

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
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DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
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GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
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IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
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MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Mr. Speaker:** Are we ready to proceed with Bill 200? [*Agreed*]

So we'll now call Bill 200, the results-based budgeting, standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk, who has five minutes remaining.

#### **Bill 200—The Results-Based Budgeting Act**

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** I want to begin my comments by just offering my condolences to the family of Elijah Harper. I had the honour of serving with him for two years in this Chamber, from 1990—as you do—as did you, Mr. Speaker, and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), I believe—we served with him from September 1990 to, I guess, the fall of 1992, when he left to run federally.

Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to—as I know you have as well, to, Sir—to visit much of northern Manitoba with him. I—it was a great—as I said, he was a great man and a great leader, and it was indeed an honour for me to have known him. Again, I offer my condolences to his family.

Mr. Speaker, this is—I want to continue with my comments from last week—I gave two weeks ago. We had a chance to talk about the—this piece of legislation brought in by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), where she asks the government departments and agencies and the commissions to be

reviewed on a regular basis. Well, that's exactly what we're doing. We did it last week; it's called the Estimates.

Now, we do this every year. When I was first elected, we used to do Estimates for 240 hours. Then it was decided that—we lowered the hours to 100. We also have a chance to do a concurrence motion in this Chamber, which members, all members, participate in—well, all members participate in the Estimates process, and that is a chance for members of the Chamber—opposition members, government members—to review the operations of government, Mr. Speaker—exactly what this legislation, this bill, asks the government to do.

Mr. Speaker, I think—so what I'm suggesting is opposition members should, in fact, be do—should do their job and get on with Estimates, so we can continue on with this important review and to find efficiencies within government, to find a way for government to operate more effectively, provide a better service to Manitobans.

As I mentioned, when we first came to government, Mr. Speaker, there were 13 regional health authorities. Now we've lowered that down to five. There were 54 school divisions when we came in. We've lowered that down to 37. We've merged liquor and lotteries to cut red tape and to improve services. We've made a commitment to reduce the size of the civil service with three years through attrition—not layoffs as members opposite have suggested that they would do. And we have also announced that we're going to amalgamate municipal—municipalities under the—with less than a population of 1,000.

Now, I remember in 1990, running in—oh, excuse me, 1999—in that election, and the Filmon government—at the time, they promised to reduce government by 10 per cent. They promised to reduce all of the operations of government by 10 per cent, and that was an election promise they made. And part of that, they said they were going to cut the number of MLAs. Presumably, we were going to be—there was going to be six less of us in here, had Filmon government been re-elected, Mr. Speaker. So they believe in smaller government; they believe—the Conservatives—you know, if you—you know, their—one of their key tenets of their philosophy is to

believe in, you know, a smaller government, one would think.

And, you know, here we're bringing in less government. We're saying we're going to be reducing the amount of administration; we're going to be reducing the amount of school divisions; we're reducing the amount of health authorities; and we're reducing the amount of municipal government. You would think, Mr. Speaker, that they'd be applauding this move. You'd think they'd be supporting us, as one of the key foundations of, you know, conservative-conservatism around the world is less government.

**An Honourable Member:** Cut, cut, cut.

**Mr. Dewar:** Well, member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) is saying cut, cut, cut. Well, that's the second one, but it's interesting that they now—when they are in opposition, they don't seem to believe in less government, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that we're doing—as I said before—they just simply won't take yes for an answer.

But as I said, the government is currently reviewing all the expenditures as we do every year. It's called the Estimates process. I know Treasury Board looks at the different spending requests of government and they review that, Mr. Speaker; it's done annually. And as I said, if we could just get into the Estimates process and continue on with that, we could continue on with doing the fine work.

I know the member for Steinbach—he's always eager to participate in that level of debate. I don't know if he was engaged as he should be, Mr. Speaker. What I'm suggesting—an opportunity exists for all of us to get on with the fine work of reviewing government by getting into the Estimates process so we have a chance to quiz ministers, to make government more effective, to make government more efficient for all of Manitobans. Thank you.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Yes, and good morning. I know there are other members of the Legislature eager to speak to this bill, and we'll give them an opportunity to speak to it and then to vote on it later this morning, Mr. Speaker.

I want to echo the comments—the earlier comments made—the beginning comments by the member for Selkirk—nothing else—but the comments that he made about Mr. Harper. I had the opportunity to be here yesterday. It was a great number of Manitobans who were here, as well, to pay tribute to Elijah Harper. I understand he was a—quite a humble

man. He would have been humbled, I think, by the number of people who were lined up right down the hallway to honour his work in Manitoba.

Also because it's the first opportunity, I want to recognize and to make mention that we're thinking about our friends and neighbours in the United States who are dealing in Oklahoma City with a tragedy in terms of a tremendous tornado that struck Oklahoma City over the weekend, and we continue to remember our friends and neighbours there as well.

On to the debate, Mr. Speaker, of the—at the—that's germane this morning on the bill brought forward by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), and I want to applaud her. And I don't know why the members opposite would oppose—and I won't presume that they're going to oppose the bill or to speak it out this morning—but why they would oppose something that ensures accountability—that shows that you actually have results for things that you're bringing forward.

\* (10:10)

And the member for Selkirk tried to list off—and I know it was hard for him to find things that his government has done to try to find efficiencies because truly, Mr. Speaker, if the government had found efficiencies over the last 12 years, they wouldn't be raising the PST. I mean, what would be the need to—why would you have raise the PST if, in fact, the government had found any efficiencies in the last 10 to 12 years?

So good luck trying to explain to Manitobans and to try to sell Manitobans on the notion that you found an—a litany of efficiencies, and then you're increasing their taxes, not only last year by 200-and-some million dollars or a hundred—or \$200 million, but now this year by \$250 million or more by increasing the PST, Mr. Speaker. So, ultimately, you find out whether or not there're efficiencies by whether or not you have got to continue to ask people to pay more, and this government continues to ask people to pay more so they're not finding those efficiencies. But all we are asking for is that there be some sort of accountability, that you actually have results for what you're doing.

The member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), he can try to indicate that there are different things that he says they're doing, but he can never point to any results. Now I don't know where he was on Thursday and Friday when we started the Estimates process—and,

you know, he talks about the great need for the Estimates process and then he doesn't—isn't even aware that it's happening here in the Legislature. Maybe that's part of the problem, Mr. Speaker. This government is so unaware of the things that are actually happening within their own departments, and all they would really need to do is on a regular basis ensure that—because I suspect what they do in terms of budgeting is they sit down every year and they go, well, this is what the budget was last year. So let's add 3 or 4 or 5 per cent to it next year, and we'll just sort of continue on. So, well, you know, they sit down, whether it's sector budgeting or the individual ministers, and the ministers will say, well, you know, we spent this much last year, so let's just add 5 per cent and spend that much next year.

Well, that's certainly not how Manitobans budget, Mr. Speaker. I know that families in Manitoba, they don't sit down at the supper table or where they're discussing these things, and say, well, you know, we spent this much last year, so let's just add 5 or 6 per cent next year; they actually have to make decisions. And this isn't a government that wants to make decisions. It isn't a government that actually wants to review what it is that it's doing or have any sort of results-based budgeting, have any sort of accountability at the end of the day.

And we see that in many things where the government will say, well, we're going to have savings by doing this or amalgamating this. They talked about the RHA, and I've often heard the members talk about, well, you know, we used to have two RHAs in the city of Winnipeg and now we have one. But they don't talk about how the bureaucracy is bloated, Mr. Speaker, in that particular segment and how the costs have gone up without any sort of results for patients, and that's what it's about. Is it about how much money you're spending or is there—what kind of results you're getting, and it's the same thing within the budgeting process.

We have a Premier (Mr. Selinger) who at one point said, oh, don't worry, we have a five-year economic plan and not only are we on track with the five-year economic plan, we're actually ahead of schedule. Now, of course, he said that just before an election, Mr. Speaker, so that, of course, raised our suspicions. And Manitobans now know that not only was the government not on track on their five-year economic plan, we don't know where they are. We're—they're so far off track, we can't even find them.

And then Manitobans understand that what this government says on budget day has no reflection of what actually happens a year out after that budget is—come to fruition and we've seen where the expenditures have happened. You can look at this government's budgets going back many, many years, both under this leader and the previous leader, Mr. Speaker, and what you hear about on budget day, on that great day where there's all fanfare and people come and listen to the budget, has no reflection to what happens 365 days later when you actually find out—maybe a little bit more—when you actually find out the actual numbers. You find out that there were over expenditures—were almost right across government. You find out that those promised efficiencies didn't actually materialize that the member for Selkirk is trying to talk about.

And I suspect it's going to be exactly the same thing this time, Mr. Speaker. They'll talk about efficiencies and the promises of efficiencies, and then at the end of the day, further out we're going to find out none of those were true. In fact, we'll probably find out the opposite was true, that many of these things are costing more than they did before. But it's not a government that's interested in efficiencies.

It's a government that brought in the vote tax. It's determined to take the vote tax, 7 and a half thousand dollars or so for each individual MLA that they don't have to go out and try to raise for their own party because they don't want to find those efficiencies.

It's a government that hired the 58th MLA of the Legislature. She's not sitting here with us this morning because she's got a nice office somewhere down in St. James or that neck of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, is—because she was given exactly an MLA's pay for a job that apparently none of their backbenchers were qualified to do. And, you know, it's insulting enough for Manitobans that they went and they hired Bonnie Korzeniowski after she decided to retire, however that came about. But they asked her to take on this particular position, whenever that negotiation happened, but none of their backbenchers were apparently qualified. So it's insulting for Manitobans as they have to pay now for the 58th MLA, but it's twice as insulting for each one of their backbenchers who the Premier would have said to them, I'm sorry, you're not qualified, we're actually going to have to have somebody else to do that job. So I hope that they're standing up for that lack of efficiency in government as one more example.

