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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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| YAKIMOSKI, Blair | Transcona | PC |
| <i>Vacant</i> | St. Boniface | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker, and colleagues. Wondering if you could canvass the House to see if there is leave to call Bill 221 put forward by Mr. Lagassé—[interjection]—the member for Dawson Trail, thank you. Sorry about that.

I'm wondering if you could canvass the House to see if there is leave to call Bill 221, The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act, and then at 11 o'clock to proceed to Manitoba Curling Week resolution.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to proceed with Bill 221 this morning? [Agreed]

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: Before we proceed with the bill, I have a ruling for the House, and it's a ruling on Bill 214, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act.

Before we proceed with the next item of business, I must inform the House that Bill 214, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), has some similarities with Bill 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, inappropriate use or unsafe footwear, sponsored by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine). Bill 219 passed second reading on April 5th, 2018.

Rule 42 of the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba states that, and I quote: "No Member shall

receive a debate already concluded during the session or anticipate a matter appointed for consideration of which notice has been given." End quote.

The House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, states on page 1129, and there is—that there is nothing preventing two similar items from being placed on the Order Paper simultaneously. However, because the House cannot take more than one decision on any given matter during a session, a decision on any of these bills will prevent further proceedings on any other similar bill.

Both Bill 214 and Bill 219 propose to amend The Workplace Safety and Health Act. After consultation with the Clerk's office and with Legislative Counsel, I can verify the content of both bills is indeed very similar. I have concluded that, legislatively and procedurally, they both achieve the same goal: prohibiting footwear requirements for the purpose of ensuring safety and health in the workplace.

As this House has already decided in this session to pass Bill 219 at second reading, and since both bills contain substantially the same provisions, I must rule that Bill 214 cannot proceed any further in this House this session.

The honourable member for Assiniboia has two courses of action open to him. Bill 214 can remain on the Order Paper and not be proceeded with further. Alternatively, he may seek the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw it.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 221—The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to bill—to second reading of Bill 221, The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski), that Bill 221, The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lagassé: The safety of Manitobans and everyone who visits this province is a top priority for

this government. That is why we are bringing forth legislation designed to provide Manitobans with knowledge required to make railway accidents a relic of the past.

As we all know too well, railway accidents cause injury or death. This past year Elijah Gunner was hit by a train in Winnipeg and dragged for 12 metres before escaping. Elijah had both his legs amputated, one above and one below the knee.

On a personal level, we unfortunately faced a heartbreaking tragedy in my constituency as well.

Madam Speaker, as a father of five kids, four of which are daughters, I cannot even imagine the pain associated with the loss of a child. And, to be honest, this is one of my worst fears.

In September of 2017, Kharma Annette Brown, an 11-year-old girl, was hit and killed by a train in Ste. Anne. As a father and community member I am deeply, deeply saddened by the tragedy, and my heart aches for those who loved her, especially her dad, Randell Brown, who is joined by other community members here today in the gallery.

I believe that as we look forward, those of us with the power to act, to improve things, have a responsibility to do so. Accordingly, I have put this bill forward to prevent such accidents from happening again in the future.

Unfortunately, the cases I have mentioned are by no means isolated incidents. Every year there are close to 250 collisions and trespassing incidents along Canadian railways, resulting in an average of 100 injuries or deaths.

More specifically, in Canada during 2017 there was 222 railway incidents, 72 fatalities and 44 serious injuries. In Manitoba alone there were 19 rail incidents, three resulting in fatalities and five serious injuries.

As a country and as a province, we need to do better at preventing such tragedies. That is why this bill aims to increase education and awareness across the province about rail safety. Educating the public is an effective way of reducing rail-related accidents, and a look at initiatives in other jurisdictions provides evidence for taking this approach to this issue.

For example, the European Union has implemented a level crossing railway crossing awareness day to educate people about the dangers of railroads. Additionally, the United States has

implemented a national rail safety awareness week in order to better educate people about the variety of transport dangers, including railway tracks. These programs are effective because they can reach a wide audience and improve the capacity of citizens to protect themselves.

* (10:10)

Accordingly, this bill is proposed to create an annual Rail Safety Week during the last week of September. During the week, the Manitoba government will encourage citizens, employers and schools to co-operate with rail companies to implement educational programming on rail safety. These programs will focus on improving awareness about how to spot and avoid dangers associated with rail traffic, especially when it intersects with roadways and walkways. Importantly, we have been in consultation with CN rail, and they agreed that creating a rail safety awareness week would benefit Manitobans.

Improving rail safety is the goal of our government and the federal government and rail companies. Specifically, in 2017 the federal Transport Minister allocated \$20 million to the Rail Safety Improvement Program. Much of the funds were used with Operation Lifesaver, which promotes rail safety education amongst young people in Canada. In addition, CN developed the Look. Listen. Live. community safety partnership program. This program provides communities with decals and presentations reminding them to look, listen at railway crossings.

