

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

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
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REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

Honourable government—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call Bill 223, Indigenous veterans day, for second reading debate this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 223—The Indigenous Veterans Day Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now call Bill 223, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) for second reading.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): I move, seconded by the member from The Pas-Kameesak, that Bill 223, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Pankratz: It is such a profound honour to stand before the Chamber today as we work to formalize Indigenous Veterans Day on November 8th here in Manitoba.

This bill does more than just recognize a date, though. It serves as a tribute to the countless Indigenous veterans who've shown an unwavering commitment to Canada and to our collective freedoms.

Indigenous Veterans Day is already recognized in spirit following the historic resolution brought forward in Manitoba, but by enshrining it in law, we reaffirm our commitment to honour those who have sacrificed so much.

Today we look to our shared history with a huge amount of respect and admiration. This day represents the incredible courage, sacrifice and unity shown by Indigenous service members across generations. And with this bill, we pay tribute to those who stood shoulder to shoulder with their fellow Canadians, defending freedoms both here and abroad, often at a great personal cost.

Now, throughout history, Indigenous veterans have been a crucial part of Canada's military, contributing to battles and mission that have shaped our nation's legacy. They've stood on the front lines, willing to give everything for a country that, at times, failed to offer them the same freedoms here at home. Many Indigenous veterans returned to find themselves unjustly denied the benefits, support and recognition that were readily available to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Yet, despite these systemic barriers, their commitment to this country and to the ideals of freedom and unity remained steadfast.

This bill honours their resilience and their sacrifices. Their contributions have been invaluable, not only in terms of their bravery on the battlefield,

but in strengthening the bonds of unity that hold our province and country together.

And I want to take a moment just to share a story that really illustrates that spirit of unity. You know, I had the honour of attending the memorial for Austin Lathlin-Bercier, who's a young man from Opaskwayak Cree Nation who died in the line of duty while serving in Ukraine. And one of the articles that I read about Austin had a powerful quote from his mother, actually. And it was that he said, as soon as he joined, he felt like it was a family right away, it didn't matter where they came from.

And this really simple statement, I think, captures what Indigenous veterans day is about: it's honouring, again, that unity, the courage and the family-like bonds that service creates.

Now, Austin's contributions remind us that freedom comes with a price. These men and women paid that price, often fighting in conflicts far from home, yet their service ensured a legacy of freedom and democracy that we enjoy here today. Indigenous veterans day provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by these veterans and to express our deepest gratitude for their role in securing our shared freedoms.

In bringing forward this bill, I absolutely stand on the shoulders of those who have advocated for Indigenous veterans day long before this moment. The 1993 resolution and the first commemoration of that day in 1994 for our province was a milestone that was achieved through the dedication of many advocates, one of whom, Randi Gage, joins us here today. And I'm so happy that she's present with us. She was instrumental in creating a space to formally remember and honour Indigenous service members. And we're here today because of their vision and dedication.

Now, through this bill—again, we honour not only those who served, but those who have continually fought to ensure their legacy is recognized. And education is a core element of what we hope to accomplish through this formal recognition. The story of figures like Tommy Prince, from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, provides a powerful example to guide that understanding.

Now, Prince's service and story are often used to shed light on the role of Indigenous military contributions, helping us understand the greater challenges they faced both on the battlefield and upon returning home. Now, while many educators across Manitoba are already doing incredible work to bring the stories

of Indigenous veterans into classrooms, this bill will only strengthen those efforts.

By creating a formal Indigenous veterans day, we reinforce the importance of these stories and support educators in fostering awareness and respect among future generations. And this isn't just about remembrance, it's about understanding and acknowledging the whole history of our nation, including the sacrifices Indigenous veterans made to protect it despite the challenges they faced.

Now, as we gather here to mark this important step, I also want to acknowledge the presence of a few fantastic folks who've joined us here: we do have Grand Chief Garrison Settee; we have interim Grand Chief Betsy Kennedy; Minister Jack Park, Minister Shawn Nault, from MMF. And I believe Chief Bluesky is here as well.

And they're also joined by a number of leaders within the military community, and I didn't have a list, and I think I can see up that high, but I see General Chris McKenna up there, a commander at NORAD. I also see Mr. Cousineau is up there, yes, from 17 Wing. And we have also John Dawson, who just changed over to the Rifles from serving as the RSM for the Camerons.

* (10:10)

So I just wanted to acknowledge quickly that your presence here is just so incredibly powerful and sort of a reminder of that unity that this day is going to represent and also of the collective commitments of the many communities that are going to share in recognizing Indigenous veterans. So thank you again for your attendance today and for your guidance and dedication to seeing this day recognized in law.

I'm also really grateful to young leaders in the community, like Justin Woodcock, who I had the chance to speak with at length about this. And that began at the actual memorial for Austin Lathlin-Bercier, and we've had a bunch of great conversations about how this bill can really be meaningful for a lot of folks.

And then I also have to acknowledge the late Grand Chief Cathy Merrick. And I still remember the hug she gave me at Austin Lathlin-Bercier's memorial and the conversation that we had about this bill specifically. And it is just such a huge loss to the community that she's not here with us today, and I really appreciated everything that she contributed as I did this work over the summer.

I also want to just acknowledge, generally, currently serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are also here in the gallery and who are here to show their support.

So as we establish Indigenous veterans day in law, I really encourage Manitobans to join us in honouring the service and sacrifices of Indigenous veterans and currently serving members. November 8th provides a moment to pause, to come together as communities and to recognize the contributions of Indigenous service members.

And this bill calls upon us to not only remember those sacrifices again, but to also engage our communities in meaningful ways. And so I would also encourage communities as they, maybe, become more aware of this day, to create commemorative events on November 8th that honour the stories, sacrifices and legacies of Indigenous veterans. Now, these gatherings could be a space to share stories, reflect on their contributions and foster more unity among community members.

Honourable Speaker, this bill is about more than words or dates on a calendar. It's about honouring the real costs of freedom in our province and country, and the profound sacrifices made by Indigenous veterans. It's about, sort of, uniting our gratitude to paying tribute to the family of services members who have defended this country across generations, and by enshrining Indigenous veterans day in law, we give these veterans and their families the respect they've long deserved.

So again, I'm reminded of Austin Lathlin-Bercier's mother, who said that from the moment he joined, he felt like he had found family; didn't matter where they came from.

This bill honours that bond of service and sacrifice. It transcends backgrounds and unites all of us. And Indigenous veterans have stood for Canada time and again, protecting the freedoms we hold so dear.

So today, I hope we can all come together and vote in favour of moving this bill very quickly through to solidify our show of solidarity with Indigenous veterans across our province.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following

sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; and each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer may exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I'd like to thank the member from Waverley for bringing this important bill forward. Recognizing the importance of our Indigenous partners in the military is very important to do.

Can the member please expand a little bit more on who was consulted in the drafting of this bill?

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much for that question.

You know, from the very outset, it was so important to me to make sure that this was coming from community and from the people directly involved. So it's a pretty extensive consultation process, but I do think it's important for me to actually name the folks that I spoke to.

So Wanbdi Wakita was a really important contributor to this work. He's a veteran. He's the current grandfather-in-residence at U of M.

I spoke to Elder Barbara Nepinak, who had a lot of great inputs into the conversation with this bill.

Lieutenant-Colonel Jon Baker was another one that I spoke to—former CO with the Camerons, and he does a lot of work with northern health, so he had a real connection to this work.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): First of all, I want to thank my colleague for bringing this very, very important bill forward.

Manitoba was one of the first provinces in Canada to celebrate Indigenous Veterans Day and has commemorated their contributions ever since. Services are held every year to remember their bravery and sacrifices.

My question to my colleague is: How will they be participating in Indigenous Veterans Day this year?

MLA Pankratz: Thanks for that fantastic question. I want to answer it very quickly so I can speak to a few more of the people that I talked to.

So I'm really looking forward to joining Randi Gage, actually, and her crew in Riverton for the Indigenous

Veterans Day commemoration that they do out there, and it's going to be a wonderful event.

So I also had the opportunity to speak to Chief Warrant Officer Joel Pederson, who's actually the first First Nations person to hold the role of brigade sergeant major, which is absolutely wonderful.

As I mentioned, Randi Gage has been a huge contributor to this work and was part of the original work, as well, that was done in the '90s.

Justin Woodcock from Southern Chiefs' Organization—so he is actually the First Nations veterans' co-ordinator and relentless advocate for veterans in the Indigenous community, who's been fantastic.

Chief Warrant Officer John Dawson, who's now the RSM for the Rifles, was a—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): I'd like to thank the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz) for bringing this legislation forward today.

As he continues to run out of time in his answer, I'd like him to continue to elaborate who he's consulted with on this legislation.

MLA Pankratz: Yes, I really appreciate you giving me the opportunity to continue because it really is important, again, to speak about the number of people that I had the opportunity to sit down with.