So we continue to see, Mr. Speaker, how there are examples that this government is not interested in results. They bring forward budgets that have no reflection on what actually happens at the end of those budgets, and Manitobans understand that now because Manitobans are now paying the price. And that is ultimately one of the changes that have happened, because you can only do this for so and so long. You can only blow your budgets year after year for so and so long. You can only miss your targets for so and so long. You can only promise efficiencies while not being able to do those. You can have 192 spin doctors go out there and try to convince everybody that everything is okay, but eventually you got to pay the bills. Eventually you got to pay the bills, and the problem here is that it's not like a traditional family. Now you have the government who is doing the spending but it's Manitobans who are going to have to pay the bills, and they're going to pay the bills through a proposed increase in the PST.

There's still time for the government to change their mind. I understand there's 180 or so presenters lined up. They'll be more coming in every day. They'll want to get the government to change their minds. I hope that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), who spoke about efficiencies, is going to be at that committee so he can hear exactly how efficient Manitobans think this government is, because he might want to come back and reverse some of his comments that he gave in his speech earlier on, after he listens to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** I'll be there.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So, at the end of the day—and I'm glad to hear that the member for Selkirk says he's going to be there for every minute of those committees over the week or two, Mr. Speaker. And I would challenge him to go to his Premier (Mr. Selinger), you know. He might be looking for company; he might be looking for somebody go with, because you don't want to sit alone at these sort of things. So I would ask him to talk to the member for St. Boniface, the Premier, and ask him to come with him, because the member for Selkirk is now committed to being at that committee for each of the sittings.

But the Premier hasn't yet. The Premier still hasn't said, even though the Premier invited the Manitobans to come and do the presentation, the Premier hasn't said he's going to be there. So now

he's got a friend in the member for Selkirk; they can buddy up. I'll buy them pizza for a couple nights if they want to have supper, if they commit to going to the committee and listening to Manitobans, because those Manitobans—those Manitobans aren't going to say that this is a government that's been acting in an efficient manner, Mr. Speaker. I can guarantee you that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, it's great to stand up today to talk to Bill 200. I just want to put a couple of corrections on the record. I'm sure the member for Steinbach wouldn't want to mislead the people of Manitoba.

Talking about our communication staff, the member for Steinbach talks about how we have so many of them. I'm thinking that he wouldn't want to propose that we're going to cut people who are like the health officials who communicate in the pandemic times of the world, or when we're having health emergencies around the province, or the communicators who communicate things like when we have floods and natural disasters occurring. Those are the people who are the front-line workers who jump out in front of all of these emergencies and let Manitobans know, instead of being quiet and hushing and not having any communicators in the province and allowing people that possibly, actually, end up being sick or hurt or worse, you know, killed in these emergencies. I'm sure that the 1 per cent cut across the boards that his government is proposing wouldn't include cutting really important communicators like that, that actually keep the province and people really healthy.

You know, it's interesting that they talk about transparency in their budget when we do have a process called Estimates. And I came on Friday, and I was here with the member for Selkirk and—actually, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) was at it too. There was a—the Estimates process for Health. And I sat in and I listened in to the Estimates in Health, and the critic from Health was there, and he asked great questions and he was digging really deeply and I give him total credit. He had his notes and he had an Estimates book and he was looking through everything and he was asking the Minister from Health some great questions and she responded and for—you know, her department was there and they were very responsive to all the questions he was asking. And I think that that's the process we're talking about, Mr. Speaker.

\* (10:20)

We do have a process in place; it's Estimates, and it's the budget, and when we talk about creating another layer, another program of transparency, we're actually talking about creating something that the leader of their opposition is so fantastically against—red tape. He talks about how he eliminated 3,000 pages of red tape in his time in office. Well, this bill would actually create more red tape, we'd be taking another process and layering it in.

And then it also makes me wonder, Mr. Speaker, about how we would do this process, because according to the members opposite, they would cut 1 per cent across the board. Just lay off, you know, hundreds of people, nurses and civil servants included—thousands of civil servants. So now we're talking about creating another step, another layer of red tape, and, well, who are those people who are going to go this? Would it be the civil servants that they're going to lay off? Well, no, those people would be on the unemployment lines and they would actually not be working in our province and they wouldn't be spending at all the businesses that I know that members opposite support.

So we would now have 1 per cent across the board cut, adding another layer of red tape and having those same people that they're cutting, having to give them more work and adding this on. So it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that they don't value the work of the civil service. They're saying that we should cut them and then we should also add on way more work for them. I really don't think that that's a very good suggestion and I don't think that there's a need for another layer of red tape—we have a process in place.

You know, the Conservatives call for reckless cuts, you know, and more work on the backs of the civil servants if we do this. You know, it's kind of shameful that they actually are suggesting that our civil service isn't hard-working. I mean, those same folks that they're calling for the cuts that they want to load more work on top of, were the front-line workers during the flood of 2011, and, you know, they were out there doing all that. They were in the media; they were working around the clock. And this is the same civil service that, you know, they, on this side of the House, on the Conservative side of the House, want to cut and eliminate.

We also did something, Mr. Speaker, on our side of the House, that was very transparent, and we eliminated the donations from unions and

corporations. Now, I know, on their side they want to claim that—you know, that there they've got the better system in place. I think that we've seen from their federal counterparts that the system that they have in place isn't really working.

You look at these donations—I mean, the chief of staff just resigned because of a big scandal for donations. Is that clear and transparent? I don't think that on our side of the House we need to take any advice from the members opposite when it comes to being clear and transparent. How about having the—all of the board members for the EI for federal government making donations to the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, even though it's illegal to do so?

So we are supposed to take advice on clear and transparent when on—members opposite, clearly, in their party line, have no means of transparency and making things across the board where people can see them. All these little things are hidden and luckily we have people out there digging to find these wonderful little gems of \$90,000 given by a chief of staff and donations made illegally because of people who were appointed to these plum positions on boards. You know, do they suggest that the senators are transparent in—their senators? I would think not, Mr. Speaker—I'm hoping that they're not suggesting that.

I'd also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when you look at our side of the House, we represent Manitobans. You look at the diversity of our caucus, you look at the people in our caucus—they're everyday Manitobans, people who worked for a living beforehand and are not millionaires, people who do not have the resources to put in a—to completely fund their campaign. We are everyday Manitobans who work really hard. I would actually hazard to guess that if you looked at our side of the House there's probably not one millionaire amongst us, but I'm sure on the other side of the House they would have quite a few.

It's also kind of rich that the opposition speaks of transparency when in the '90s it was found by the Auditor General that there was two sets of books, Mr. Speaker: the set of books that was on top of the table that they showed to the public and then the real set that was tucked underneath the table where they hid from Manitobans what the true finances of the Province were. So, you know, they're talking about results and transparency; well, I think it's pretty rich that they would speak of that.

You want to talk about results, Mr. Speaker? In our budget, we have results. We have health care, we keep building on health care; we keep building on education, we're educating the youth to the future and the future of our province. You know what, it was interesting this morning, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) pointed out that one of our initiatives is the defibrillator program, where we're putting them in buildings. And, you know what, you want to talk about a result? A 61-year-old man is alive today because of what our government does. They—we put defibrillators in buildings and a 61-year-old man was in one of our buildings, in Booth college, had that defibrillator deployed and used on him, and the health-care professionals say he is alive today because of our budget.

Now, would that be the budget if the opposition was in place? I highly doubt that, Mr. Speaker. That budget would have had cuts across the board. One per cent, they're saying, \$52 million from health care. Well, how can you afford to put defibrillators in facilities when you're cutting \$52 million from health care? You surely can't. You'd be firing nurses; you'd be definitely not putting defibrillators in. So how is that results-based? How is that transparent? People in Manitoba would literally have died if the opposition was in power because of their reckless cuts, \$52 million in cuts—\$52 million. That would make sure that the defibrillator program wasn't in and that gentleman who's alive today wouldn't be here. That is a results-based and very transparent.

You want to talk about things that we've done for people, Mr. Speaker. Since 1999 the amount of people that—the amount of things that we've done in this province that have cut things like WRHAs—we went from 15; we're now down to five. Well, that's transparent.

We're showing people that we're taking that money that we're—that was at the top and we're putting it back into front-line services to make sure that people in our province are taken care of, Mr. Speaker.

We've also reduced the amount of school divisions, Mr. Speaker. We went from one-time high of just over 50 down to 37, I believe. We've also, in the last three years, we've invested in much in our infrastructure as they did in all of the nine years that they were in, in the '90s. And it's very transparent; it's in the budget. You can see where we spent the money.

We spend the money on all of the riding of the members opposite. They've all gotten something, and every time they stand up, they ask for more. I think the total's up to \$240 million now in requests for eight ridings of the members opposite in this session alone. So that's equivalent, Mr. Speaker, to 1 per cent of the PST. They're asking for 8 ridings to get 1 per cent of the PST.

And they're talking about transparent and making things transparent. Well, we are transparent. We're saying we're going to spend money in Brandon; we're going to do Victoria Avenue in Brandon. That's transparent, Mr. Speaker. We're spending money out in Morden and Winkler doing a personal care home. That's transparent. Fantastic for Manitobans, right? Those are all fantastic investments that we made.