These communities are encouraged to participate in the process by passing a resolution promoting rail safety during Canada's annual Rail Safety Week at the end of September. Canadian Pacific Railway also has educational programming with resources available for educators, as well as the safe—as well as safety presenters to speak with children about safety around railways. We are taking it one step further than a resolution and we are attempting to be the first province to put Rail Safety awareness Week into law through a private member's bill being discussed today.

Our friends at CN have told us, and I quote, rail safety is a shared responsibility. By looking out for each other we can help keep our communities safe and prevent fatalities and injuries on or near railway properties and crossings. Together, working with the dedicate partners like Operation Lifesaver, law enforcement, schools and governments, we can save

lives and help bring crossings and trespassing accidents down to zero. CN applauds the MLA for Dawson Trail and the Province of Manitoba for taking the initiative to proclaim Rail Safety Week in Manitoba, a significant step forward in helping to keep Manitobans safe, end quote.

In partnership with the rail companies, our youth will be more educated about the dangers of rail crossings, but also more aware of the important safety steps to take when around railways. This will help us prevent further tragedies like the one we faced in the community of Ste. Anne this past year. Together, we can prevent tragedy by educating people about rail safety. That is why this bill is so important and I look forward to passing it—passing second reading.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Can the member tell us what this bill does to improve safety other than just raising awareness of rail safety?

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Thank you for the question.

This is really just about raising awareness and teaching children about how to be safe around rails, and it gives us the opportunity to ensure that accidents like the one that occurred in Ste. Anne does not happen again.

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Thank you very much to the member from Dawson Trail for bringing this forward.

Can you talk for a minute or so about your reasoning behind the creation of this bill and why it's so important to you?

Mr. Lagassé: Thank you to the member for Transcona for the question.

Part of the reasoning behind this bill is when I heard of this tragedy, it actually broke my heart completely. And the community of Ste. Anne, which is in my constituency of Dawson Trail, was in shock

and disbelief after an 11-year-old girl was hit by a train and died tragically. I believe it is incumbent on us as elected officials to do the right thing and prevent occurrences like this from happening again. After consultations with CN and CP, the best first step is the creation of a safety awareness week, so as to educate young people about how to remain safe around railways.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): The member from Dawson Trail, I wonder if he could share with this House, for the permanent record, what he knows of the victim and their—and her family and if he wants to use this opportunity to say anything to that family in memory of the young person that was killed.

Mr. Lagassé: So today's actually the first day that I've met Randell Brown. I chose to allow him to mourn during the process of losing an 11-year-old girl. I had heard of Kharma through—and we actually had thought she had been at the Legislative Assembly for a tour shortly before the incident had occurred.

I could have been wrong. I could have maybe have read to her at school shortly before that but, again, we allowed her—the family the opportunity to mourn. So I look forward to getting to know him a little bit better in the next little while.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): First of all, my condolences to the family and friends. Second, we have in Manitoba an amazing railway museum, and I just wondered if you'd consider partnering with the railway museum in terms of a rail safety initiative.

And the other thing would be that there was a report, Preventing Rail-Related Injuries and Deaths in Canada presented September of last year by Operation Lifesaver. Have you considered highlighting the recommendations in that report?

Mr. Lagassé: I think it's an excellent idea to work with the railway museum, but I'll leave that up to—in discussions with our partners, with CN, and see where we can go with that.

As to the recommendations, I will, again, discuss with CN to see what we can do.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Thank the member for Dawson Trail for bringing this bill forward, and I recognize everyone who's come from Ste. Anne this morning to watch the debate.

We know one of the frustrations can be dealing, as a provincial government, with federal

government. Of course, a lot of the rules and regulations regarding level crossings and railways are federal. Does the member believe there's a role for the Province to advocate on railway issues with the federal government?

Mr. Lagassé: The federal government has already given \$20 million towards rail safety, and I absolutely believe that we can do a better job of advocating on behalf of Manitobans when it comes to rail safety.

Mr. Yakimoski: I, too, give my condolences to the father of that wonderful young angel.

To the member of Dawson Trail, who have you spoke to regarding this? And if you could take a moment perhaps and mention some of the people who have come with us in the gallery—I know you mentioned the father as well—and take a minute and let us know who you've actually been speaking to regarding this.

Mr. Lagassé: As I said in my earlier speech, we've been lucky to have the assistance from our friends at CP and CN, who have—who also believe rail safety is their No. 1 priority. We have consulted with folks involved within the municipality, as well as the major rail companies who have assisted us in the creation of this bill.

And as to who's in the gallery, there are people from all over Dawson Trail, actually, up in the gallery today, one of those being Kharma's father. There's representatives from CN, there are police officers from CN and also my mom.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, safety is near and dear to my heart. I spent 20 years as a safety rep, trying to protect workers and help companies find better ways of doing things, so I do appreciate the member bringing this forward.