I also spoke with Colonel David Cronk, who's the commander at Shilo. He had a lot of fantastic input in terms of what his members thought about some of this work that we're doing and how supportive they were, as well.

And just this past Friday, along with the member of Seine River, I met with SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, who was fantastic and supportive and actually provided some inputs into some of the words that I shared today.

Then I also was speaking to a number of educators, to elders in the community beyond this, CAF members generally who are currently serving and—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Redhead: The NDP government has promised to listen to all Manitobans.

Indigenous Manitobans made great sacrifices, all to preserve our freedoms and fundamental rights.

My question to my colleague is: What does Indigenous Veterans Day mean to them?

MLA Pankratz: So I think the best way for me to do this is just to quickly share a story from this past June.

I know a lot of folks here have heard it a number of times, but I had the honour of travelling to D-Day commemorations in France with the Premier (Mr. Kinew). And we were walking around at Bény-sur-Mer the cemetery, and we ended up bumping into, actually, a young group of Indigenous students from Manitoba who were there looking for relatives who had fought.

And it was incredible—there were a huge group of 15-year-olds in tears, crying at these graves, and the Premier walked up and it was this moment where they turned around and all of a sudden, the Premier of Manitoba was standing there in front of them. And, you know, tears kept flowing more, and he told this really beautiful story of how they are students now looking at this gravesite—they can say that their—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte)—sorry. The honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Thank you to the honourable member from Waverley for bringing this forward.

One of the questions that I have is: Will there be educational support in the classrooms to inform our children about the importance of Indigenous 'veteraners' day?

MLA Pankratz: It's a fantastic question. I mean, we—our caucus is filled with educators. That's such an important part of the work that we're doing as a government here in Manitoba. And so, by enshrining this in law, ultimately, we get to support further the incredible work that educators are doing in Manitoba already.

* (10:20)

So yes, I mean, there will be work that we do in terms of reaching out to educators to see if there are resources that we can provide. Obviously, we know we can't provide funds within a private members' bill, but I will certainly be consulting and speaking with the many educators in our caucus to make sure that that information is received.

MLA Redhead: Our government has promised to advance reconciliation within the province. By remembering the contributions of Indigenous veterans,

we continue to integrate reconciliation into our daily lives.

My question for my colleague is, how will we continue to support Indigenous veterans in Manitoba?

MLA Pankratz: Thank you for the question.

I apologize, because I keep running out of time, because there are so many things that I'd love to chat about here today.

You know, and I was telling this story about our Premier (Mr. Kinew) speaking to those students. Part of this work has to be education, right, and the late Honourable Murray Sinclair said it: education got us into this mess, it's going to get us out of it. Right? So the more that we can do in terms of speaking to our young people and bringing things forward that actually shine light on our history, whether that's negative or positive, is always going to be a good thing in my mind.

And so, as a government, as a caucus, I know that we're going to continue to—bringing forward legislation and bills that support that work.

Mr. Perchotte: To the member opposite, how does this law ensure that the Indigenous veterans and their families receive the proper support and services they require from the provincial government?

MLA Pankratz: Thanks for that question.

You know, ultimately, a private member's bill can't effect that in that way specifically. It's more of a symbolism. But that being said, as a government, we have been taking steps to ensure that Indigenous communities are receiving good health care, good education. We introduced a universal nutrition program, which is also helping with the community.

So there are a number of things that we can effect through bills. This one specifically is a private member's bill. I believe we'll just bring more awareness to the day. Although, as you know, and as I said to the member from Portage, we can't attach any sort of funds to a private member's bill. So that won't be specifically coming from this legislation.

MLA Redhead: This day is to—this day is a day to remember the truth about the courage, bravery and sacrifices our Indigenous veterans have made. All Manitobans deserve to know these truths.

My question for my colleague is: How will remembering this day let Manitobans learn about Indigenous veterans and their contributions to our province and country?

MLA Pankratz: Thanks for that question.

I do just want to quickly finish that story with our Premier, where he was with these students and he basically told them all—and I'm very much paraphrasing—that their relatives paid the price of admission in this country and they should feel that they are a part of Canada just like anybody else.

And it was moments like that, and—I'll be completely honest, I've got goosebumps right now, because it was a moment where I was standing there in this space, this hallowed space where veterans from all walks of life had served and died and were buried there. And now we had these young people from Manitoba who are given this new opportunity to have a new perspective on what it is that they can accomplish in this world, in this country.

And I very much look forward to continuing to bring forward, as I said before, legislation—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Lagassé: Once again, thank you to the member for bringing forward this legislation.

Can he talk a bit more of—about some of the roles that our Indigenous veterans have played in fighting for our freedom?

MLA Pankratz: Thank you for that question. I very much appreciate that.

You know, there is—it's a difficult question to talk about when we say, you know, we're going to talk about the history, because a lot of folks in World War I, Indigenous veterans from World War I, World War II, were actually not afforded a lot of the same rights that other Canadians had. And then they went and fought in the war anyway, for our freedoms here. And so, you know, that's a big part of what we're talking about with this bill.

I mentioned Tommy Prince as a spectacular example of someone who was actually awarded a number of medals for valiant service and then later on came back and did not receive the same treatment as some of his brothers and sisters that he fought with.

And so I'm hoping that, with this bill, we can continue to speak—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

And the time for questions has also expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is now open for debate.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Thank you to the members in our gallery for attending today. Your presence means a lot here today.

My career in the military ended 35 years ago, but I'm brought back to the day when I decided to enlist. The decision to stand up and represent your country, to stand up and join the Canadian Armed Forces, is not for everybody, and there's a lot of decisions to be made and lot of things to weigh as to where you want your career to go. Means time away from your family, sacrifice, walking away from your friends and developing a new brotherhood of family within that military.

A fair amount of testing is done before you can enter into the military, both academic as well as physical testing. And when you take a look at the Armed Forces and the careers that they offer, and we have—I have family members who have become lieutenant colonels in the military serving their whole life, and now part of NATO. It's an incredible journey that they have. They had the ability to go all over the world and be members representing the Canadian military.

And the Canadian military is honoured around the world for our peacekeeping, it's—for our training. We've had many different nations come here for training that are provided across our great country. And as people take a look at joining the military, you don't often know this, but it's not an easy pass that you just get in and you finish your basic training and you go on. It's high, rigorous standards that are done.

And the member from Waverley talked about one of our most famous people, the Indigenous military of—sorry, of Thomas Prince. Thomas Prince was born in my constituency of Petersfield. He is very well known in the Selkirk area, St. Andrews area, Scantebury. He is truly a hero. But I was shocked to discover that he applied several times to join the Canadian military and was rejected—rejected over and over and over again. And a large part of that is discrimination, because he was Indigenous.

And it was only just before the early days of the Second World War that he was accepted, and thank goodness for that, because he made a huge difference for the Canadian military in fighting for what was right. He became an expert marksman. He went on to have 11 medals bestowed for his level of bravery and courage that he showed throughout his career. And there's many, many, many Indigenous war heroes like Mr. Prince.

But what about the ones that were rejected? The ones that were turned away simply because of racism? These are people who had to make the decision to leave their families to go fight for a country they believed in, and that country turned them away.

Thank goodness that, for Mr. Prince, that didn't happen. Thank goodness for Canada, and thank goodness for every member of our province that he represented the future as valiantly as he did. He went on to have a most distinguished career, and one of the things that he had said—and I'll take a look here—is that he was always striving to gain back the respect the Indigenous people should've always had. He was always striving to show the world that the Indigenous people were just as good as any white soldier was.

* (10:30)

And he proved that over and over, and over and over again, that his excellence and valour wasn't measured by race; it was by the person that was—as a soldier. He moved mountains to show the world what he can do.

But yet, back in Canada, after he left military service, he again found that he was at the receiving end of racism. He had started a business which failed while he was away fighting for the Indigenous rights of the people. And when he came back, he realized that he needed to do what he was very good at. He re-enlisted in the military.

And it was very sad to find out that in 1977, upon his death, there wasn't a lot of support for him, a true Canadian hero. A true member of our elite military force was somewhat forgotten.

And this bill today says that that is not permitted, that we must look at our Indigenous people and make sure they are registered—

An Honourable Member: Oh my God, they're not our Indigenous. We're not our Indigenous. They don't belong to you.

Mr. Perchotte: They're a part of Canada. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: The honourable member for Selkirk has the floor.

Mr. Perchotte: Where I come from, we're all brothers and sisters, so they're all part of my family. So when I talk to our Indigenous people in Selkirk, they are part of my brothers and sisterhood. The—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

We may disagree with what the member is saying and people will have the opportunity to put their comments on the record, but hollering across the floor isn't going to fix anything or solve anything.