Between 1991 and '93, the Tories cut Agriculture budget by \$25 million, and then they cut it again by \$12 million. And I'm wondering if the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) is on side now for the 127-year-old program that's in Brandon that the federal government just moved to Alberta, stripping Manitoba of yet more jobs and more things. That's their federal counterpart, taking stuff to Alberta.

And I'm wondering if the members for opposite are going to stand up for Manitobans in that, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about transparency; let's be transparent. Let's stand up and tell us that you're against your own party.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** That was a wonderful rant that we heard from the member from St. Norbert—very long on rhetoric; very, very short on facts. And when I hear him talking about the 1990s, I guess that's when he was still on training wheels on his three-wheeler. He would know everything that was happening then, I'm sure.

Bill 200: Manitobans will get a complete review—public review—of spending. And we know that this is necessary. We're not getting that today; we haven't been getting it now since 1999.

And just to give you an idea of how afraid this NDP government is of a complete review—they have 192 communicators to put together a rant like the member from St. Norbert just done. And it takes that many to make him sound half decent but not credible.



They also had 500 of their supporters were on the front step, on the front step of this very Legislature asking about the PST hike, asking the government members to come out and speak to them. And so, Mr. Speaker, as you'll recall we asked many of the members personally to come out and meet the very people that elected them. And they chose not to; they chose to run out the back door, all except for one. One stood by the curtains in his office and peaked around the curtains. And one day we'll have to get that photograph blown up a little so that a lot of other people in Manitoba can see that.

\*(10:30)

We talked about the—we heard the member from St. Norbert talk about the civil servants, and they do a great job. The civil servants in this province are the backbone of this government. Unfortunately, with no leadership, it's not the civil servants in a quandary of what they should do, what they can do, what the bounds of—that they—or boundaries they have. And this was probably made very, very clear in a bridge in St. Jean.

The bridge in St. Jean has been there for over a hundred years, Mr. Speaker. A very valuable link between the communities on each side of the Red River, it links the east side and west side and that's the—at the heart of that community. It was imploded in February, unnecessarily, but the decision was made—not by the minister; the minister didn't know what was going on. He had no control over his department, had no idea what was going on, and unless some of the members here can speak differently—but, accordingly, the minister said he didn't know. But if there's someone here that has a better answer and says that he does know and says that the minister is not telling the truth and isn't coming forward with the truth, we'd certainly like to hear that today.

But the minister said, no, I don't know that that's happening, Cliff. And then he said, I'll talk to my deputy. He got back to me within an hour and a half, two hours, and he said, I'm sorry, but my deputy doesn't know what's going on, are you sure you've got the right information? So I delivered the notice to his office. He said, we'll have to get to the bottom of this.

Well, about the time he got to the bottom of it, the bridge was imploded and was in the bottom of the river. And that decision, Mr. Speaker, was made by an assistant deputy minister, to implode a bridge—that was not necessary. But when we talk about

accountability—and that's what this bill talks about; it talks about accountability and where your money is being best spent and how best to do it and how best to supply a service.

Everyone knew that they were going to lift the bridge and take the spans off of that, repair the pier and put it back on. But the 192 spinners jumped into this and said, whoa, whoa, whoa, that's going to cost a huge amount. Unfortunately, the engineer said, well, I don't agree with them—I don't agree with them. This is how much goes to the piers, but the dike, the ring dike, is slipping into the river—it's slipping into the river. That's a \$20-million touch that the spin doctors tried to attach to the bridge. Wasn't necessary to attach it to the—attach it to the bridge. It has to be there for the safety of that community.

That's what infrastructure's about; that's what you have these flood payments for. But, unfortunately, the minister wasn't on the top of his game and, well, perhaps he was having trouble somewhere else, family visiting, whatever, but he didn't have time to pay attention to something that was south of Winnipeg.

We also talk about efficiencies, and I heard the member talk about how he's saved so many people on the highway and how the hospitals—and he had saved so many lives with the defibrillators and he had done that personally.

But I would like to ask this House today, do you feel that hallway medicine has been eliminated? Do you feel that the health service that you get today is far superior to what you were getting in 1999?

So would you say then, that we need to have—do we need to have a full review? Do we need to have a full review and complete transparency on where this money is being spent? Because what we have today is one third of the budget goes to health care, but a number of my colleagues don't believe that the system is better than it was in 1999.

And in 1999, Mr. Speaker, I have to reiterate, that the NDP government inherited—they inherited a set of books, the true set of books that we've never seen since, that had no deficit—no deficit, a balanced budget and a surplus. That's something we've never had since 1999.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the rate of our deficit has been climbing faster than the consumer index. We have doubled and tripled our provincial debt with record—with record—transfers from the federal government. And we don't have anything to show for

it. We have potholes bigger than cars, we have—I seen a picture today of the shoulders of Highway 13, and it looks like it's been used for a mud race with quads. I can't believe that a highway in Manitoba would look like this.

We need to have transparency in where our money is going. Manitoba families need a different approach than the NDP's tax and spend, and they're spending with no solutions. The increases and performance decreases must stop, that's what we have to have.

Our education system has fallen apart. It has fallen apart. Manitoba grade 8 students have fallen to last place among all Canadian provinces in science and in reading test scores and second last in math. Wow, that's an accomplishment. We have moved from the top of the list to the last. That's the bottom of the barrel feeders that we have from this spend in—spendDP government.

The NDP turned a surplus into a five oh—into a deficit of over \$500 million today, and they do that year over year over year.

The NDP have tried to blame the deficit on natural disasters, Mr. Speaker. Natural disasters like floods are a horrible, horrible thing. That's something that we can't predict and we can't predict the outcome. But what we can predict is that the federal government steps up with 90 per cent of the dollars. They step up with 90 per cent of the dollars to cover the cost of any flood and the aftermath of the flood. What they will not do is they will not be double charged like they have been in the past.

What has really happened and what has caused most of the devastation is the lack of planning in the last 12 years by this spendDP government. They had the opportunity in the Shoal lakes area, for example, and the minister that is responsible for EMO in 2001 put on the record that there was a disaster about to happen in the Shoal lakes and, sure enough, he was clairvoyant. It did happen in 2011. It took 10 years for it to happen, but his clairvoyancy paid off and it shows what did happen. That is his fault. He could've solved that problem with very, very few tax dollars; 2001 tax dollars were a lot cheaper than they are in 2011. But he expects the federal government to pay it all, and they do that by double billing them.

Over the last 12 years, the NDP has seen a record of loss of level—has seen record levels of revenues. Revenues from other taxes like the PST have climbed 150 per cent in the last 12 years. That's

another hundred—or 1.5 billion in additional revenues each year, and we have nothing to show for it. We have highways that are degrading. We have bridges—over a hundred bridges in the province of Manitoba that need to be replaced down to one lane and, in many places, no lanes.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have a bill exactly like this Bill 200. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise with the pleasure and the honour of speaking in this Chamber and I, too, want to digress for a moment to recognize a Manitoba—a genuine Manitoba hero and a great Canadian who lie—who lay—who will be laid to rest on Thursday and who lied in state here at the Chamber yesterday. I had the honour of paying my condolences to Elijah Harper yesterday, and I also had the honour of spending some time with him, in fact, the day that he quit this Chamber, when he—when I talked to him and asked—we had a conversation and he said to me, just do one thing, Dave, never forget the Aboriginal people. And I'd like to think and hope that all of us in this House will carry that sentiment forward in the spirit of that very humble and decent man who we had the pleasure of, many of us, sitting with and spending time with.

I'd also like to welcome the students that are here today to hear the debate and to—for you to recognize that this is a Chamber where we fight with words, and we get temperamental at times, but we do fight with words. And that's one of the marvellous things about our democracy, that we don't—it doesn't lead us to violent incidents; it's done with words. And we have differing opinions—of which you'll hear one today—we have differing opinions, but at the end of the day, there's a certain respect that's afforded to this institution and to each other because of what we have, which is a democracy. I'm thankful for that.

\* (10:40)

It is an interesting debate we're having about the budget and about accountability. I seem to recognize a consistency amongst members opposite. We had 10 balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. We had 10 balanced budgets, and every single one of them, the members opposite voted against.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a budget that's—we're balancing providing front-line services to people while trying to get us back into a balance situation in several years, and members opposite come back with what I call their one-trick pony.

They come back with a one-trick pony. They come back with a solution that the only thing that'll make anything better in the world is if they cut taxes, even though those taxes amount to reckless cuts on the backs of citizens.

The last time we saw that kind of regime in Manitoba, when members opposite said we're going to cut indiscriminately, we saw a thousand nurses in Manitoba fired. A thousand nurses were fired by that government, Mr. Speaker. We saw teachers laid off by the hundreds. We heard today the members opposite say we have the worst school system in the country. I disagree, and I don't think the students should accept that and I don't think we should accept that. But if members opposite had the chance to control the budget, they would cut more teachers, more services out of school system, more out of the health-care system like they did during the 10 mean, lean Tory years that we saw in Manitoba. You know—

**An Honourable Member:** Eleven.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Oh, the 11 years.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was here. I saw what happened. I did hundred hours-plus of those Estimates. They wouldn't even tell us how many hospital beds they had in each hospital. That's how much they hid away that information. Nothing was put on the Net. We didn't know how many people died in the system. We didn't know how many people were hurt in the system. There was no system of accountability in health care where you could actually go to an agency to complain or to have a right wronged. They wouldn't even give us the information. We've put it online. They raise every day the information and we deal with it.