Can he tell us what exactly he sees or what he envisions as a role for—you talked about the partners with CN. Is there something more that through that partnership, that can be advocated to make rail crossings in particular safer over and above just the education portion of it?

* (10:20)

Mr. Lagassé: So thank you for that question.

Actually, the first—when we started to look at the bill, the first point of contact I made was with CN as to exactly how we can improve crossings like that. I learned a lot about how there's actually, at times,

natural crossings that occur that are not actually crossings. People just naturally cross at these places. So it's a big challenge. I look forward to continuing to work with the rail companies to see if there are other solutions we can come up with and bring them to this House in the future.

Mr. Yakimoski: I would like to ask the member: Do you have any rail crossings out and about near your home, and have you spoken with your children regarding the issues around them?

Mr. Lagassé: Actually, we used to. We now live in a community that has no rail crossings. But, yes, when we did live by them, it was always about ensuring that you're safe around tracks.

Mr. Swan: Yes. The member spoke about the federal government, I suppose, putting forward \$20 million to improve rail safety. I presume that's primarily for public information and awareness. Of course, the member, as a private member, like all members on our side, can't actually pass a bill that calls for spending. Is the member going to advocate for some money from the provincial government to assist with recognizing this day when the bill passes, and what does he hope to accomplish in terms of a provincial investment?

Mr. Lagassé: So, yes, the reference was more for the House's knowledge that the federal government has invested in this.

As to additional funds, well, we all know, and I don't want to be partisan in this whatsoever so I'm going to keep this—but we're kind of cash strapped, and I don't—you know, where do we go with that, right? So I know CN and CP have these programs in place and I know they have dollars to invest into the schools. As I mentioned, they have programs that they can bring forward into the schools with the educational materials.

Mr. Lindsey: So can the member discuss with us or inform us a little bit about any consultations he's had, perhaps, with the federal counterparts and how his bill will tie in with the Canadian Rail Safety Week that's at a different time. Does it—one build on the other or are they complementary? How exactly does the other railroads—there's CN that he's talked about being involved with. What about CP and some of the other smaller, private railroads that are running in the province? Is—the—are they going to be part of it as well?

Mr. Lagassé: So, as to the federal portion of this bill, the feds actually only passed a proclamation.

They didn't actually pass a bill or a law around this. The—as to consultations with the railway, we did communicate with the two larger ones, being CN and CP. So the—as to private railways, I'm more than willing to talk with them if they're willing to talk.

Mr. Lindsey: Again, I thank the member for bringing this forward. Certainly, safety is paramount and should be education for everybody.

I know in my own community of Flin Flon there's a railroad runs right smack dab through the middle of it which is also a major crossing for kids coming and going to school. So anything that we can do to help raise awareness of those issues, I look forward to seeing the results of these consultations.

So just—the minister—or the member, does he have any concept of what these educational things may look like at the end of the day?

Mr. Lagassé: So, as I mentioned in my speech beforehand, they—a lot of the educational materials do come from the rail companies. I will gladly ask them for copies if you would like. If you—

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

The honourable member for—normally, in the process in the rotation, it would be a member from opposition. *[interjection]*

The honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's unfortunate that the plans changed somewhat this morning, so we're a little off the pace with who's doing what at the moment.

But, certainly, we can't let that detract from the importance of what the member's proposing and anything that we can do to try and protect human life, whether it's talking about rail crossing, or other safety measures that are out there, we should make sure that we're always promoting the best practice, the safest way of doing things.

And, again, my condolences to the family and friends that are here in the gallery and people from the community. I know that in Winnipeg, in the past, there's been fatalities and serious incidents with major rail lines that run through the city. And the member talked a little bit about natural crossings, or perhaps, maybe the railroad or the city planners don't

intend for those to be rail crossings, but people being people, they generally take the shortest path between A and B. So we always need to be cognizant of those issues. So raising awareness is important. Talking to the railroads about other things that they can do to enhance the safety of people that come in contact with the railroads, by crossing them, should be one of the things that, hopefully, the governments will talk to the combined railroads about.

But, you know, it's interesting, the member brings this forward. Last night I was flipping through the channels on TV and there was a show about railroads on TV. Now, some of the messages, unfortunately, that come out of some of these reality TV shows are the complete opposite of the message that should be coming out. I know I watched a little bit of this one last night and it was all about getting 'er done as quick as possible and never mind worrying about the safety aspects. So education is important for children and it's also important for working people.

I mean, making rail crossings safer so there is less chance of an accident will also help protect the railroad workers, because, certainly, if they're involved in one of these incidents where somebody gets seriously injured or killed, it affects them as well—not nearly like it affects the family of the loved one that's involved. But we just want to reiterate that we, as legislators, we as members of this Assembly always need to be looking at improving on what's available for—whether it's education around safety, or other safeguards that we can look at putting in to make things safer.