Mr. Perchotte: While I was in the military and the people that chose to make that their career, and the people coming from all different areas of our provinces, areas of Canada, from coast to coast, all had a very similar story that they wanted to make Canada better. They wanted to move forward and show that they were more than the individuals that they are, that they are collectively a group that would stand for something, stand for the rights of everybody in Canada, stand for freedom, stand for the ability for nations to succeed, and stand in the face of adversity.

And shocking to find, the Indigenous population found it very difficult not only to get into service, but when they were in service, that they also faced racism on a daily basis. They found it difficult to move forward. And as I mentioned earlier, what about the ones who didn't get the opportunity? What did Canada miss out from those potential soldiers who never got the call for service, who never got to take up arms and work with fellow brothers and sisters in the military to make sure that Canada was forefront in their minds and their families' minds?

And I've met several people who were the pride of the reserve when they got there. There was stories done on them. Several members were coming in: one particular member was looking to become a helicopter pilot and throughout basic training and further training he was followed by more communications people and media as to how his career was developing.

Now it's been 35 years, I don't know if that member is still in the forces or not, but I would hope that they had a tremendous career, as well as—the same as the careers of my family members, my grandfather, my cousins.

I say to all people in the province that recognizing our Indigenous veterans is a great thing. I can't wait for this bill to be passed, and I want to thank the member for bringing this forward.

Thank you.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): I am very proud to rise today to speak in favour of this bill. I had a plan of how I was going to—the way I was going to do this, this morning, but it's changed, and in a good way. I think we're all experiencing a teachable moment here. So I really hope members opposite pay attention,

get off their phones and take an opportunity to learn something.

I'd like to begin by thanking my colleague, the MLA for Waverley, for putting in the work to educate himself about the true history of Canada and the true experiences of Indigenous veterans. So I want to thank you for that—doing that work. It means everything to me. And I know it means very, very much to the folks here that are Indigenous. And I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Indigenous leadership and military leadership that's present here today. Thank you so much for being here and supporting my colleague's bill.

So as questions were being asked this morning, as the member from Selkirk stood up and spoke, one thing I might—I'm saying this with all due respect—the member opposite should maybe prepare his words more carefully. He doesn't even realize that what he is saying is offensive. And I know that he doesn't do it in an intentional way, which is exactly why we need legislation like this to pass this morning, so that folks can educate themselves on the language that they use that is inappropriate.

I am an Indigenous person. There are Indigenous people in this room. And I can assure you, I am not yours or yours or yours. And I can assure you, the folks above you agree with me. Now, when you use language—when you use possessive language, it is a micro-aggression. Folks on the opposite would really benefit from taking some anti-racist, anti-oppressive training, so that when they stand up to represent their constituents who are both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, they do it in a respectful manner.

I am horrified by some of the things that were said this morning. Using the word our—our Indigenous people—is totally inappropriate. It's like me saying our white, old people. I would never say that, because I don't own anybody. I don't possess human beings.

And so they can heckle me and they can disagree—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I just caution members about when they disagree with what's being said that they still should not be hollering across the Chamber. And I would caution the members very strongly to not be doing that while the member is speaking.

MLA Cross: I am not trying to be disrespectful. But I am very disappointed to hear the language that was—is being used here this morning. It shows a lack of

education. It shows a lack of understanding. Just because you know an Indigenous person doesn't mean you understand their lived experiences. And you do not get to refer to them in a possessive tense, which is one of the problems that we've had in this country for far too long.

We have a country built on colonial values and systems that we are trying to move away from those colonial norms. And so we must understand that when a member says things like I am so shocked that they experience racism; it is shocking that they were not allowed to participate or volunteer or be accepted. And language like he went back to doing the work he was good at, is just disappointing, when we're talking about one of our greatest military heroes in this country.

And let me be clear, this is a person who served—who himself—family members would have went to a residential school. We have members that serve that their children were probably sitting in residential schools while they were performing military service. And those things are due to Canadian government policy. Policies that were meant to harm Indigenous people, to strip them of their identity, to bring them into mainstream.

* (10:40)

Member opposite probably doesn't understand that when veterans were denied their rights as any other—Indigenous veterans, I'm talking about—when they were denied the same rights as non-Indigenous veterans, that was due to government policy and forced enfranchisement. If you wanted to have your benefits, then you'd better give up your Indigenous identity and become a Canadian and enfranchise into the mainstream.

What this bill will do today is signal and send a message to everyone that we respect all veterans, Indigenous veterans as well.

And it's disappointing to see members across chatting and laughing—very disappointing. Especially a member who had the audacity, weeks ago, to stand up and call us bullies because we didn't agree about his belief system where he doesn't include everyone. So maybe members opposite should sit and be respectful for a change. We've had far too much of this in this country and in this space.

As a teacher—and hopefully the members opposite pay attention, because they asked this question—as a teacher, this Friday is Indigenous Veterans Day. Monday is a holiday, which is Remembrance Day.

I guarantee you that every school in Winnipeg is recognizing Remembrance Day and Indigenous Veterans Day on Friday. And I know that because I worked in about 20 different schools in this province and in this city. And in the last few years of my teaching career, I was an Indigenous educator that looked after 16 schools. And every single one of those schools participated in Indigenous Veterans Day.

The work is already being done thanks to Randi Gage, thanks to folks who brought this forward a long, long time ago. And it has taken far too long for this Legislature to recognize this officially.

In closing, what I'd like to say to the members opposite: this isn't a partisan issue. I want to remind everyone, including people from—Manitobans right across the province, the members of the PC Party were all elected under a campaign—they all took their seats knowing that they were elected by people who agreed with their horrific campaign that involved racist tropes against Indigenous people and trans kids.

Now here's your opportunity to run away from your record, to maybe redeem yourself and participate in truth and reconciliation in a meaningful way. Don't talk this bill out this morning. Vote yes and let it pass.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Good morning. Today I rise to speak to Bill 223, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act.

This bill's passing would mean the eighth day of November of every year would be dedicated to remembering and appreciating and thanking the Indigenous veterans that have served in the Canadian military.

I'd like to thank again the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz), once again, for bringing this bill forward in the House. The member for Waverley mentioned the first Indigenous Veterans Day took place across Canada on November 8, 1993, and our Province was the first to recognize Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8, 1994. It was a unanimous decision in this House on the private members' resolution that brought this forward.

I'm pleased now that it has come before the House and that the member for Waverley is putting forward this bill formally, to recognize this most important day.

Bill 227 is a bill that recognizes First Nation, Inuit and Red River Métis veterans and the recognition that they deserve. It is a day where we will acknowledge

the sacrifice, the courage, the heroism that each one of the Indigenous veterans gave to protect our rights and freedoms.

November 8th will also be somewhat of a sombre day for many people, for many reasons. It is estimated that as many as 12,000 First Nation, Métis and Inuit people served in the wars of the 20th and–century, and at least 500 of them lost their lives. During the Second World War, 125 Indigenous Manitobans lost their lives.

Let's also remember that some Indigenous veterans volunteered to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces when they were being denied fundamental rights such as the right to vote. And despite the sacrifice these Indigenous veterans were willing to take, they were not always welcome and treated as heroes when they returned home, and many returned home to nothing. Some were forced to give up their Treaty status, some were not eligible for land grants that were offered to non-Indigenous soldiers, and others were denied jobs and access to benefits and support programs for veterans.

Bill 227, Indigenous veterans day, is a step toward showing appreciation for the sacrifices made and is a step towards all of us acknowledging the dark history. Our Indigenous veterans deserve this day.

Our First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Manitoba have always played a part in the interest and defence of Canada. There's a long and proud tradition of military service in our country. There are many valuable skills Indigenous people brought with them when they answered the call of duty. The patience, the style and the marksmanship were all traits and—that strengthened the Canadian military.

Not only did the Indigenous shoulders—soldiers show up for service with skills unmatched at home by their families—at home from their families, their families contributed immensely by means of donating food, clothing and large sums of money, and allowing access to portions of their reserves for construction of airports and defence installation.

As written on Bill 223, Indigenous veterans day, and I quote, Indigenous veterans day will provide an opportunity to recognize the contributions and sacrifices of Indigenous veterans and significant—and the significant obstacles and prejudices that they had to endure and overcome.

I find it of the utmost importance to remember some of our Indigenous veterans, and I'll just name a few. Chief George Myran was from Long

Plain First Nation; Private Arthur Meeches was from the Long Plain First Nation; Warrant Officer Julian Houle from the Ebb and Flow First Nation; Vince Henderson, a member of the Pinaymootang First Nation; Lionel Daniels from Peguis First Nation; Herbert Daniels from Long Plain First Nation. Alfred Chartrand from Skownan First Nation; Norman Thomas Beauchamp from Long Plain First Nation. Donald R. Catcheway from Skownan First Nation; Daniel Black, a member of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation; Corporal Melvin Swan, Lake Manitoba—of Lake Manitoba First Nation. Elliot Ratt from Peguis First Nation; Rufus Prince from Long Plain First Nation; Michael Pashe, born in Old Sioux Village; Randi Susan Gage, an Ojibway woman, from Winnipeg, Manitoba; Sargent Donald Vernon Houle from Sandy Bay First Nation; Felix Ambrose Fontaine, born in Sagkeeng First Nation; Leon Xavier Fontaine, born in Sagkeeng First Nation; Mervin Clarke from Hollow Water First Nation; Tommy George Prince from Brokenhead First Nation.