But I want to get to the fundamental of members opposite, who in their one-trick-pony approach—by the way, they had two sets of books. We were—put in place recommendations of the auditor to have one set of books where all of the information was public.

But members opposite stand up each day and they criticize our capital projects. We just heard the member talk about poor highways. How do you build highways—how do you build highways? You put concrete, you put asphalt, you put shoulders in, Mr. Speaker, but that costs money. That's infrastructure money. That's what we committed to do. One hundred per cent of the tax revenue that we get will go to infrastructure money. That's to build highways, to build schools, to build roads.

The member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) gets up and criticizes the hydro project where we built a dam, Mr. Speaker. Now, he talks about the dam and he makes the same damn mistakes on a regular basis. You—he takes the dam and he says you capitalize in one year and you're going to lose all that money in one year. You're losing millions and millions of dollars because you capitalize in one year. He doesn't realize that the output from that dam is going into the system that provides power that makes money that keeps our rates the lowest in the country.

And, you know, they distort it. They play around with it. The equivalent would be, well, if you were to build a hospital, the people that are in the hospital that—at that time would have to all pay. They'd have to pay a million dollars each to build a hospital, and then everyone else would get it for free. That's the ridiculous, foolish nature of the arguments the members opposite are making with respect to our capitalization project, and particular as it relates to hydro.

We have managed, through prudent—through export revenues, through prudent management of the hydro system to have the lowest electrical rates in North America—the lowest electrical rates in North America. We equalized the rates between urban and rural; that's fair. That's for—all Manitobans have the lowest rates. Where are they higher? Everywhere else. What's the difference? The way we've managed hydro. We are a hydro province, Mr. Speaker. We have the capacity to increase our hydro by several thousand megawatts. Manitobans know that hydro is our future. Not only will it keep our rates the lowest in the country, but it attracts business. It attracts opportunities.

Just recently, we had a high-tech company come here that's going to do an app and a digital media application. Now, Mr. Speaker, in digital media, of which there's over a thousand people working in this jurisdiction—in fact, in this jurisdiction there is a company that does the commercials for McDonald's in China. That's how sophisticated our digital media system is. Our companies do work right across the world.

Now, we recently had an app maker come here to do app and games, and members opposite, what did they do? They criticized it. They criticized it because we provided a grant, Mr. Speaker. Now, we have studied, and if members paid attention they would notice, that for every dollar—with every dollar invested in digital media, \$9 comes back; \$9 comes

back for every dollar invested. We have a thousand people in digital media, most of them young people. Do you know the last class in digital media from Red River was completely employed in Manitoba? That's progress. That's keeping young people here. That's keeping jobs here. It's by prudent management of those resources. If you want accountability, look at what jobs are created. Look who comes here.

You know, Mr. Speaker, members opposite who had two sets of books, members opposite who left a tremendous deficit in health care when we came in—that reminds me, '99, members opposite always talk about this side talking about the '90s, when most of their speeches are about '99. They still haven't got over the fact that we won in '99. Get over it. We won in '99; we won again in '93; we won again in '97; we won again in 2011. Now, I know members opposite, they can't—they're having trouble getting over that. They still talk about '99. They still talk about it.

But the facts remain that we've been able to win those seats, not because of luck but because of trying to reflect what Manitobans want us to do, trying to build a health care system that's better, making an education system that's better, having a Manitoba economy that's growing, the Manitoba GDP, the total economy has more than doubled since we've been in office; it's in the \$60-billion range. That's one of the reasons why Maclean's magazine called Manitoba the miracle province.

But to hear members opposite talk about the budget or accountability, you'd think they lived on another planet, sort of the planet, the—sort of the—Bizarro planet that's totally negative, that can only see one side, can only see a one-trick pony, that has no ability to adapt, that is lost in the past, that has leadership that's—it's actually going backwards in terms of progressive which is critical of everything and in favour of nothing. That's not leadership. That's not positive opposition.

That's just negativity and that's one of the reasons why over and over again Manitobans have said that they don't want that kind of leadership. They want the kind of leadership that reflects the goals and aspirations of Manitobans, that talks about a future. A future with jobs, a future where you know your kids and grandkids can stay here, a future where you have the best health care possible, a future where education allows you to grow and you'll be able to go in and out of the education system. That's what Manitobans look forward to. That's the accountability they ask for, and that's what we try to

deliver—this Legislature, every single day, despite members opposite and their improbability—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** I would like to start by offering my condolences to the family of Elijah Harper. Although I never met the man, from reading and listening, what I've heard the last few days, he was a very proud parliamentarian that did us justice in this province. So I'd just to like offer that to the family.

I would like to thank the member from Tuxedo for bringing Bill 200 forward, The Results-Based Budgeting Act. This bill requires the budget for all government programs, services, agency, boards and commissions, to be reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure that they are delivering the outcomes that the public needs. Once the review process is completed for a given program, the budget for the program will be re-established. The process is to be transparent with the finding and recommendations of the program review made public.

Result-based budgeting is something we all live with in our daily lives. Banks and credit card companies don't let people just continue to spend without results. The banks will soon cut you off. This present government continues to spend.

In reply to the member opposite in balancing the budget, he failed to also mention that, you know, when you take money from Hydro on a bill to balance a budget or you bring in a bill to, you know, to add on to the debt to balance the budget, that's not really balancing the budget.

\* (10:50)

In 2011, Mr. Speaker, every MLA across the way promised their constituents not to raise taxes. In every budget since, they have broken that promise. Since the 2000 election, the NDP have hiked taxes and user fees by over \$500 million per year. The 2013 broken-promises budget contains the biggest increase in 26 years with taxes up by \$227 million. Over the next four years, the NDP tax and user-fee hikes will cost Manitoba families over \$2 billion more. This is the largest tax increase in Manitoba since the days of the Pawley government. And what do we get for these tax increases? We get more and more spending. We get more and more spending, but we see no results from these spendings.

One of the comments I'd like to make is being the critic for child and youth opportunities, glancing at the budget, I noticed there was a decrease in funding for programs, but yet an increase in the cost of wages and benefits. How can this government take so much more money in the way of taxes and yet be continually cutting programs that are important to this province? I mean, our youth is our most important asset. I've said that several times before in my speeches. And I wish that this government would take a good look at what they're doing, because they're saddling the youth of this province with unheard of debt that they'll be paying—not only the youth, but their grandchildren will probably be still paying for this debt.

And this government continues not to do anything about it. They're increasing the budget, increasing costs, but not looking at where we're going with all the stuff that's happening. Instead of safer communities, Winnipeg has the—is the violent crime capital of Canada and Manitoba is the murder capital of Canada. There are a lot of things happening in our system where a person has to take a good look. We're spending money, but yet we're the child poverty capital. You know, continually, we're going from top of the hill to the bottom of the hill. Now, if the government is continually spending but yet our results are not coming out, there's something wrong with what they're doing. They really need to take a look at their budget, how they're spending money, why they're spending money and we need to get some results for it. Because anybody knows, any member here, if you're going to spend money and not get any results for it, won't be long before you'll be bankrupt. And that's exactly the road is—that this government is heading to.

And it's not just about being bankrupt; it's bankrupting its people. Our education system is hurting. Our poverty—kids are using the food banks to greater extents. There's a lot of things that are happening in this province that should not be happening if they would take a good look at their programs and get the programs running properly. It's not just about spending money; it's how you spend the money. That's the most important part here. Spending money. Anybody, any fool, can spend money, but to spend it properly, that is a problem that this government has. The NDP seem to simply need to face reality—that they really need to take a good look at every single program they have out there and be able to rate it. Like, it's fine to have programs, but we need to make sure those programs

are working. We just can't throw money away at the programs.

This—in this last budget, we saw record increases with the 1 per cent sales tax, but yet they don't seem to be able to justify the need for these increases. Yes, we need a better system for our poverty. We need a better system for our youth. But we need to have a system that works, not one that doesn't work that continually puts us down at the bottom of Canada. Like, we're facing eighth, ninth, 10th place in a lot of different categories, which is unfortunate for the people of this province. Income tax revenues are up over \$1.3 billion since Budget 2000. Like, there's all kinds of things that are happening, but we continually see the debt growing. The debt keeps rising, rising and rising, and the deficit is something that should be at a zero, not continually at over a half a million or half a billion or a billion dollars, because the people of this province just can't afford that.

Federal transfer payments are at records. Our interest rate has been one of the lowest interest rates around, and now is the time; when government is working properly, they should be eliminating these problems. When a business has record years they usually put money in the bank or add more services, make sure that their businesses are running better—this government is not. It can't be working better because we keep dropping them. Mining has gone from No. 1 to No. 9 in this province. Like I said, there's a lot of stuff that's happening in this government that's just not working, and this government needs to take a good look at what it's doing.

The NDP is out of control with their spending, and I would ask every member opposite to think hard about this and look at what the different programs that they have, to make sure that these programs are working fine. We need programs to support our people, the lower income people, but you can't just throw money at programs—that doesn't work. You've got to make sure that these programs are working.

So I would ask every member here to make sure that they would not talk this motion out, that they would—this bill out, that they would continue to make sure that this gets put through.

I know that there's other members here that are wanting to speak to this, so I will thank the—Mr. Speaker and I will sit down. Thank you.