So raising awareness is very important and it's part of the overall process. We need to make sure that we're looking at the rest of the processes, to ensure that we're providing safety for citizens and workers and families and everybody else. Certainly, if the federal government has proclaimed a Rail Safety Week, that's part of it. If this bill gets introduced, or gets passed, making a certain week the Rail Safety Week, we need to ensure that it doesn't get lost in the shuffle. And there are so many weeks proclaimed and seems every day of the year is really a day about something now. So we need to ensure—and I look forward to seeing this program as it rolls out—to ensure that it actually carries on. That it's not just something that gets proclaimed now, while it's fresh in people's minds. But also next year and the year after that, and the year after that, that it's always going to get raised. And it's a good time then, for governments, whichever party happens to be in

power, to really focus on looking at, do we have the safest regulations that we can have? Is there something more that we can do?

*(10:30)

And it's a good reminder for us that if there's a Rail Safety Week, let's look at what we have for legislation. It should be not just about reminding the public to be careful, but it should remind us as legislators to look at is there more that we can do to provide a safer environment for our children and our families so that—young kids don't always look at the world the same way we do. They know that if I need to get from here to there, I'm going here, and they don't always grasp the full reality of what hazards they may encounter. So while we try and educate them, we also need to do things to prevent that kind of contact from happening. So I just want to make sure that those are things that we always look at, and I appreciate that ensuring that there are proper regulations and rules sometimes gets viewed as red tape, but sometimes that red tape really needs to be there to make sure that we're providing the safe environment for our loved ones that we should be. Doesn't mean that those kind of things shouldn't be looked at every now and again and reviewed to make sure they still make sense.

So I want to, again, thank the member for bringing this forward because it does give us an opportunity to talk about raising awareness, but also it gives us the opportunity to talk about the other issues, such as making sure that the necessary safety things are in place so that it's providing that safe environment.

And, certainly, I know there's been a big move afoot in the city of Winnipeg to try and get the rail yards relocated for a number of reasons, but certainly the absence of rail yards within the confines of a city would provide a safer environment, particularly for kids that live on this side of the tracks and want to get to that side of the tracks. It's not just kids, obviously. It's people as a whole that want to find—I mean, obviously, there's costs involved in that.

So, again, we want to make sure that this education component doesn't just apply in the city of Winnipeg, that it goes out to the rural schools, the rural community as well because they are more likely to come across the level crossing or to try and cross the tracks in a spot that may not be the safest. So we want to make sure that whatever happens, whatever comes of these consultations and whatever

comes of this week of raising awareness gets out to all members of the province.

Certainly, in the North, there's less, perhaps, encounter, but the potential is still there. I know some of the northern trains move pretty slow, but people get used to thinking they can cross when, in fact, they perhaps shouldn't. Certainly, I know in my own community, there's—by the time the bells and lights come on, the train is already there just because of the layout. So raising awareness of when it's safe to cross is always good.

So, while I support this member's bill about improving awareness of safety, I also encourage us all to look at making sure that the other part of the puzzle is in place to ensure that we have the regulations and codes in place to make sure that it's safe.

So thank you for the time.

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to 'suepeak'—to speak in support of the member from Dawson Trail and his bill on rail safety awareness week. This is something that I did some research on, and I see that it's already been proclaimed, this sort of thing, in the United States and also Australia and other places.

Now, as the member from Transcona, my railway awareness is something you really do grow up with, because with the CN Shops right there, where so many of my friends' fathers worked as mechanics or electricians or in the foundry, the history of the railway was really quite an important part in school. We talked about it. I remember Mr. Mikula's history class, and he would—had the description of the last spike that connected our country with a steel ribbon from sea to sea.

You may know that Transcona was founded as the site of the repair shops for the Grand Trunk Pacific and National Transcontinental railways. Its name is a combination of Transcontinental and Strathcona—Lord Strathcona, a former Manitoban who was instrumental in building Canada's first railway.

So just like, you know, if my father hadn't met my mother, I might not be here. If the repair shops for the railway hadn't been located in my neighbourhood, there would be no Transcona, perhaps, and hence no member from Transcona.

The railway and Transcona are one, and odes to its history are everywhere from the hockey team, the

Railer Express; the football team, the Nationals; my former grocery store which was named after a—the former member for Steinbach, Jim Penner, Penner Express Foods; local watering hole, the Silver Spike; and, of course, the iconic 2747, the first engine produced at the Transcona shops which sits proudly in the park on the corner of Plessis Road. I have a beautiful, signed copy of that painting of that engine from the father of the member from Radisson who is an accomplished artist and may be listening today, and I wish him well in his challenges now.

Transcona also—the previous member, my predecessor, the former Speaker of the House, Daryl Reid, you know, worked at CN, was a steward there.