In Winnipeg, there is Sergeant Tommy Prince—Sergeant Prince Tommy—sorry, excuse me. In Winnipeg, there is a Sergeant Tommy Prince memorial that is dedicated to the memory of Sergeant Tommy Prince. Sergeant Tommy Prince is one of the Canada's most decorated Indigenous war veterans. He was awarded a total of 11 medals for his service. He fought in the Second World War and the Korean War. He was also deployed in the Battle of Kapyong, which his battalion was subsequently awarded the United States president unit citation for its distinguished service. Other awards included the military medal of America, Silver Star for gallantry; Korean medal; United Nations service medal and the Canadian service medal.

Bill 223, Indigenous veterans day, recognizes those like the individuals listed above: the ones we lost during battle, the ones who returned but are no longer with us, the ones who are served and are still with us, and the ones who are currently serving.

History shows that Indigenous veterans have served in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 19—I mean, in 1759, and more than 4,000 Indigenous served during the First World War from 1914 to 1918. In September 1939, the Second World War began. By March 1940, most—more than 100 Indigenous people volunteered, and by the end of the conflict, there were over 3,000 First Nation members, as well, an unknown of Métis and Inuit recruits.

* (10:50)

As a Métis man, I am honoured to stand here today and put a few words on the record for Bill 223, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act. I would also like to thank the member, once again—for Waverley, for bringing forward this bill, and I'm happy to support the member on the passing of this bill.

We should all use this time to reflect on the commitment and courage our Indigenous veterans—of our Indigenous veterans, and to remember those sacrifices—those who sacrificed their lives for our peace of mind and our freedom.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: My mistake. I'm sorry.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before recognizing the next speaker, I have some guests in the gallery I'd like to introduce.

We have 20 grade 3 and 4 students from Gladstone School in the constituency of Fort Rouge, and they're only here for a short time, so please join me in welcoming them to our Chamber.

* * *

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Families.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I just want to get up and say a couple of—put a couple of words on the record this morning in respect of my colleague's really important private members' bill, and offer my support on this bill passing second reading this morning.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge all of our relatives that are in the gallery today, and a particular acknowledgement of Gage for all of the hard work that she's done over the years. Her and I have known each other for, I don't know, 25, 30 years—and I've always had an enormous amount of respect for her and I want to acknowledge her in the House today for all of the work that she's done. And to each and every one of you that are in the gallery. Miigwech for being here.

I don't want to take up too much time so that we can allow a vote on this second reading of this bill. I just wanted to get up this morning to acknowledge my grandfather.

My grandfather, Henry Charles Fontaine, who I have spoken about a couple of times in this Chamber, was a member of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. I've shared that my grandfather was 16 when he was released from the Fort Alexander

residential school in our reserve in Sagkeeng, and my grandfather was 17 when he enlisted. And from what we've been told, he lied on his application or whoever he spoke to and said he was 18—but actually, he was only 17 and he enlisted very soon after leaving residential school.

And he shares this story—he shared this story with us that the day that he was leaving Sagkeeng to be—to go out, he went to the residential school to be able to say goodbye to his siblings. And the priest at the school told him he wasn't allowed to say goodbye to his siblings, one of whom was only five—she had just started residential school.

My grandfather was actually on the second wave of D-Day and, very soon, was captured by the Nazis. And for our family, we have a really, really hard time talking about it because he only would've been, like, 18, and I just can't even imagine my own sons. And the story is that he was running and running and running for miles and kilometres to try and escape the Nazis, and he was captured by the Nazis.

And in September 29 of 1944, my great-grandmother, Elizabeth [*phonetic*] Fontaine, received this notice, and it says—it was sent to her and it said: the minister of National Defence now wishes to inform you that information has been received through indirect channels that H1168 Private Henry Charles Fontaine, previously reported missing, is now a prisoner of war at Stalag VIII B—prisoner of war.

And this is what we're talking about here today, to ensure that Indigenous veterans are given their due recognition—and that's why this bill is so important.

So much of Indigenous people's contributions to the freedoms that we enjoy here in Canada have gone unnoticed, unacknowledged. And today is a day that in Manitoba we can rectify that.

For the members opposite who get in—get up in this House, day in and day out, and say that they believe in reconciliation or they believe in the respect of Indigenous peoples, here is a day to actually action it. It's not enough anymore in 2024 to say I believe in reconciliation but not action that language.

So, in honour of my grandfather, in honour of all of the folks that are in the Chamber, in honour of all of our relatives who were never given their due, I hope that members opposite will stand up in the House and unanimously pass this bill to second reading.

Miigwech.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this today. Thank you to the member from Waverley for bringing this important act forward.

The Indigenous Veterans Day Act is an important legislative recognition of Indigenous veterans in Canada. Observed on November 8th, it honours the Indigenous men and women who served in various conflicts, protecting freedoms and values Canadians cherish today.

This act amends The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act to create a designated day that recognizes Indigenous contributions to the Armed Forces. While many Indigenous veterans served with valour and distinction, their contributions often went unrecognized for years. Indigenous veterans day helps rectify this by offering specific day for Canadians to remember and honour their sacrifices.

I just wanted to mention today, I wanted to say the names and recognize two members from the community—from the constituency that I represent.

Michael Pashe: He was born in Old Sioux Village and was a Canadian—in the Canadian Army from 1944 to 1946. Before his army service, he attended a residential school. For his service, he received the France and Germany star medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and clasp for his service.

He later went on to be chief of Dakota Tipi First Nation in 1970. Michael Pashe was seen in a powerful voice and a role model for Dakota nations in Manitoba.

I also want to recognize Rufus Prince, who was a Second World War veteran.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 223, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

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

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, I would request a recorded vote, please.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested.

In accordance with rule 24(7), a division requested during private members' hour must be deferred to private members' hour the following Thursday. The deferred vote shall take place at 11:55 a.m. on Thursday and shall not be further deferred.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 11 a.m.?

The Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 11 a.m.? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 27—National Youth Climate Corps

The Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it's now time for private members' resolutions.

The private members' resolution before us this morning is resolution 27, National Youth Climate Corps, brought forward by the honourable member for Lagimodière.

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz),

WHEREAS climate change is an existential threat that should be taken seriously by all levels of government; and

WHEREAS climate change is already impacting Manitobans today with rising temperatures, extreme weather events, wildfires, and other threats to the air, water, and land; and

WHEREAS Manitoba has historically been a leader in supporting green jobs, such as through the 97% renewable electricity grid; and

WHEREAS encouraging youth and young adults to pursue opportunities in the low-carbon economy will be essential in doing the province's part to combat climate change; and

WHEREAS support from the Federal Government is critical to boost the availability of sustainable jobs for young Manitobans; and

WHEREAS young Canadians have historically shown tremendous leadership during times of uncertainty and are now calling for the opportunity to work to address the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS many young Manitobans want to work in green jobs, but do not see an outlet available for their effort and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS youth across Canada have been campaigning for the creation of a National Youth Climate Corps; and

WHEREAS a Youth Climate Corps would fund thousands of both climate mitigation and adaptation jobs that will help communities prepare for, respond to, and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS a Youth Climate Corps would bolster Manitoba's mitigation and adaptation capacity, empower young people to enter green careers, and lead the low-carbon economy into the future.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call upon the federal government to support the work of the National Youth Climate Corps.

* (11:00)

Motion presented.

Mr. Blashko: I'm very lucky to stand in this Chamber and speak to not only one of the most pressing concerns of our time but also an important part of the solution to that problem. The climate crisis overlays everything. We see rising temperatures, air pollution, floods in Spain, hurricanes on the east coast and wildfires right here in Manitoba.

After seven and a half years of climate inaction from the former PC government, our NDP government is committed to protecting our lands and waters for Manitobans. Youth here in Manitoba and across the country are ready and willing to do their part to address climate change.

I need to thank the grassroots activists who met with members of our caucus and are joining us today in the gallery. Young people recognize the urgency of this work and see their future successes intertwined with how seriously we collectively take the threat of climate change.

A Youth Climate Corps would provide green jobs that prepare the workforce for a net-zero carbon emission economy. Youth would be trained in emergency response, strengthening community infrastructure and greenhouse gas mitigation. A national Youth Climate Corps program would fund thousands of well-paying green jobs, boosting the economy. This is why we urge the federal government to support the national Youth Climate Corps.