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** It is great to be up speaking to a budget called results-based budgeting,

because I think that absolutely sums up what we've been doing for the last—I don't know, how—what year did we get in—1999, was it? Ever since 1999, I think that's exactly what we've been doing—results-based budgeting. And we've seen the effects and the results of those things in so many different ways, and I'm afraid I'm probably not going to have nearly enough time, Mr. Speaker, to get to them. So I think you've covered the fact that already we do all these things in Estimates, and everything is, in fact, explored and examined very carefully all of the time. I'd like to just mention a couple of things with regard to affordability. For example, a two-earner family of five earning \$75,000 is now actually No. 1 in Canada for affordability. It mystifies that me that we never hear those stats coming out, but there you go.

As the member from Kildonan mentioned, we have the lowest electrical costs in—probably in North America, certainly in Canada, without doubt. But some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that I think of inefficiency, fall into a different category. Things like early-childhood education, and spending the money in research and in data collection and in evaluation in those. Those will lead to the true efficiencies that we need to see as our children are reached, even prenatally, and we're helping healthy babies be born, and that is absolutely a fact with some of the things that we're doing with Healthy Baby—with our Healthy Baby programs. And working with children early on in programs like PAX and having child-care centres the—in every school, and the numbers of children in classroom sizes for grade 3 and under—all of those things speak to the kinds of efficiencies that I want to see, and they're the kinds of efficiencies you will not see with a 1 per cent cut across the board, as well as a lack of the 1 per cent increase with regard to infrastructure spending.

I thought it was kind of interesting, the member mentioning about we didn't have any idea what we were going to do with this money. I mean, they've spent it in the first day they were in here. At least half of that 1 per cent increase in the PST, Mr. Speaker, was spent in the first question period, if we had done all of those things. And since then I think they've upped it to the full 1 per cent, would go right into those—just eight—was I—am I correct? Eight ridings. So it's certainly not hard to find when it comes to infrastructure. We want to put that money into the efficiency of flood mitigation. That is—

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution we have before us this morning is titled "United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development", sponsored by the honourable member for St. Norbert.

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 9—United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight),

WHEREAS Manitoba is a multicultural mosaic first inhabited by our Aboriginal people and today comprised of people of diverse international ethnicities; and,

WHEREAS since 1999, Manitoba has welcomed over 100,000 new immigrants with more than 25,000 choosing to live in rural Manitoba; and,

WHEREAS there are 150 countries represented, 148 different languages spoken and over 300 ethnocultural community organizations across Manitoba; and,

WHEREAS Manitoba—Manitobans value and are accepting of ethnic diversity, as evidenced by multicultural organizations and their inclusive, year-round festivals and events; and,

WHEREAS this day as recognized by the United Nations is dedicated to deepening our understanding and appreciation for cultural multiplicity; and,

WHEREAS in agreement with UNESCO, Manitobans recognize the—that respect for cultural diversity and universal programs and protection of human rights, including the right to development, are mutually supportive; and,

WHEREAS this day is an opportunity for stakeholders to promote cultural diversity in all its forms, heritage, creative industries, goods and services, and work towards prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexistence.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the United Nations and every cultural organization across this great province for promoting inclusion and acceptance; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we recommit to welcoming international newcomers to Manitoba and recognize the special talents we are all fortunate to share; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all Manitobans of the Legislative Assembly—sorry, all members of the Legislative Assembly in Manitoba pay respect to the first people—the First Nations and Inuit—and all ethnic communities while 'communiting'—continuing to work together towards greater acceptance of social diversity and supporting related opportunities for development.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for St. Norbert and seconded by the honourable member for Burrows—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

And I like to ask the House if there's leave to consider the resolution as printed in the—today's proceedings. [Agreed]

*WHEREAS Manitoba is a multicultural mosaic that was first inhabited by Aboriginal peoples and comprised today of people of diverse international ethnicities; and*

*WHEREAS since 1999, Manitoba has welcomed over 125,000 new immigrants, with more than 25,000 choosing to live in rural Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans have come here from 150 countries, speak 148 different languages and have established over 300 different ethnocultural community organizations across the province; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans value and celebrate ethnic diversity as evidenced by multicultural organizations and their inclusive year round festivals and events; and*

*WHEREAS World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, as recognized by the United Nations, is dedicated to deepening our understanding of and appreciation for cultural multiplicity; and*

*WHEREAS in agreement with UNESCO, Manitobans recognize that respect for cultural diversity and universal promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, are mutually supportive; and*

*WHEREAS this day is an opportunity for stakeholders to promote cultural diversity in all its*

*forms including heritage and creative industries which offer goods and services that support prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexistence.*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the United Nations and every cultural organization across this great province for promoting inclusion and acceptance; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommit to welcoming international newcomers to Manitoba and recognize the special talents we are all fortunate to share; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba pay respect to the first people—the First Nations and Inuit—and all ethnic communities while continuing to work towards greater acceptance of social diversity and be urged to support related opportunities for development.*

**Mr. Gaudreau:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up today and talk about multiculturalism in Manitoba.

This past weekend, actually, I was at The Forks, even though it was pouring rain on Sunday, and went to the Asian Heritage Month put on underneath the tent at The Forks. It was pouring rain but we all managed to squeeze in underneath the tent and take in some great entertainment from different cultural backgrounds. They had some wonderful dancers and some martial arts performers there. It was just fantastic.

So I think that our whole province has benefited so much by people coming from all over the world, and the perspective that is brought by immigrants to our country is invaluable. I mean, Mr. Speaker, if you look at it, we're all immigrants to this country, some of us just a couple of generations removed from coming here, and I think that it's so fantastic that our government is supportive and that we're moving forward and supporting multiculturalism in our province as a policy.

Manitoba's commitment for growth in immigration is second to none. Our program has been recognized across the country as one of the best nominee programs, actually, and it was the pilot project that was brought in in '96. And I'll give the members opposite credit for bringing that in—was a fantastic program that was brought in. Unfortunately, last year, we saw some of it being stripped away but,

you know, we're still working very hard to reaffirm our—that we want growth in our province and we want people to be coming to Manitoba.

You know, Manitoba is one of the places that, in this country where it's one of the most welcoming. I talk to people of all different backgrounds and they all say the same thing, that they just feel so at home when they come here. It—even through we're a city of 700,000 here in Winnipeg, it's—it feels like a small town, and people really get to know one another and the communities really seem to blend.

In my area there's people of every background and, you know, they have such fantastic events that go on that get other people to be aware of what their culture is about. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, if this didn't happen in Manitoba, I think we'd all be, you know, less rich for this. It's such an important thing in our province and it really speaks to who we are as Manitobans. We're so diverse.

In February we saw the skills development conference that was hosted by the Province as part of our commitment for training thousands and thousands more workers in our province, and one of the four pillars included in this program that we're rolling out was immigration. You know, the things that we do to support immigration in this province are many, but one of the ones that's key to my heart, coming from a labour background and lots of safety involved in the job that I used to do before I was elected to this Chamber, is the health and safety rules.

And in Manitoba we've actually seen the health and safety rules being translated into different languages because communities like Brandon have a lot of people coming from other countries to work there, and they're the backbone of the community and they really—they need some supports. You know, when you come here and you first come and you're not quite sure of the language and all that, we've worked hard to translate a lot of it into different languages and also make universal signs so people can understand. You know, if there's a safety concern, we don't want anybody being hurt.

So there's a lot of things that we do in Manitoba that make people feel welcome here, and, you know, I've attended a lot of the ceremonies and—I've attended actually quite a few of the new swearing-in ceremonies; 4,500 people, approximately, are sworn in every year in Manitoba, and I've tried to attend every one of the ceremonies here in the building in

room 200, and it's one of my favourite things to do, Mr. Speaker, since I've been elected.

When I attended my first one, the look on the people's face when they—they're so proud and so happy to become a Manitoban, become a citizen here, and you can just see that pride coming from them. And the fact that we're also welcoming and they want to become part of our communities, it's just—it's one of my favourite moments when you sit in there and you look at their faces, and you look at the families and you think how—what a fantastic journey they made. I mean I give them so much credit. I mean I've travelled a little bit in my life but nothing like that. Like I can't imagine uprooting your family and coming, you know, to a totally foreign environment and moving everything that you have and, you know, the risk involved.

But I think it's great that we all welcome them here, and I give them so much respect for coming here and taking that leap and that risk, and I'm just hopeful that they keep doing that because they're the reason why our economy and our province is doing so well. And, you know, it makes you wonder if people would've stopped immigrating years and years ago, what our province would look like. It would be so boring and bleak, and, you know, we have such a background here of different people; it's just amazing. I mean 148 different languages being spoke in our province at any given time.

I have a school in my area, La Barriere Crossings School, and they've taken on—what they've done is they've taken a flag for each one of the children in this school. They've put up a flag of their home country, and right now there's—I believe there's 48 flags the last time I was there a couple weeks ago, and they have them hung up in the—they have a big open area in there, and it's to represent the countries where these children have come from.

I think that's just amazing that in the one school, and it's only a school of I think it's 136 students—140 students is a very small school, but it has that many different countries and backgrounds in the one school. So I think it's just fantastic, and they celebrate all the time. They celebrate from Festival du Voyageur and then they do all the celebrations for all the different countries, and they try to make it a big mosaic of all the different backgrounds, and it's just—it's a beautiful place to be when you go in there and you see all those flags, and then the children still have part of their original, you know, their history and their heritage, and they can bring that to school.



And they're not at all afraid to talk about where they're from and bring it out, and they have days where they bring in, you know, traditional dishes from their original homelands and countries, and all the other kids get to share in that.