It was the founding business for Transconians and is still an essential and iconic part of the neighbourhood which sprung up around it—again, from the watering holes near the main gate to the banks and post office on the main street, from my 'boyhead'—here—boyhood hearing that CN whistle which marked the day for employees to start their shift, and then lunch, and then time to go home. Well, for us kids that whistle signalled time to go to school and then time for lunch and then time for street hockey.

Today, CN is still a major part of the community where the shops are still there—and I recently read about a deal to supply 1 million railcar wheels to Amstead Rail using 100 per cent recycled steel, and with the recently dedicated Claude Mongeau National Training Centre which delivers state-of-the-art railroader training, including virtual reality training and simulations with this—where the emphasis is always—the focus is about instilling a strong safety culture.

My colleagues on this side of the House and I, recently, were on a tour of the facility with a few of the visitors who are here in the gallery: Kate Fenske, whose picture can be seen on the CN website. I believe she's signing the safety pledge. It's the No. 1 thing—and JD, of course. We were all impressed with the design of the facility, the practical training that is incorporated for engineers or conductors with the focus on the main goal: the No. 1 goal is safety.

The myriad of things that can go wrong in a railway can, unfortunately, end in disaster due to the size, speed and cargo carried. Our history is littered with unfortunate incidents: from the 1947 Dugald train disaster, a passenger train headed westbound crashed into an eastbound train in Dugald, Manitoba, at the station because, unfortunately, they failed

to heed the CNR procedure. Thirty-one lives were lost. In 1986, the Hinton train disaster: a head-on collision between a CNR freight train and a Via Rail passenger train—23 dead, 95 injured. A friend of mine's father was on that train. He survived, but he never was able to work again.

The more recent Lac Mégantic disaster where 47 people lost their lives shows that this is a hugely important thing. We were told again at the end of that tour that the No. 1 priority and the value of the company is safety. Those new employees that are training at that centre some day, many years down the road when they retire, them and their family will be very thankful for that.

*(10:40)

Rail lines are dangerous. We all know that. Sometimes those words fall on deaf ears. I remember similar a story to the one from Dawson Trail. Two young boys from where my old store was on Concordia—one of them actually ended up working for me. Well, this was back in the 1980s and they were typical, young boys at the time, and they tried to jump a slow-moving train. It was in the member from Concordia's area, just off of Molson. Well, one boy fell and ended up losing a part of his leg, a horrible, horrible injury, but it could have been so much worse. Who among us hasn't walked a rail line? Well, I'm sure we were obviously safe at the time, but education and awareness must always be present teaching. We were trespassing. We were creating a danger. It's true that sometimes you can't hear a train coming up from behind you. The friction co-efficient combined with the wind speed, train speed and other factors can combine to produce a tragic end.

Rail safety, traffic safety, bike safety: we can always do more. I was in the car with my son the other day, and the lack of a routine shoulder check almost caused him to turn into the line of a truck passing. It would have been awful. We need to teach and reinforce amongst young drivers to be safe, to not be distracted, to focus on what's in front of you, to teach them about rail crossings and how important it is, because so many of those crossings are uncontrolled.

I'm proud to have a company like CN in Transcona which is being proactive in ensuring safety is ongoing all year long and not just during Rail Safety Week. They have programs such as Operation Lifesaver, which promotes a program, All Aboard for Safety, where they go and they speak to

students, adults, they talk to people about how important it is. They also have an online presence. On their online presence, they do cater to young children. There's little Obie they have; they have a website. And they have at mysafetypledge, a virtual reality online site where you can put it on your phone, and if you have the virtual reality goggles, the member from Dawson Trail, who likes to game, may have that sort of thing, where you can see what it's like to, perhaps, be a pedestrian crossing a rail line, or a driver. You can use that to educate your children. Please go to mysafetypledge. Take a look at it. You know, we need to talk about it in the classrooms.

And I know that this rail awareness—rail safety awareness is going to be well supported. I'm—I hope that it's going to be supported. I know that—also proud of the fact that CN—I read in its third year, the Safety Innovation Program, which aims to develop more lines of defense against accidents, 2016 program involves spending \$20 million on a series of initiatives. Thank you.

Memories of trains. I remember when I was young, going to Jasmin, Saskatchewan, and staying at my aunt's house, and my aunt—literally, across the street from my aunt was a railway. And in the middle of the night—I couldn't imagine. How do they sleep? Because you hear this train going by, 'woom,' very loud. It would wake all of us up, except my aunt and uncle always slept through it.

We can't fence in railways everywhere. In small towns where it's—the train—rail is always there, perhaps it's just they know about it, so they're safer.