MLA Robert Loiselle, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So I come from a background of education, I work with young people, and one of the frameworks we often used, and it's probably familiar to some in the Chamber today, is the Circle of Courage. And I think

it's relevant to this context and to this resolution we're talking about, because I think it will take a great amount of courage for us to meet this moment and for youth to play their role, and clearly they want to play this role, so I thank them for that.

The Circle of Courage is a way to look at how we can be successful, how we can meet the moment and how we can support those in our community to do the best they can. And while I used it with students, I think it's applicable to me in my life and probably members in the Chamber as well.

So the Circle of Courage involves four quadrants: belonging, which, for me, belonging in this context is us saying, you have a place in solving this problem, this issue of climate change, youth have a role and they're wanting to engage in it; the second quadrant would be independence, where they are given the space to engage in this topic, whether it's apprenticeships, whether it's internships; and then it's mastery, really fine-tuning those skills that they can use towards really addressing climate change with their particular passions and talents; and the fourth—and, honestly, it's the most important for me—is the concept of generosity, of giving back to community, and I think that's what the Youth Climate Corps is really about. It's about service, it's about youth wanting to play that active role and contribute in addressing this issue.

So Manitobans are well positioned to take on this challenge and embrace the Youth Climate Corps. Our government is creating more blue-collar jobs and emphasizing our clean energy economy through strategic investments in clean technologies, sustainable energy and critical mineral development. One year into our mandate, there are important investments to point to that align with the vision of the Youth Climate Corps.

So let's talk about geothermal. We're developing a clean heat strategy that includes geothermal for new and existing homes. We are prioritizing heat pumps for home heating and exploring district geothermal energy systems.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, I'd love to talk a little bit about Lake Winnipeg. We understand the ecological importance of Lake Winnipeg to the lifeways of Manitobans. We are strengthening The Environment Act to look at how mechanisms like fines can be used to intervene sooner when problems arise. We also recently implemented Manitoba's first-ever formal nutrient target regulation for Lake Winnipeg and its tributaries.

Let's talk about green manufacturing jobs. Our NDP government helps support the creation of 400 low-carbon manufacturing jobs at New Flyer Industries. Honourable Speaker, this supports their all-Canadian-build facility to manufacture, finish and service zero emission buses in Canada, for the Canadian market and establish a national heavy equipment vehicle innovation centre of excellence.

I'm really excited to talk about wind energy. For the first time in the province's history, the Manitoba Affordable Energy Plan solidifies government policy to include Indigenous-owned utilities scale wind energy generation. I want us to take a moment and appreciate that future.

Indigenous governments will be building green energy infrastructure at a scale where our provincial government would acquire meaningful amounts of energy from these Indigenous-owned utilities.

This is a government-to-government partnership that benefits all Manitobans and is an important piece of economic reconciliation.

I'd also love to talk about the Seal River Watershed Alliance. The Seal River Watershed is one of our largest ecological pristine watersheds. The Indigenous-led alliance has been working towards having the watershed recognized as an Indigenous protected land. This is an important part of our commitment to preserve 30 per cent of Manitoba's lands and waters by 2030.

All of these projects that I've listed are prime examples of where a green economy can flourish and a Youth Climate Corps would enhance. Ultimately, all of these pieces lead to good, green jobs and a future for Manitoba's youth, where they want to stay and build their lives right here in Manitoba. And isn't that what we all want? To help build a community and province where people want to stay and they can see themselves being successful over the long term?

Manitobans now have a government actively partnering with other levels of government, community organizations and researchers coming together to build Manitoba—a Manitoba for all of us and those that will come after us. Whether it's \$10 million to support Manitoba's emission reduction commitments under the pan-Canadian framework on growth and climate change or \$10 million for waste water infrastructure in Winnipeg, our NDP government is a willing partner and is looking to work for a green future that meets all of our needs.

Manitobans are on the other side of seven and a half dark years for the environment, under the former PC government. They slashed the environment and climate department, defunded environmental organizations and cut environmental testing and monitoring. All of us in this Chamber know of a flood, drought, wildfire or other extreme weather event that has impacted our communities.

Imagine having enthusiastic young workers present, working to mitigate that damage, reaching out to isolated community members. These are—these aren't unskilled jobs, and for the record, there are no unskilled jobs—all jobs are skilled.

Youth will be building infrastructure, developing community plans, applying scientific research, deepening their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and parts of teams responding to weather emergencies.

These are all experiences and skills that will serve them and their communities in the future, whether they go to—whether they go on to further their studies, remain in public service or enter private industry.

Honourable Speaker, while there is clearly concrete projects and change that will happen through the Youth Climate Corps, there's also an intangible aspect to this. This is an opportunity to move from a state of anxiety to agency.

Many folks, but young people particularly, are unsure what the future holds for them. This is impacting where they choose to live, if they study, whether they have kids. Moving past the anxiety and the overwhelming feeling that can come from living in the current climate realities and having a place to put that energy to play a part—of being—to play a part in being solution-focused. That can be life-changing.

Me and my colleague from Riel had an opportunity to join a celebration at a local United Church a few weeks ago. The local community there, 18 months ago they decided they were going to do what they could. So they entered onto this pathway of geothermal heating. And so after 18 months, they were able to say that they will be fossil-fuel free in the coming weeks.

And it was a great celebration. And they recognize that this one initiative wasn't going to change the greater pathway that we're all on. But they did need to do what they could. They needed to be able to look to the young people in their lives and say, we took something on. And they recognize the value of collective action.

This is what the Youth Climate Corps is all about: unleashing the potential, the talents and the energy of youth to contribute to solving the wicked problems we're facing. It will take all of us doing what we can, and so I want to thank the members of the Youth Climate Corps Manitoba and everyone working to protect our environment so that it can be enjoyed for future generations.

* (11:10)

I hope to see all of us enthusiastically support this resolution for us here in the Chamber and for future generations.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions. *[interjection]*
Yes, pardon.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Thank you to the member opposite for bringing forward this resolution.

And my question is: What does the member for Lagimodière consider a climate job, green career? And what skills are needed? And who will be teaching those skills to these young folks?

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): I thank the member opposite for the question.

And the great thing about this initiative is how vast it could be. These could be jobs, like, for high school students part time, these could be jobs right out of high school, these could be apprenticeships, these could be research partnerships with universities, these could be apprenticeships in the trades. There's great opportunities, because the problem is so complicated, there's so many parts to the solution, so it'll involve jobs at all levels of skill and experience.

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): Ensuring that our environment is protected so that future generations can enjoy it is a priority for our government. After seven and a half years of neglect, our provincial government is resetting the relationship with environmental organizations, activists and experts.

My question for my colleague is: What inspired you to bring this resolution forward?

Mr. Blashko: There are many reasons the team and I brought this resolution forward today, and I want to thank the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz) for all her work on this resolution.

A significant part of us bringing forward this resolution is building bridges with grassroots activists. Youth are very passionate about this issue, and so they brought forward solutions and we want to support these young people, these activists, these community members, and be a listening government that is responsive to their needs.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Can the member for Lagimodière tell the House today why the NDP government cut \$4 million from this year's Green Team budget? And can he also indicate to the House if the NDP government will be restoring this funding in Budget 2025, put more youth back to work in green jobs right here in Manitoba?

Mr. Blashko: I thank the member opposite for that question.

After seven and a half years of PC cuts, I believe we won't be taking any lessons from members opposite. We're restoring funding to an—important environmental organizations, which I did not mention earlier, but there were many environmental organizations, community-based experts, looking to make positive impacts on climate change, and their funding was pulled by former government under the Heather Stefanson and her Cabinet and members. So we will take no lessons from them on this issue.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

MLA Moyes: A key principle of our government's energy policy is tied to the creation of green, sustainable jobs. We see the value of green initiatives, as they're essential to Manitoba's economy.

My question is, how is our government creating more green jobs for Manitobans?

Mr. Blashko: I want to thank my colleague from Riel for the question.

One of the cornerstones of building energy capacity here in Manitoba is ensuring that we put hard-working Manitobans front and centre, so our affordable energy plan does just 'thas'—that, and it'll create more blue-collar jobs in the next phase of energy transition. Already, we've supported

the creation of 400 low-carbon jobs at New Flyer Industries, and our plan will build off of this progress.

And as I said earlier, isn't that what we want? Creating jobs, creating futures for young people, where they want to stay and they can stay in Manitoba, where they're earning a good living and contributing to their community and contributing to the future through these—

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): The member's time is expired.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): Can the member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko) say why the NDP cut the Building Sustainable Communities program in half to \$12.5 million and then rebrand it? What, when—will the NDP restoring this funding back in two—and for the Budget 2025 and put more youth to—in jobs at work? It's important that—Building Sustainable Communities did provide a lot of youth employment in especially rural Manitoba.