I remember when my son was in school at Bonnycastle School in my area. You know, the diversity that was in the school was just fantastic, and, you know, it was just a wonderful thing to see all these kids playing on the playground, and, you know, they don't realize all of the backgrounds where people came from. And some of them came from—as refugees from very, you know, hard places in the world, very war-torn countries, and then they get to come here and play on the playgrounds and attend our wonderful schools and become part of our community and part of who we are as Manitobans.

\* (11:10)

We have a wonderful program that just was started, I believe, last year as a Manitoba START program, and it's fully funded by the Province, and this is another way that we welcome people here. It's to serve the immigrants who are settling in Winnipeg as permanent residents and it gives them a little bit of a, you know, into the labour market and can set them up with some of their language training and to be, you know, to become citizens here, and I think it's fantastic that our government supports all of this.

You know, the opposition, Mr. Speaker, was speaking earlier about results in the last debate we were having, and I think that one of the things that shows Manitoban as one of the more welcoming places in the country is our results. The study shows that 85 per cent of provincial nominees were working in less than three months in Manitoba and 76 per cent of nominees were homeowners within five years. If that's not a fantastic result, I don't know what is. Eighty per cent, roughly, of people are working right away, and then within three years they're owning homes. That's such a—it's a fantastic story for people who are moving their whole lives and coming over here, and within a few years of being here in Manitoba they end up being homeowners and right into our whole society. And also the unemployment rate in Manitoba is one of the lowest in the country for immigrant population.

So I think that those are the results, and the programs that we provide to those people. Yes, they do have a cost, Mr. Speaker, and I think that it's fantastic that our government supports that and that we're not looking at doing cuts across the board

because cuts across the board would affect programs exactly like these. It would affect the programs that help our newest people coming to this province to, you know, learn our systems and to get the supports that they need, and I think that it would be really sad if we stopped doing that. I mean, just think of the loss of the diversity we would have if people stopped coming here. It would have a devastating impact on our economy, but more as a feeling for our province.

People here love all of the different backgrounds and we all come together and we celebrate things like Folklorama. Last year the Minister for Justice and I were going to a lot of the venues and we kept, you know, we were going back and forth on all the ones that we went to, and I think—I believe I ended up at 13 different Folklorama pavilions during that time and I believe the minister ended up at a few more than me. And it's just such a fantastic event to take in a little piece of every culture around the world, and this year I intend on going to more and, hopefully, I can get through to more pavilions and take in even more culture around the world.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a great resolution—or a private member's resolution and I hope the members opposite support it.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Yes, thank you very much and—for this opportunity to speak to this resolution.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I read the resolution carefully. There is certainly much within the resolution that is worth supporting. There are some omissions, as is the case with this particular resolution, and fortunately for us we have many days ahead to be able to speak to this resolution and other resolutions. I know we've had—already recalled some resolutions for debate a second time, that might very well happen with this one. I'm sure we can improve upon it; there's a couple of things, as I mentioned, that are missing.

I also know that many members are going to want to speak about the multiculturalism within their own communities, Mr. Speaker, and so, fortunately, we'll have a good amount of time to do that and, perhaps, with a couple of changes this resolution will be one that will be passed before the end of this session.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I thought was—should have been highlighted perhaps a little bit more—and he—the member highlighted it in this speech and so I was happy to hear that, although it

could have formed part of the resolution, was the importance of the Provincial Nominee Program because, ultimately, that is the engine that is driven.

So much of the immigration that we have here in the province of Manitoba—I want to commend, of course, the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), who was a great part of that in getting the Provincial Nominee Program signed along with former members of this House Rosemary Vodrey and Harold Gilleshammer. Both of them had a part in their respective ministries at the time of getting that agreement signed, and it wasn't an easy thing. The federal Liberal government at the time was not particularly interested in ceding some of the responsibilities and powers to immigration that they held nationally to the provincial government. And yet Manitoba, under the stewardship of the Filmon government at the time, believed very strongly that part of the success that we would have as a province would be through increased immigration, and not only increasing the numbers, but ensuring that those who were coming to Manitoba would be those that were in high-demand jobs and—to ensure not only that our own economy would strengthen, but that they would have the opportunity to participate in that economy.

And so, that was a great part of the discussion around the Provincial Nominee Program—is how can we ensure that we have more say in who might be coming to Manitoba, but also to ensure that they would find success here that they would have the kind of economic success that often leads to social success within the communities. And I think that that's been a great success, but it wasn't without its struggle. And again, it's certainly important to commend the ministers of the day who ensured that they fought that out over a number of years with the federal government. Ultimately, it became a model, Mr. Speaker. It became a model across Canada to ensure that this would be seen at the provincial levels to be something that is important so that individual provincial provinces could have a say in terms of having their new Canadians come to their province to meet the high-demand areas within their province and often the reunification that came after that.

And so, that seems to be missing from this resolution, and it's important to have in there in the sense that people understand why it is that we've been successful as Manitobans in terms of getting people to come to the province and how we'll be successful in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I share a similar experience with the member from St. Norbert. He mentioned, within one of his local schools, about the number of flags that appear within their school. In the elementary school that my son attends, within their gymnasium, they also have flags that go around the gymnasium representing the various countries that the individual students have come from. And it's quite astonishing to look at the flags that wrap around the gym, and it's a testament to not only how Manitoba has changed, but certainly the region that I represent has changed significantly.

We have a great population of Filipinos who've come to Manitoba, of course, but also to the city of Steinbach and to the region that surrounds the city of Steinbach. The Minister for Culture will know that. She has visited with me with the Filipino community there several times, Mr. Speaker, and I've got great Filipino friends in the city of Steinbach. I was pleased to have a Filipino co-chair of my campaign, actually, in the last election, and I don't know that 15 years ago people who lived in Steinbach would have ever believed that to be the case. But we had great Filipino volunteers that came to work on my campaign, and they just embraced democracy because they expressed to me how different the elections were in their home country, in the Philippines, compared to how we have them in Manitoba. And they just wanted to be a part of it and they were so excited to be able to be a part of the election process, and they added a great vitality to our campaign and we really enjoyed having them a part of that. And I enjoy the friendships that we've built up over the last number of years and my wife, Kim, and I particularly appreciated, along with my son Malachi now, who has grown a great appreciation for the Filipino people within our community. He particularly enjoys the karaoke events that we get to attend because he loves to sing, and I don't have the same sort of love, but I get wrapped into it sometimes too and I enjoy that as well. It's great fun. Although, I make sure all of my Filipino friends turn off their videophones first so there's no evidence of it ever to appear on YouTube, I hope.

But it speaks, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that we do have a great multicultural province and that we do have great diversity within the province. That doesn't mean there aren't challenges. Certainly, many of my friends who have come from other countries express frustration sometimes that the trade that they learned in the country that is their birth country that they

can't practise that trade here in the province of Manitoba. And I understand that there are different qualification issues that have to be addressed for the different trades or the different professional occupations, but sometimes it seems like there are unnecessary barriers that are placed in the way of individuals who are often highly skilled, but doing jobs that are quite outside of their skill set.

And that is something I think that's probably missing in terms of this resolution—how we can ensure the government does a better job of making those individuals who have great skills and maybe just need a bit of a bridge—they need a bit of a bridge between what they learned in their birth countries to this particular province and the trades that are or the skills that are happening here. Often, it doesn't mean having to be completely re-educated, Mr. Speaker, going through the process right from ground zero. Often, it just needs a bit of an upgrade or there's terminology issues. And that doesn't seem to be happening strongly enough.

\* (11:20)

And so there is great frustration among our new Canadians that often they feel that they are underemployed, or often they feel that they—what they were told when they were coming to Manitoba doesn't exactly live up to what happens, that they believed that they could do something before they came to the province of Manitoba and then they get here and they find out, Mr. Speaker, that they aren't able to practice that particular occupation. And so that's a great source of frustration for them as well.

So there are certainly many things to be applauded in this resolution that the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) has brought forward, but there are some omissions. There are omissions in terms of the importance of the Provincial Nominee Program that was started in the mid-1990s, and the challenge of that was to get those powers from the federal government and the importance of ensuring that we have the ability for individuals who are coming to Manitoba to be able to fully use the skills that they have, to ensure that those who are coming to Manitoba know what they will or won't be able to do once they come here so there aren't frustrations. Because, certainly, the last thing we want to do is to welcome somebody here, have them believe that something is going to be the case and then they grow frustrated and they don't stay, either don't stay in the country or they don't stay in the province. And we do know that we do lose many new Canadians to other

provinces, and I can only guess that some of that would be frustrations in terms of the qualification issues because other provinces have done different things to address those issues.

So we will have a number of weeks yet to debate this resolution. While there are a couple of omissions, I think that would be—that should be inserted into the resolution, perhaps the member for St. Norbert can have discussions with the respective critics on our side to have some friendly amendments so that the next time this resolution comes up for debate, or if comes up several times for debate, that we could strengthen the resolution, that it could be an accurate depiction, both the successes and sometimes the challenges that new Canadians face.

So with those few words I look forward in the days and weeks ahead to having discussions with the member for St. Norbert and our respective critics to strengthen this resolution and perhaps see it come to fruition. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** I thank my colleague for introducing this private member's resolution, The United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

Mr. Speaker, it's always a great day when we are able to speak about cultural diversity and work for and have dialogue on this topic. I also thank the member from Steinbach for the words that he had put into this resolution. I—as mentioned by the member from Steinbach, we've been together several times attending events, multicultural events in Steinbach. I also had the pleasure on a few occasions to be with the member from Spruce Woods and also the member from Riding Mountain attending multicultural day celebrations in Souris. I also had the delight of being in several other places in Manitoba like Brandon, Neepawa, Altona, Winkler, Morden were—also The Pas—were—there were celebrations and always fun and joyous to be seeing so many new Canadians or new immigrants integrating and socializing with members of the mainstream society and having fun and having good conversation and I'm sure also talking about or discussing about issues of the day that would affect their communities and would help develop their communities.