Thank you for the member from Dawson Trail for acknowledging the work that the railway companies are—in doing to enshrine a culture of safety in all that they do, and I hope that we all support this bill for rail safety awareness week.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I want to commend the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé) for bringing this bill forward this morning and for allowing us to have this debate. And I really want to thank everybody from the community of Ste. Anne who've come down here today to listen to this debate, to hear what members have to say. And I hope by the time 11 o'clock rolls around, you'll be pleasantly surprised that sometimes, all of us in the Legislature can actually get along and speak with one voice.

In particular, I want to thank the father of the young person who lost their life. It takes a lot of courage to come down and to be part of this. Of course, sometimes, I've found in my experience as a legislator, some of the strongest advocates and the strongest voices are people who never wanted to be in that position in the first place. So thank you for joining us today.

Of course, there has been a long history. I mean, the history of the railway is in many ways parallel to the modern history of Canada. As a law student, of course, many times in law school when we were learning about the laws, unfortunately a large number of those laws are cases where railways injured a person. And so, unlike many other areas of learning where you learn by things that went right, in law you learn about things that went wrong.

And, frankly, the law hasn't developed completely. Railways still do hold a lot of power in this country, but with that power, of course, comes a lot of responsibility and I am very pleased that we have representatives from CN and CP. They are down here today to talk—to help us move forward on ways that we can make railways safer for Canadian citizens.

We know that rail lines bring this very large country together. We also know that rail lines can actually keep people in this country apart, and I think of the rail lines that divide west Winnipeg from north Winnipeg; I think of the member for Transcona, who also represents people in south Transcona, and I know over the last years there have been challenges with people in south Transcona being able to get across to their friends and their neighbours on the north side of the tracks.

What we can agree upon is that however people deal with getting across the tracks, we want that to happen safely, and I think it's fair to say that every single member in this House, whatever party we might be from, share the goal of getting people across those tracks safely.

In a perfect world we would separate pedestrians and vehicles from rail lines, but we know that there is no way that you can have a graded crossing everywhere you want it, let alone every crossing in the province of Manitoba.

We know that when there's a level crossing sometimes lights and other features can make it safer for not just vehicles, but also pedestrians. Again, I don't think it's practical to expect that there can be

lights and other warning measures aside from a stop sign at many of the mile roads and many of the other crossings.

We know, and I know the member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski) alluded to this, we know that in some countries, in European countries that may be more heavily populated, effectively the rail lines are fenced off, except at level crossings. Again, we don't expect that that is ever going to be the case in a country as large as Canada, and even a province as large as Manitoba.

So I want the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé) to know that I know his community better than he may know. My kids' dentist, Dr. Jeff Hein of the Seine River Dental Centre, actually practices in Ste. Anne. He lives across a couple of rail lines near Ste. Genevieve so I do drive out there frequently, and I know that in that community the train goes through at very, very high speeds. And I know that, again, that is so important for commerce and for transportation in Canada, but we know the risks of that—that adds to the community.

We hope that good will come from such a tragedy that's impacted a family and has impacted a community and, I know from his words, has impacted the member for Dawson Trail as well.

So, certainly, our NDP caucus hopes that the passage of this bill will raise awareness within Manitobans. It will encourage those conversations, whether it's in the media, whether it's around the kitchen table, to make sure that parents do their best to make children understand. Sometimes, it'll be children educating their parents because of things they learn in school on what are and what are not safe practices. And I know even in my own community in the West End, we do have a rarely used—not rarely used but only a couple times a week, there's a train that goes across Ellice and Sargent and it is concerning to see people who think they can beat the train, that they don't want to be inconvenienced for those few minutes, who take risks for themselves, for their families and also for people who work on the railways.

I did ask the member a very honest question and I think he gave a very honest answer when I asked whether there would be any investment from the provincial government. Neither the member for Dawson Trail nor I can actually propose a bill that requires the government to spend money. That's a principle of our democratic system. The member did put on the record that the federal government has set

aside \$20 million that's going to be used for rail safety initiatives. We think that's a good thing. We know that \$20 million may sound like a lot, but it's spread pretty thin across a country as big as Canada.

* (10:50)

I wish the member for Dawson Trail success to take this bill to his Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Cabinet to make sure that the provincial government is invested in this, and I'm sure that if they work with CN and CP, perhaps with some of the communities like Ste. Anne, perhaps some provincial money can help to raise the awareness of this important issue even a little bit further. So I say this sincerely. I hope the member for Dawson Trail has some success on that front.

So, by all means, our NDP caucus is well aware of the importance rail lines play in our province. We want people to be able to cross the rails safely and we believe that this bill should help Manitobans understand this just a little bit better.

So, with those words, I will sit down. There may be a few other members that wish to speak. I expect we might have a night in committee in the near future when we can hear from other Manitobans with their views on this important issue.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about rail safety and what we need to achieve and where we are now.

First of all, I want to say a thank you to CN and CP, the federal government and others who are involved in this effort together with the MLA for Dawson Trail.