Mr. Blashko: We're proud of the employment opportunities we're putting forward for Manitobans. We have—we listed the New Flyer jobs.

I'd like to talk more about the wind energy futures that exist here in Manitoba. There's exciting announcements coming from the MMF, the Manitoba Métis Federation, about their wind energy corporation. And our government is excited to put young people to work in this renewable energy sector alongside our Indigenous partners at the MMF.

Thank you.

MLA Moyes: Manitobans understand that we live in difficult times as it pertains to the environment. From droughts to shorter winters, people can see the effects of climate change all around them. It's why our NDP government's committed to action.

My question for my colleague is: What are some of the environmental initiatives that our government is committed to fulfilling?

Mr. Blashko: Manitobans want their government to be part of creating climate solutions, and we're proud of that.

In the year that we've had the honour of forming government, we've made progress in our commitment to achieving net-zero targets by 2050. This includes supporting a collection of climate and sustainability initiatives by restoring funding to environmental organizations that the PCs cut. These partnerships are going to be integral as we move forward towards

greenhouse gas emission reductions and other climate change adaptation programs.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): The member for Red River North.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Thank you, honourable acting—no, assistant Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): Deputy.

Mr. Wharton: Thank you. Deputy Speaker—right.

Question I have for the member and, again, I thank him for bringing this bill forward—or this resolution forward. Programs like The Green Team that were cut by your government, the NDP government, provided more immediate proven opportunities for youth to be involved in green jobs.

Would the member consider, perhaps, maybe looking at building initial—or existing infrastructure, instead of creating an NDP boondoggle going forward?

Mr. Blashko: I'm happy to talk about green teams, actually, because it is a model for what a Youth Climate Corps could look like.

There's all kinds of models used throughout Canada for getting young people into the job market—it's green teams; it's Canada Summer Jobs; it's also programs like Katimavik that have existed since the '70s. So there's all kinds of models that the federal government can pull from to ensure that a Youth Climate Corps is meeting the needs in communities.

MLA Moyes: We know that Manitobans will make the carbon-friendly choice when it's affordable to do so.

My question for my colleague is: How can we ensure that we're bringing Manitobans along as we transition to the low-carbon economy?

* (11:20)

Mr. Blashko: Our government is making historical partnerships as our affordable energy plan formalizes into government policy. Indigenous-owned utility scale resource supplies through the creation of government-to-government partnerships, as I mentioned earlier, with Indigenous nations, in wind generation, with the MMF.

This plan will benefit all Manitobans, and it will mean greener Manitoba jobs, building our energy capacity and helps to keep our rates low, because

affordability is also an issue that we take very seriously as the government of Manitoba.

Ms. Byram: We all know that spending deficits and debt are at an all-time high here in Manitoba under this NDP government, as well as the Liberal government in Ottawa.

Does this government really need to be increasing bureaucracy and taxes for this new program?

Mr. Blashko: Thank you to the member opposite for that question.

And I appreciate how it is difficult for members opposite to really envision a world where governments invest in people, invest in youth. But that's something that we're committed to.

We see investment paying off in the long term. Not only in terms of people's lifespan—like, if we—if I talk about, say, the prenatal benefit or the nutrition program, that'll pay off over the lifespan of someone and their families. But we're also talking about the climate, something that we can impact in a very meaningful way for decades and centuries from now.

So yes, we believe in investing in people and youth.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): The floor is now open for debate.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Today I rise to express 'deef'—deep concerns about this NDP resolution, which supports the formation of a national Youth Climate Corps, moved today by the MLA for Lagimodière.

At face value, this proposal claims to create jobs for young Manitobans and address climate change, but I urge my colleagues to look beyond the surface. Beneath its idealistic promises lies a costly, duplicative and bureaucratic proposal with no clear plan for funding or measurable impact. This resolution risks becoming a burden on Manitobans and their wallets, while ignoring established, effective programs that already support our youth in meaningful, green careers.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, let's first address the corps proposal. The resolution calls for the federal government to create a national Youth Climate

Corps, arguing that climate change is an urgent crisis that requires immediate action. We all agree that climate change is an issue of great importance. However, instead of building on successful existing programs, the NDP want to create an entirely new Crown corporation. This would come at an enormous cost, one that Manitobans will ultimately pay without a clear sense of the outcomes we're supposed to expect.

The cost of similar initiatives has been staggering. Take, for example, the proposed US climate corps, which would require a massive \$8-billion budget to create 50,000 jobs. That's an average of \$160,000 per job. Are we truly prepared to see similar costs here in Canada?

Do we believe Manitobans want another expensive federal Crown corporation with such uncertain financial commitments?

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, I believe the answer is no. Manitobans cannot afford to foot the bill for yet another federally funded entity with vague objectives and an unclear path to success.

Manitobans are already feeling the weight of high taxes, particularly through the carbon tax, which disproportionately affects rural communities, families and low-income households. Adding a new Crown corporation to this equation will 'inetyvably' drive costs higher, making life even more unaffordable.

A majority of Canadians support action on climate, but not at the expense of everyday affordability. Manitobans should not be forced to choose between environmental action and their financial well-being.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, the federal NDP has yet to define what qualifies as, and I quote, climate job. Are we talking about wildfire fighting, trail maintenance, community cleanups or environmental education? Without clear definitions, this Youth Climate Corps lacks direction. How can we expect to inspire youth and create genuine green job opportunities without a solid vision? Instead of clarity, all we have is a vague promise to, and I quote, do something. Manitobans deserve specifics, not slogans.

Manitobans already have successful programs that provide youth with jobs in green industries, such as the Green Team program. Yet, instead of supporting this established initiative, this NDP government slashed its funding.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, these actions have consequences. Youth unemployment in Manitoba has climbed drastically from 9.9 per cent in June to 11.4 per cent in August, a direct result of these cuts.

If the NDP genuinely cared about youth employment and climate action, why would they underfund programs that have a proven track record? Why are they, along with their federal cousins, pushing for a costly new federal program, when provincial solutions are readily available?

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, the very successful Progressive Conservative government's Building Sustainable Communities program suffered similar treatment. Upon assuming office, the NDP government promptly cut the program budget by half, choosing instead to rebrand it with a new name.

These cuts directly impacted—directly impact Manitoba's youth and undermine the Province's green initiatives. Instead of focusing on this new proposal, why aren't we reinvesting in these existing programs? Programs that are already familiar to our communities and can be strengthened today without the need for a new federal Crown corporation.

Let's head west and let's look to our neighbours in British Columbia who established a Youth Climate Corps with provincial funding. By partnering with local organizations and working their own provincial framework, they were able to expand job opportunities without the creation of a federal bureaucracy. If the NDP is serious about green jobs and youth engagement, why haven't they pursued a similar approach here in Manitoba? Why are they relying solely on federal intervention when local solutions could achieve these goals more efficiently?

Another concerning aspect of this proposal is its potential to displace existing jobs, particularly in Manitoba's natural resource sector. These industries are vital to our economy, and any initiative that threatens jobs in these areas risks undermining our province's stability. The proposal fails to address these potential impacts, and as a result, it raises serious questions about the NDP's regard for the working people of Manitoba. Our province cannot afford to pit green jobs against resource sector jobs, especially when both sectors are essential to our future.

The NDP's failure to release a meaningful emissions reduction plan for Manitoba undermines the credibility of their climate promises. How can Manitoba trust a party that talks about climate

leadership, yet fails to deliver concrete goals and actions? Before proposing new programs, the NDP should establish clear emissions targets and outline a comprehensive plan for achieving them. Manitobans deserve transparency, not empty promises. The NDP must show they are committed to real progress, not merely symbolic gestures.

We all want to see Manitobans, particularly our youth, benefit from stable, well-paying jobs that contribute to sustainable futures. But creating a new Crown corporation isn't the way to accomplish this. Rather than expanding government bureaucracy, let's encourage private sector partnerships. Many companies in Manitoba are already taking environmental action as part of their corporate responsibility efforts. Instead of duplicating these efforts, let's support and expand them.

For example, Efficiency Manitoba, the Canada Service Corps and the Green Team are all existing programs that have successfully provided green job opportunities for youth. Reinvesting in these initiatives could immediately put young Manitobans at work while simultaneously advancing our climate goals. We must not forget that the simplest solutions are often the most effective.

*(11:30)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): Order. Order. Order. Order.

Like to remind all members that I'd like to hear the debate that's going on this morning.

The honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt).

Mr. Nesbitt: Polling data indicates moderate support among younger Canadians for the idea of a climate corps. But this support lacks a context of the financial burden it would place on taxpayers. Many may support the idea of climate action in principle, but are they prepared for the financial impact?