I also thank this opportunity to be able to speak in favour of this private member's resolution as it will allow me to express my gratitude for the situation I find myself in and that of my family and

of many, many other immigrants—new immigrants then, and now citizens of this beautiful country of Canada and living in the province of Manitoba. I am sure I speak for many of these, if not all of them, that we are grateful and we are delighted to be in Canada, especially to be in Manitoba, a province which fosters economic, social and civic integration of newcomers to Manitoba. We are grateful and proud and very happy that we were welcomed in Manitoba. We were allowed to practise our faith here. We were allowed to express our not just artistic sentiments but also political sentiments in this province. And we are also grateful that hard work is recognized in this province.

I can safely say that I speak for people who are like me, who are first-generation immigrants and thankfully now, Canadian citizens. I can very well relate to many of them, if not all of them, that we came here not because we wanted to—really, really wanted to. Some of us came here because of political reasons. Some of us tried to escape from a political regime in our respective countries which did not value or did not practise democracy as it ought to be practised. Some of us came from regimes that did not value diversity, individual liberty and human rights. And so we're very thankful to be in Manitoba, and we are all excited and we're all determined to make a mark and contribute and put in our—with our best in this province, the best of our abilities, the best of our intentions, and also share and work hard to strive for peace and seek economic success for this province.

With my stint at this House, I'm very thankful for—and also with the ministry that has been entrusted to me—I'm very delighted and very thankful whenever citizenship day ceremony comes. I love so many events happening in the province, initiated by our department, but one particular event or celebration that is very dear to me and is now under the leadership and guidance of the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism, being ably led by my colleague, the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick), is the citizenship ceremony.

From the very start that I attended a citizenship ceremony, and that was in 1986, to the recent citizenship ceremony which was about two or three weeks ago, there is never a chance or there was never an opportunity that it would be an ordinary celebration for me. I always consider it a very, very special ceremony and albeit a very emotional one.

\* (11:30)

I remember my very first citizenship ceremony. I was—we were all very happy, my husband and my—I think, three children then, who were all very young. We were so excited we will be ushered in as new Canadians, and we were thinking of so many things to be done as new Canadians that all the more we will work hard to make sure our presence in Manitoba is worthwhile, that we could contribute to our communities, in our church and be a help to our friends.

So we were all excited, and never did I imagine that it would be a very emotional ceremony for me. When we were asked to say our oath of allegiance, every word in that oath of allegiance penetrated my heart and my mind, and I uttered those words with most sincerity and with all my emotion. And when it came to singing of the Canadian anthem, I memorized the lyrics and of course practised the music—I thought it's beautiful music—but one or two sentences into the hymn I couldn't sing any further. My eyes were welling with tears, because I—well, I was very happy to be a new Canadian.

I suddenly remembered people back home. Here I am, now a new Canadian and enjoying the privilege of being in Canada and all the opportunities that are before us and all the—and we know they are bright opportunities, yet I thought of people back home that were left behind—family, friends—who are struggling, specially under a regime that doesn't recognize freedom of speech—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the honourable member, but the time has expired.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak to the resolution that recognizes United Nations world day for dialogue and development.

This resolution, as the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) had already previously mentioned, can be strengthened, Mr. Speaker, and it's a good feeling in this House that we're going to be here for quite some time and the ability for this resolution to come back up and with some possible amendments and discussion to strengthen this resolution. I look forward to those discussions as well as some of the other comments from the other members in the House today and for the upcoming few days. In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly declared May 21st to be the World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. As the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism stood up just previously just before me, she—I'd like to thank her

for putting a few words on the record and sharing her own personal story.

I, too, Mr. Speaker, just last night, had a conversation with my youngest son, Jarvis, and we talked about a lot of the different news stories that were in the news and a lot of the not-so-happy news stories. And so, we've had the discussions on, you know, why certain people elect to do certain things throughout the world and affect absolutely everybody. So with that, even though it's not quite, you know, happening right in our own tight-knit community of Beausejour or the constituency of Lac du Bonnet to that degree, we do have to feel very, very fortunate for where we are living.

The cultural—the United Nations world day provides all Manitobans with the opportunity to deepen our understanding of the rich cultural diversity of our province, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba does, indeed, have a rich cultural heritage with much diversity. This resolution notes that there are 300 cultural community organizations in Manitoba, and the immigrants that call our province home come from over 150 countries.

As the member from St. Norbert noted, there are many, many schools across this great province of ours that celebrate the multiculturalism that we do have here in the province, and they do hang quite a few of the different flags, I guess, of the students that attend the various schools. I'm not quite sure which school originated that idea, but I think it is a great attribute to this fine province of Manitoba.

At the same time that we recognize the diversity of the cultures, it is important that we do so with respect to Aboriginal peoples who were the first inhabitants of this province, Mr. Speaker. Three years ago, the Legislature recognized that May 12th as Treaty Day. May 12th was the day that we honour the treaties, not only because we recognize that First Nations are the founders of this province but because the treaty relationship between First Nations and Canadians needs to be better understood and acknowledged.

I commend the work that the treaty commission and the treaty commissioner, James Wilson, are embarking on, making part of the education curriculum—having the treaties developed and to be immersed into our various curriculums within the school system, Mr. Speaker, just as the residential school legacy was also put into the school curriculum.

In the—I guess what I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that education is the key, and the more and more we look at how things are moving, not only in this province, not only in Canada but throughout the world, we have to rely on our greatest assets, and those are our kids and how we educate them and move them forward into this world that just doesn't seem to be getting any easier to live in. But there are many, many, many things that we can celebrate.

Mr. Speaker, the contributions of Manitoba's First Nations people to Manitoba's cultural mosaic are most—absolutely beyond measure. While we have much to be proud of, the NDP's record to support Aboriginal people and immigrants isn't necessarily one of them. On this side of the House, we are committed to the promotion of safer communities for Manitoba families, communities where cultural diversity can flourish. On May 13th, the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs said, and I quote, that it is not acceptable in 2013 to accept the widespread poverty and lack of basic infrastructure that so many First Nation residents have to live with. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, the government talks a good game on supporting Aboriginal people, but the facts speak for themselves and they tell quite a different story. Less than 35 per cent of Aboriginal youth, age 15 to 29, have completed high school. Labour-market participation rates amongst Aboriginal people are nearly 20 per cent lower than that of non-Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal unemployment rate is nearly 25 per cent higher than the provincial average. And nearly 30 per cent of Aboriginal people in Manitoba live in dwellings in need of major repairs.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has the smallest percentage of Aboriginal youth that attends school. By the year of two—by the year 2017, there's going to be nearly 50 per cent of the students who are entering kindergarten are going to be Aboriginal—have Aboriginal descent there. So, again, with our most precious assets for how we're moving forward, I'm not quite sure if the plan of this government is the plan that we need for our future generations.

\*(11:40)

Mr. Speaker, the government's neglect doesn't stop with Aboriginal people. The NDP's record on immigrants is equally abysmal. The government often touts the Provincial Nominee Program as a Manitoba success but there's more to the story. The foundation of this province is based on the hard work of immigrants, and Progressive Conservatives have a

long history of supporting hard-working and dedicated immigrants to this province. Members opposite should fact-in fact recall that it was a Progressive Conservative government that introduced and successfully launched the Provincial Nominee Program. Thank you to the member of River East, and the member from Steinbach also mentioned a few other MLAs that were instrumental in the development of that Provincial Nominee Program.

And, again, those are examples of things that we should be celebrating as far as success for this province, and I think that's why, when we on this side of the House are standing up and speaking to this resolution we're encouraging the ongoing dialogue in regards to this resolution to possibly strengthen it and bring it forward—and continue to bring it forward because I know that there's other members on this side of the House, and I'm sure members on the other side of the House that would like their opportunity to speak to this resolution as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I'm taking a look, Mr. Speaker, I've read the resolution quite a few times, and the last line in regards to the resolution, it says: Be it further resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba pay respect to the first people. End quote. And that's absolutely right in the resolution.

Now, I also heard the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism mention all the hard-working people and immigrants of Manitoba who contribute to the stability of this great province of ours in Manitoba. She also mentioned the reason for coming to this province is the democracy piece that we have in this province, where it is—we do have a democratic right. And some of my concerns in regards to this government's handling of these type of resolutions and not strengthening it a little bit more is the fact that we do have a line right in the resolution talking about respect for people, Manitobans. And with this government bringing in the PST hike of one point or a nearly 14 per cent increase come July 1st, and without holding a referendum, I start to question how much the members on the other side absolutely believe in the fact that people have a right to a democratic process.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage the government to think about holding a referendum for that PST hike, and I look forward to—

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

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** I would like to start by thanking the MLA for St. Norbert for bringing this resolution forward.

And I just would like to start by saying that my perspective on this is coloured, I suppose, by the experience that I had before my current career. I was an adult literacy instructor, and through my work for the last 10 or 15 years I had a lot of opportunities to speak with immigrants and hear about their stories. And it was really a privilege because I discovered just how colourful and varied each individual was in how they came to this country and this province, and these stories weren't told to me immediately. It took a long time to work with them before they started to share some of those stories because some of them are pretty awful. And I was very moved by many of the sacrifices that they made in order to get here. It's very easy to focus on the many opportunities that we give immigrants, that we offer to them when they come to Manitoba. It's much more difficult to know the sacrifices that they made by choosing to come unless you've had the opportunity to hear of those experiences first-hand.