Second, I want to point out last year, in 2017 in Canada there were 75 fatalities associated with railways and rail use in Canada, and that number, sadly, is very similar to what it has been for the last 20 years. In other words, that what we're doing now is clearly not enough to make a difference—make—to make the difference that we really need, and we need to be looking at what has been recommend. We need to be look at, I suggest, even some novel potential approaches.

I have talked about using the railway museum. I think at the very least the railway museum probably could host a display on rail safety in highlight of Rail Safety Week, and it could be at the same time an opportunity to promote the railway museum which I think too—far too few Manitobans have visited. I was

there not very long ago. It really is an amazing collection of railway vehicles, cars and railway historical facts, some of which are fascinating and specifically related to Manitoba.

There have been quite a number of recommendations put forward in the report, Preventing Rail-Related Injuries and Deaths in Canada in operating lifesaver—in Operation Lifesaver in September of last year, and from other reports. There's a clear need for improved data, improved 'demographic' data collected nationally. There is, I suggest, because it was harder to find, a need to compile the provincial data related to rail accidents, and maybe that's something that the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé) could actually undertake together with the railways to make sure that we have each railway safety week a package of information for all MLAs to be spread and as part of the educational effort that I believe he wants to undertake.

There's an effort nationally to identify grade crossings that need safety improvements. I suggest this is something that could also be done with a Manitoba focus, that there could be an inventory of dangerous rail safety crossings and that this information could be made available on Rail Safety Week, and that an effort could be made with local communities to look at ways to improve those grade crossings. I mean, there is, after all, a federal-provincial infrastructure funding approach which might provide examples of infrastructure opportunities.

Google, Apple, Waze and Garmin are doing a lot of interesting things in terms of helping people find directions, and yet I understand that their information on railways in Canada and railways in Manitoba could be improved. So maybe this is something that the MLA for Dawson Trail could look into to make sure that that information is updated, and bring that to the attention—where there are shortcomings.

Suicides happening on rail locations are a sad fact of life. And clearly, as part of the suicide prevention approach which the Minister of Health was talking about, perhaps the member for Dawson Trail could talk with the Minister of Health about making sure that there's a rail safety component. For example, it has been suggested that railway workers could be strategically trained in preventing suicides and at identifying individuals who might be suicidal. Putting this material in the educational curriculum so that all students have access to some information on

rail safety could be another approach that could be looked at.

Interestingly, over the last, oh, 50 years, there's been a development of lasers to focus light. Well, a similar approach to focus sound so that it was directed right along the forward pathway of a railway in the railway line when a train is coming could perhaps be used to alert people who are accidentally or consciously at or along the railway line. And, in that way, you could do it without causing a lot of disturbance to people who are living near the railways but not, obviously, on the line.

So there are a lot of things I would suggest that could be looked at as, you know, existing opportunities and new opportunities. And hopefully this Rail Safety Week will provide a focus for undertaking this sort of a look, which could be helpful to all of us in Manitoba as we move forward.

Madam Speaker, those are my comments. I welcome those who come as visitors to the gallery and hope that many of you will join us in this effort to create a greater awareness of the need for rail safety. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further government speakers on the topic? Any speakers from opposition?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to finish my remarks before the time is up, so if the government could give me the signal when they'd like me to stop. Like with—okay, that—two days ago doesn't count.

Madam Speaker, this is an important bill. We have—Winnipeg's the only place in North America where three grade 1 railways meet: CN, CP, Burlington Northern. Rail safety is an important aspect. It has been dealt with federally and provincially. Many people are injured.

When I was minister responsible for VIA Rail, I was shocked—absolutely shocked at how many people died because of VIA Rail accidents. And the member from River Heights touched on it. And when I asked why so many people were dying and if it was normal, they said that it's because they know what time those VIA trails—trains are coming down the tracks. So something has to be done about that.

So the member for Dawson Trail is a great guy, great work, great effort. Thank you to the family. I'm done.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 221, The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act.

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

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 8—Manitoba Curling Week

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Manitoba Curling Week, brought forward by the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I move, seconded by the member from Dauphin, whereas—

WHEREAS the sport of curling, an official Olympic sport that was originally introduced in the early 1800s by Scottish immigrants, has a long history in Canada with now more than 1000 curling clubs across the country; and

WHEREAS curling has physical health benefits, including cardiovascular activity, improved balance and hand-eye coordination; and

WHEREAS curling is an inclusive sport, open to people of all ages and abilities, and is even adaptable to those with physical disabilities with aids such as delivery sticks and wheelchairs; and

WHEREAS curling is also a social sport, designed to get families out of their homes in the cold of winter for physical and social activity; and

WHEREAS curling clubs in all regions of Manitoba promote community involvement and participation; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is the world leader in curling with nearly 100 clubs and more national wins than any other province.