Let's remember that 40 per cent of federal Conservative voters in Manitoba and Saskatchewan are opposed to this idea. As public servants, we owe it to Manitobans to approach climate solutions with fiscal responsibility and to consider all voices, not just those who align with NDP ideology.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, this Youth Climate Corps proposal is a misguided attempt to address—an important issue. It risks raising taxes,

displacing jobs and duplicating existing programs that have served Manitobans well. If the NDP is truly committed to climate action, they should 'focunus' on strengthening and expanding our current green initiatives rather than creating costly new bureaucracies.

Let's be clear, climate change is a serious issue. But Manitobans deserve solutions that are responsible, sustainable and affordable. We need targeted, thoughtful policies that work for all Manitobans without adding to their tax burden or risking jobs in key industries.

This is a time for unity and practical action, not divisive partisan initiatives. Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, Manitobans deserve a government that prioritizes their well-being and respects their hard-earned dollars. Creating a national Youth Climate Corps may sound appealing but it is a costly distraction from the real work we need to do. If we want true climate action, let's start by restoring funding to programs that are already proven, supporting Manitoba's green workforce and building partnerships that don't rely on yet another federal Crown corporation.

Thank you.

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today because I cannot stand to listen to somebody telling me, a young person, how young people can be put to work.

Honourable Speaker, there were questions raised by the other side about whether or not Manitobans can afford to take climate action. Now they say that Manitobans can't afford to take climate action. Well, Manitobans could not afford a government that could not say the words climate change is real.

I am grateful for my colleague, the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko) for his willingness to champion this resolution. It's because of him that today we have a chance to shine the spotlight on young people and the potential that rests within our generation on the subject of climate change.

The Youth Climate Corps is a national movement, a national movement that is waiting for elected officials like us to acknowledge—to acknowledge the work that they are doing and the work that they are leading, from the grassroots up, to fight climate change.

And what is government here for? Government is here, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, to do the big things that we can't do alone. And one of those big things is tackling the climate crisis. Climate change is an issue of justice, of fairness and of equity. Those who have been—who have contributed the least to its causes—the young, the poor, the marginalized—are those who will suffer the most.

Young people in Manitoba have been raised to know no other context but climate change. All we know about nature has been deforestation, the threat to our lakes, the strain of our lungs, the destruction of national—or natural ecosystems and declining biodiversity. Though I know that these things, though devastating, they're—they come with privilege. In other places of the world, young people face even more extreme consequences of the climate crisis. It's a humanitarian issue, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

Young people across the world are being stripped of their homes by floods and turned into refugees. Young people across the world are watching their siblings become a shell of what they used to be, because their food supply disintegrated into thin air. Young people like us have no choice but to take action. And so when members opposite say that Manitobans can't afford to take climate action, they don't know what they're talking about, Honourable Speaker.

They have not had to be displaced by the weather, by natural forces. They have not had to have their food supply stripped of them. And they have not had to listen to the stories of those who are immunocompromised and what the weather and the changing tides in our atmosphere mean to them.

History gives us a precedent. Young people in every generation have historically stepped up to face the challenges of the world. Young people are known to put the work—put in the work to build a better future for those who come next. And young people find purpose in serving our communities. We're ready to be put to work.

During World War II, Canada's population was just over 11 million. Facing the rise of fascism and a global threat to democracy, more than 1 million Canadians signed up to defend our freedom. About 64 per cent of those Canadians who enlisted during the second World War were under the age of 21.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was young people who enlisted on the front lines in our

hospitals, care homes and vaccination super sites. It was young people creating space for mental health. It was young people calling everyone in for the greater good.

And in each of these occasions, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, young people weren't turned away when they wanted to help. So what makes the climate crisis any different?

For decades, experts have been sounding the alarms of climate change. While the current efforts are substantial, scientists, experts and many policy makers know that climate change solutions—the adaptation and mitigation efforts—they need to be expanded and implemented at a large scale. We need a massive undertaking to address the generational threat of climate change.

And that's why government is here. Like I said earlier, it exists to do the big things together that we can't do alone. And the Youth Climate Corps, once again, is just that. The Youth Climate Corps Program would fund thousands of climate mitigation and adaptation jobs, which would provide young Canadians with training and meaningful employment while building communities' resilience to the effects of climate change, creating a more sustainable economy and conserving and restoring natural ecosystems for future generations.

Polling among Canadian adults aged 18 to 35 who would be eligible for the program showed 84 per cent support or can accept a Youth Climate Corps Program; 65 per cent would consider enrolling for 2 years. And so, again, when members opposite say that this is isn't what Manitobans want, folks across the country are ready to hop on board.

Young people across Manitoba, across Canada and across the world are calling for justice, for fairness, for equity. We are marching, we are boycotting, we are shouting at the tops of our lungs for governments and policy makers to take meaningful action to address climate change.

Though, honourable Speaker, not everything needs to be a tug of war. We have an opportunity today for all members of this Legislature, regardless of your political stripes, to acknowledge climate change; to vote not with your bloc but with your conscience; to vote to allow young people to lead us down a path to a future where we too can live to your age; where we too can have things that we can still reap from the land; and where we too can play outside with our grandchildren.

So, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, I urge members of this House to put young people to work. We may not have been around for every step of the problem, but we are eager and ready to be part of the solution.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I thank the member from Lagimodière for bringing this resolution forward, the national Youth Climate Corps. And I also appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record in relation to this resolution.

I believe—or, I think the intention behind this initiative is commendable, but it also is aimed at engaging our youth in climate action. However, I think the effects and the results of such a program really demand some careful examination.

First and foremost, let's address the financial aspect that a Youth Climate Corps could impose on our communities. Establishing this program as a federally funded Crown Corporation is likely to incur significant costs. This raises the critical question: Who will foot the bill?

Without a clear funding plan, this only means 'imposing'—imposing higher taxes here on us in Manitoba, many of whom already struggle under an existing carbon tax. Is it fair to ask them to bear additional financial burdens for a program that lacks transparency and cost and deliverables?

* (11:40)

Moreover, the pressing issue of youth employment in Manitoba cannot be overlooked. The NDP's decision to cut funding for existing programs, such as the Green Teams, impacted youth employment negatively. Rather than creating new bureaucracy, why not reinvest in these proven programs that have already demonstrated their effectiveness in providing young people with valuable jobs and experience here in Manitoba?

Expanding local initiatives not only preserves existing jobs, but also fosters a sense of community, responsibility, without the unnecessary complexity of a federal program. The PC government established Efficiency Manitoba, that of—which focused on energy efficiency and programs that led to job creation and skill development by providing opportunities in the green sector. The PC government also delivered the made-in-Manitoba climate action plan. What is the NDP plan for this?

Additionally, the concept of what constitutes a climate job is ambiguous. Will roles in, let's say, wildfire fighting, trail maintenance or community beautification truly align with the goals of a Youth Climate Corps? If the primary objective is to equip young people with training and employment opportunities, wouldn't it be more pragmatic to build upon existing programs rather than duplicating efforts like that of the Green Team and some of the projects and initiatives under that? The reality is there's already numerous avenues that the government could go down.

Furthermore, we must consider the potential displacement of workers in vital sectors of Manitoba's economy. A Youth Climate Corps could inadvertently take jobs away from individuals in natural resource industries, further exasperating economic challenges, and it's crucial to prioritize not just the creation of new jobs, but also safeguarding those that already exist, particularly in sectors that are already under pressure.

In light of these considerations, the NDP's actions raise questions about their commitment to youth employment and financial accountability. If the government truly prioritizes green jobs, we must hold them accountable for the cuts to effective programs that have historically supported youth here in our province. Instead of expanding on government bureaucracy, let's encourage partnerships with the private sector, where many Canadian corporations are already investing in environmental initiatives. This would only stimulate job creation but also promote corporate responsibility toward climate goals.

Again, the vision of a national Youth Climate Corps may appear appealing on the surface. The financial implications, potential job displacement and lack of clarity regarding its objectives render it an impractical solution. And we must advocate for the expansion of existing programs and the local initiatives that have a proven track record, rather than venturing into uncharted territory with a costly and duplicative federal program.

Let's look a little deeper into the several aspects of establishing a national youth corps, and let's talk about the financial implications a little bit more. The burden of a national Youth Climate Corps is one of the most pressing concerns. The costs associated with similar programs, like the American Climate Corps, raise serious questions about the sustainability of funding. The average cost per job will be high, and it's essential to critically assess whether taxpayers can shoulder such expenses. Higher taxes

could disproportionately affect low- and middle-income families who are already grappling with rising living costs here in Manitoba.

It's crucial to have a transparent and detailed funding strategy before considering the launch of the new program, and we don't know what this looks like.

Let's look at the youth unemployment. The recent spikes in youth unemployment in Manitoba serve as a stark reminder of the challenges facing young people today. The cuts to existing programs, such as Green Team—these cuts, thanks to the NDP government, have already had consequences, leading to increased unemployment rates during the summer months.