And these stories sometimes are like the stuff of movies that most of us in this Chamber have had the very good fortune of never having to experience and probably couldn't imagine. I can easily recall quite a few of them. I had a woman who was an entrepreneur in China, and in order to come to this country for greater success she had to leave behind a husband and a 2-year-old. And she told me—she was a very, very private person, but she—months after working with her she told me the story of leaving that day and seeing her husband and her 2-year-old out the bus window as she was heading off. And as a mother of a 6- and 4-year-old, the idea of leaving my 2-year-old behind and not seeing them again for two years is an unimaginable pain I would not wish on any parent. But she did it, and then she came here and worked for 15 years as a seamstress, and her husband and her child were able to join her after two or three years, but it's still an immense sacrifice.

There was a Vietnamese fellow that I taught who spent three or four days on a ship under a tarp with very little food and water that was contaminated. The heat was so intense that a child that was on the ship started having seizures. And they could bring nothing with them. Another—he was with his sister. There was another set of siblings around the same

age as he and his sister that had two melons that was going to last for the trip of four or five days, and they actually gave one of the melons to him and his sister because they had nothing. And when you think about the generosity of giving someone a piece of fruit, it certainly takes on an entirely different dynamic when you put it on a boat where people have no food, no water, and they're giving away half of everything that they had. I taught a woman who's family—they were Colombian, and their family escaped in the dead of night because her husband had informed on the leader of a drug cartel and he was hunting him down, and here I am in Manitoba teaching this woman English.

And, I mean, this is just an indication of the incredible lives that people have had before they come here, and that once they come here and go through those sacrifices—wow—they deeply appreciate what we are offering them and very, very often work very, very hard to maybe not meet that success themselves, but certainly for their children.

And to conclude, I would just like to say that this is a very important resolution. We owe a great deal to the cultural diversity that's in this province that was here before we came along and for those that continue to come. Thank you very much. *[inaudible]*

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I want to start off first of all by paying my respects to Elijah Harper and offer my condolences to his family. He was, of course, Mr. Speaker, a strong voice for the First Nations and Aboriginal communities in our province, and certainly the lineups in the halls of the Legislature yesterday of the people at the Legislature who came to pay their respects to the family speaks volumes to the impact that he had in the Aboriginal communities and the First Nations communities, and he will continue to have, in our province. So, again, I just want to extend my condolences to the Harper family and to all those who are mourning his loss.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to this resolution, I want to thank the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) for bringing this forward for debate in the Manitoba Legislature. Of course, that's what we love to do is debate various issues here. And while I agree with many of the points that are in this resolution, I think that there are certainly some omissions, and this could be strengthened as a result of us working together on this very important issue of multiculturalism within our very diverse province. And so, again, we look forward to the debate on this in the months and weeks ahead in this Manitoba

Legislature and discussing this incredibly important issue.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be reminded of the Provincial Nominee Program and who originally brought that in in this province. And I want to pay tribute to those in the Filmon government who saw the foresight—who saw the need for this Provincial Nominee Program in our province and how much it has strengthened our province. And we can see that from the numbers that the member from St. Norbert has in his resolution over the last 12 years or so that those are numbers that came as a result of the foresight that members in the Conservative Party had along with working together with members opposite. So I think it's important to not just—I think in many ways I look at the way part of this is written is perhaps a bit of a pat on the back to members of the NDP, and I think it's important to maybe not politicize this, but to say how we worked together in the importance of creating a culturally diverse province that we have and celebrate those things—those incredible things—that we have in our province.

\* (11:50)

I just want to talk—I know the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino) mentioned in her remarks today, and I want to thank her for her remarks about the importance of citizenship courts in our province and how moving those ceremonies are in our province. And I can recall—she mentioned it was back in, I believe, 1986 where she first attended a citizenship court ceremony and how moving it was with she and her family.

And I, too, can recall attending citizenship courts back in 1988 through '93. My mother was actually a citizenship court judge here in Manitoba, and so she swore in and had the incredible experience and honour, quite frankly, of swearing in thousands of new Canadian citizens at that time in Manitoba. And I can recall many a time, I was in my late teens and early 20s attending those ceremonies where she was presiding over those ceremonies, and when it came time for the oath I don't think there was a dry eye in the whole room, Mr. Speaker. Just how incredibly moving it is to be in a room with people who just see the power of what it means to be able to live in our free and democratic society in this great province of Manitoba. And so it was, I know, an incredible honour for my mom to be a part of that. She loved every single day. Her job—she loved getting up and she loved meeting with these incredible people who

wanted to be a part of our society here in Manitoba and in Canada, and saw the richness in creating the diversity within our province and what we can all learn from people of different cultural backgrounds. And so, I know she enjoyed every moment of what she did. And I know I can recall that at one time, of course, the oath has to be stated in English and in French, and my mother was—didn't really speak French very fluently. And so I remember on a cue card she had it written out, the phonetics of the French portion of it, and she practiced that over and over and over again before she went in front of our new Canadian citizens.

But I can recall several times she would talk about sitting down in the meetings, and this is before our new Canadian citizens became Canadian citizens and they were going through the process of becoming Canadian citizens. And the interview process and some of the questions that she used to ask and the things that she would learn from people of all different cultural backgrounds was quite moving. And she would often come home and tell us not about who the—not names or anything like that—but just some of the things that she learned that day and how moving it was that each and every person that came through—and how proud they were to become a new Canadian citizen and what it meant to them.

And I think it's incumbent upon all of us to maybe attend some of these ceremonies to remind ourselves, Mr. Speaker, those of us who were born here in Canada, just as a reminder of what it means to be a Canadian citizen. And I think you only need to go and attend one of these ceremonies to realize what it really means to those people who see the incredible benefits in their free and democratic society that we live with here in Canada and even more so here in our great province in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it—one of the other things that's a tradition when you leave an office of such the one that my mom held and had the honour of holding, as a citizenship court judge in our province you get an official photo done at the end. And I know it was very important to my mother that this photo was not just of her as it was in the past of other judges, and, you know, it was sort of the tradition that it would just be the photo of them in their robes. But she felt very strongly that this is not about her. This is not about the citizenship court judges, but this is about the new people that we are swearing in as Canadian citizens, and so she insisted on having her photo taken with a little boy from the Filipino community,

and I think he was about five years old at the time, and I ran into his mother. The—so, she had the official photo done and it does hang in the halls of where she used to work, and it is, I think, a testament to, I think, what she really believed the job was and what she was doing and how much she truly cared about swearing in new Canadian citizens and what it meant. So—but certainly, I was—I ran into the mother of this little boy—it's probably—it was a couple of years ago now, and it was great to have the opportunity to speak to her and just see what he's up to now. And he was about 23, I think, at that time, and so he had grown up and he's—he'd been through university and he was—he just—he was doing so many tremendous things in life, and the opportunities that he was able to gain in our society as a result of his parents choosing to move to this great country. And I think that was really neat for me to be able to go back and have the opportunity to talk to her.

Of course, my mom passed away many years ago now, but I know she would've loved to have had that opportunity to have a chance to talk to many of the people and see where they all are today, because many of them are still in our community. Some are not, but, you know—or maybe away at university and are coming back, and those kinds of things. And I think it's really important to follow where some of the children are who are sworn in as Canadian citizens and see where they have gone and some of the things that they've been able to achieve as a result of people's op—as a result of their parents having the foresight and the opportunity of bringing them here, Mr. Speaker.

And so, I—with having said those few words, I certainly see that—the importance of this resolution and how great it is to be here and have the honour to speak to this resolution today. And I think it's important—I know that there's many members of both sides of this House that want to say a few words, and so—in celebration of the incredible cultural society that we have here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. And so, I want to thank again the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) for bringing it forward, as we continue to debate over the weeks and months ahead in this Manitoba Legislature on this very important subject.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Now is a great opportunity and should always be taken to get up and speak about the diversity of this great province we call Manitoba.



In fact, the Provincial Nominee Program, which was a program that was thought up and implemented by the former Filmon government—and we've often said that the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) is the mother of the new immigration wave that's come into this province—it's a great program and it has served this province well. And under successive governments, whether they were the Conservative government that first introduced it and the NDP which realized the brilliance of that program and have decided to continue with it, we realize that the Provincial Nominee Program has enhanced, strengthened and grown this great province we call Manitoba.

We're very proud of the fact that we are known to be very open, to be very generous, to be very kind and considerate of those that come to this country and come to this province. It's a very trying and often troubling thing when you move and pull your roots up and move into a new country with different language, with different culture, with different way of doing things. And Manitoba seems to be unbelievably well-suited for welcoming individuals who come here and often scared of what they're going to face. And when you speak to individuals who've immigrated to Canada, they say Manitoba is the best place you could ever want to come to

because of the big heart, because of the open arms that they are welcomed with.

Many of us—or I should say, most of us, other than those who are of First Nations background, are of an immigrant background. And whether it was grandparents or parents or us ourselves, this has been an interesting experience coming to Canada and growing up in an immigrant community. It was very interesting to hear the stories of the way things went, especially back in the late '40s and early '50s. Times were different back then, it was a different way of doing things. Winnipeg, of course, was a lot smaller than it is today and had a lot of different challenges.

As, today, one of my colleagues, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), mentioned, those who come with different accreditation—perhaps that's something we should be looking at, is how can we help with accreditation—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for St. Paul will have seven minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 21, 2013**

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