Instead of creating a new initiative, reinvesting in these programs would provide immediate, tangible benefits to our young people here in Manitoba. These programs, like I said, have proven track records of providing training and making them more viable to youth employment.

Ambiguity of climate jobs—defining what qualifies as a climate job can be contentious. The vagueness surrounding this term can lead to inconsistencies in what types of employment are offered through a Youth Climate Corps. What does that look like? What are they teaching? What skills are going to be learned?

Will these roles in environment education or community beautification genuinely serve the overreach—the overarching goal of combatting climate change? We don't know. We don't know what that plan is. It's essential to clarify the intent and the nature of these roles to ensure that they will align with meaningful climate action, rather than offering generic positions that lack impact and open up for further consequence.

Job displacement concerns: let's talk about that. It's another concern and is the potential for job displacement within critical sectors of Manitoba's economy. As the Youth Climate Corps would seek to employ young people in roles traditionally held by existing workers, there's risk of exasperating unemployment in essential industries, like natural resources. This is 'particular' concerning in a province where many families, again, depend on these sectors for their livelihoods. Policies should focus on enhancing job security for all workers while providing opportunities for the youth.

Encouraging collaboration with the private sector is a promising alternative to establishing a federal program. Many corporations are already investing in environmental initiatives and sustainability projects. By leveraging these partnerships, we can facilitate

job creation with the need for additional government bureaucracy. This approach not only fosters innovation and responsibility, but also utilizes the resources and expertise of the private sector to tackle climate challenges effectively.

In summary, while the intention behind a national Youth Climate Corps is admirable, the potential financial strain, the risk of job displacement and the ambiguity of job definitions highlight the need for more considered approach. By focusing on existing initiatives and fostering private sector partnerships, we can create sustainable job opportunities for youth while maximizing the impact of our climate efforts. Engaging in dialogue about these issues will be crucial as we seek effective solutions for both our environment and our young people.

Finally, there is a need for greater accountability concerning the NDP's commitment to climate and action youth employment. A comprehensive emissions reduction plan is essential before—

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): Order.

The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Again, I'd also like to thank the member from Lagimodière for bringing forward this resolution today. Certainly gives us an opportunity, on this side of the House, to also add some facts to the resolution.

We know that, in fact, the concept of youth corps was first pushed and promoted by environmental advocacy groups. And more recently, of course, left-wing political parties have taken up the cause as a means to win electoral support from young voters. Shame on them for using this issue of climate change to try to woo young voters.

We know that climate change is real, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker. We know that we need to move forward with concrete action to ensure that my grandchildren and their children will have a climate, they'll have the water, they'll have the air to breathe and they'll have everything that we enjoy today.

* (11:50)

We need to work hard as elected officials to ensure that we do that. We know that jurisdictions like Alberta, Saskatchewan and BC does have a youth corps, but Alberta and Saskatchewan's NDP have been looking at this issue as well.

So, maybe, collectively, we can work together on, perhaps, a new resolution that will touch on other areas that need to be looked at like existing infrastructure, like we have right here in Manitoba. There's no doubt that the world is working towards a greener planet; however, here in Manitoba we need to look at more of a made-in-Manitoba plan for, not only our youth, but also all Manitobans to participate in.

And we know there are many opportunities to do that. There are, however, matters to consider and again, with a Youth Climate Corps, the key consideration in—*[interjection]* Recycle that. Make sure you recycle that, Minister of Justice (MLA Wiebe). We also have key considerations in the establishment—is the cost of such a program. And we know that climate change is not free. We need to invest in climate change. How it will be paid for and how many would it employ? We know that these are areas that we need to balance out.

We know that the NDP have never had a plan, so we need to ensure that we're holding them to account when it comes to climate change because we know that when they were in power for 17 years, there was absolutely nothing done.

Our lakes, rivers and our climate itself, GHG—every aspect of climate was affected by—under the NDP; particularly when they ran a bipole line 560 kilometres across western Manitoba where they could have run it straight down where Bipole I and II was. The emissions that are being emitted from that line alone are creating to our greenhouse gas emissions by tenfold. So, it's—shame on them. They think they have a clear path on climate change. They're wrong.

It should also be noted, too, that the cost of a Youth Climate Corps will be substantial and, at the same time, would definitely require very measurable deliverables and outcomes in a program—some that I've already discussed.

For example, we know our neighbours to the south—and certainly, we wish the candidates all the best today, in the US. There's a federal election, as we all know there, today, and certainly it will be an interesting watch tonight, and I'm sure a lot of us will be tuned in to the outcomes of the federal election down in the US.

We know that their proposed \$8 billion in expenditures on a climate corps for 50,000 jobs and about \$160,000 per job. Well, certainly, those are

definitely good-paying jobs. We also have to have a measured approach to the actual income and how we can make that \$8 billion up if it's \$5 billion in Manitoba or \$2 billion in Manitoba; we need to ensure that that money's accessible.

How do we raise that money? Well, partly, we need to grow the economy in a balanced way, too, to protect our environment. We understand that on this side of the House and certainly, we'll pass that information on to our colleagues on the government's benches, as well.

We know, here in Canada, it could be viewed that climate corps programs would lead to an increase in taxes to become a drag on the economy, slowing the economic growth. Again, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, there needs to be balance in any approach, whether it be on climate change or even just simply growing the economy. We know that there's effects on both sides, so we need to be very cognizant of those effects.

I guess, here in Manitoba, as the NDP—again, through this resolution, indicating its support for a continuing rise in carbon tax. We know that they floated a carbon tax in excess of—well in excess of even the federal levels that the Liberals are currently moving forward with now that are putting Manitobans in an incredible affordability concern.

Young families, single parents, you name it, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are hurting. And we know we need to do more for Manitobans to ensure that not only is the climate going to be protected, but certainly, look at things on a more affordability aspect, as well, as we move forward with climate change.

So, again, what defines climate jobs? And would—and what would come from that program, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker? How do we fight wildfires? Is that such—is that climate change? Well that's—we saw what happened in Jasper—holy mackerel, you know, that poor town and the folks around it burned down, essentially. I mean, three quarters of the town was gone due to a raging forest fire. We've seen them across Canada, we've seen them across North America and across the world.

We know that there are more and more floods and, again, hurricanes. We know that hurricanes are becoming more powerful, we know that category 5 hurricanes are now hitting our—the North American continent—almost weekly here in North America.

We know that, of course, it's noted that the NDP's objective to give young people training on job opportunities. Several programs already exist in Manitoba. My colleagues have touched on a few of them today, and we also did in question period, too, as well, such as the Green Team.

We know that Green Team is well established, we know that the infrastructure's in place, we know that communities understand the benefits that Green Team members do. We know that they're good jobs. They build folks towards a brighter future. They give them the opportunity to work within their communities.

And we also know that community leaders are very aware of the Green Team in particular, and they know that the benefits that their community get during—particularly during the summer, when the Green Team are very active.

But growing that particular initiative would be something that we would recommend. Certainly, I know the members opposite want to work together to ensure that Manitobans have a green—'green'—pardon me, green, clean economy going forward, and certainly on this side of the House, we were doing that and will continue to do that, but we'll certainly continue to hold the NDP government to account.

We also heard today when the member from Lagimodière was talking about Seal River. Seal River, I had the privilege of meeting with on a number of occasions, and we worked towards ensuring that when the federal government decided that they wanted to sign an MOU that we were at the table as a government, as a PC government. We were at the table supporting that resolution to ensure that Seal River had a voice, particularly in their community. *[interjection]*

And I know the member—I know the Minister of Environment is heckling me, but that's only because the member—the minister has done nothing, has done absolutely nothing but just simply copy the legislation and the MOU that the federal government had supplied, that we also supported.

Certainly we know that that MOU is going to go a long way to support the folks at Seal River, and not only support them, but also that balanced approach that they want in—up in their community. Of course they want to protect the environment, they want to protect wildlife, they want to protect forests and deforestation.

We understand that, and that's why we were in a hundred per cent support of the MOU signed by the federal government. We sat down at that table and actually signed on with them, and the Minister of Environment says that we didn't do anything.

So it's unfortunate that, you know, the NDP have a record of taking all the ideas and all of the legislation and all the policy that we have as Progressive Conservatives.

We appreciate that. Sometimes they put their own spin on the legislation, which totally destroys the legislation going forward because their ideology is focused on one thing and one thing only: themselves, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

We know that this side of the House is focused on ensuring that generations to come will have the environment and have a great province like we have, and we currently enjoy today. And we'll continue to push for more investments in our provincial parks to ensure that they're there for generations to come, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): Order.

Before we resume debate, I'd just like to recognize 30 grade 9 students from Dufferin Christian School in the constituency of the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone).

* * *

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I want to put a few words on about the resolution here.

When it comes to this resolution that the member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko) put forward, I have to say that it's just another bureaucracy that is going to be added to the programs—

The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle): Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member from Turtle Mountain will have 10 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

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