—THEREFORE IT—BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to declare the third week of January every year as Manitoba Curling Week and encourage all members of the Legislative Assembly to visit and promote their local curling clubs.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ewasko: I—gives me great pleasure today to stand and bring forward this important private member's resolution on Manitoba Curling Week. As we're waiting for more and more people to get into the gallery, Madam Speaker, I am going to speak to the resolution, and I know that my colleague—colleagues, one colleague from Dauphin and my colleague from Minto, are going to possibly put a few words on the record in regards to this resolution.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There's many reasons why this resolution should be passed and supported and passed today, Madam Speaker. We know that Manitoba has been rich in its curling history for quite some time. And the resolution originally was brought to my attention and also the member for Southdale's (Mr. Smith) attention by a constituent by the name of Patti Ulrich who felt it was very important that we bring forward this resolution here in Manitoba to declare the third week of January as Manitoba Curling Week.

Patti is a resident, a constituent of the MLA for Southdale and she is also a seasonal resident of mine in the constituency of Lac du Bonnet. And, later on in my brief time to be able to share with the House a few of the words in regards to the resolution, I am going to share a little bit of a story that Patti shared with me in regards to why she wanted to see this brought forward.

This resolution was also passed in New Brunswick, and we know that another province within this great country of ours, Saskatchewan, has actually declared a particular curling day. But Manitoba is going to be the second province in Canada that declares a Manitoba Curling Week or declares a week dedicated to curling.

Joining us in the gallery, I have a—I am going to table a list of guests later on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I do—did want to highlight a few of the great people that are joining us here today.

We do have the executive director for CurlManitoba, Mr. Craig Baker, and his wonderful staff have joined us today, and we can give a little bit of a wave.

We also have Mr. Resby Coutts, who is representing curl Canada.

We have builder and business owner, synonymous with the sport of curling, Mr. Arnold Asham, who has joined us here today as well.

We have members of the international curling centre for excellence committee, as well, have joined us today.

We've also have provincial junior, mixed, seniors, masters, men's and women's representatives here today, as well as provincial, national and international coaches, Mr. and Mrs. Lorne and Chris Hamblin, have joined us today as well.

We also have a group of students led by Ms. Theresa Bouchard in the gallery today, and they're part of École Edward-Schreyer School which is the fantastic secondary institution which I had the pleasure of teaching for many, many years. Ms. Bouchard is—was one of the first teachers in the province to bring forward a curling academy which, much like we hear of hockey academies and we hear of baseball and soccer academies, Beausejour is home of the curling academy which actually has three high—which students can actually get three high school credits by taking curling at the grade 9, 10 and 11 level, or the 11-G level, the 21-G level and the 31-G level as well, which is the only school in the province that holds all three levels for course credit, Mr. Acting Speaker.

We also have new residents to Manitoba, to Canada who have taken their opportunity to participate in this great sport of ours, and I'll—and like I said before, I'll share a little bit of that story in a few minutes.

Why is curling such a great sport, Mr. Acting Speaker? Well, it brings people together—*[interjection]*—Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Madam Clerk, for that clarification. Curling clubs all across this province of ours, we have just about 100 curling clubs, 95 affiliated with CurlManitoba and many more that are within our small communities. Curling clubs has been a community stronghold, a place for people, for friends, members to get together and enjoy their company from all over this great province of ours, but within particular towns. It encourages lifelong sport, relationships, friends. I mean, back when I was a junior curling in Manitoba, there were people that I had met during my junior days that I still curl against once in a while to this day. We are a little bit older. We are a little bit wiser. But we still share many of the stories, and I know that my colleague from Minto and I, we chatted the other day in regards to many of the curling stories that I'm sure each and every one of us here have shared at least five times a year, and every time we share that story—those particular

stories, it just continues to get funnier and funnier. And as the member from Minto had shared with me the other day, we could probably talk for hours about the many stories that we've heard.

Part of the reason why this resolution's being brought forward—I want to share this story from Ms. Patti Ulrich, and this is a very—this speaks to the resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She said, and I quote, several years ago when I was playing in a mixed recreational league, we had placed our league on the list of those that were both looking for new teams and individuals—individual players. We were approached by a gentleman that was looking for a team, and so my team took him on. He had recently completed a learn-to-curl session and was looking to play. This importance of this came to me after a few weeks of playing and socializing after the games with him, as he was an immigrant to Canada from India, and he'd decided that if he was going to be Canadian, he'd better find a Canadian sport to participate in. So he took up curling. Jayan Mathew, who's here with us today in the gallery, whom—and then back to Patti's quote—whom I curled with on my mixed team for a number of years. In our final year, we won the league championship as a team. This championship was special for our entire team, but it was great to share this with someone who was not exposed to curling all of his life, end quote.

The significance of this resolution is so that people from everywhere can learn and be involved in our great sport, as it offers so much to so many and can span for so many, many years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to raise awareness of the great sport of curling not only here in Manitoba, but in Canada and around the world to continue to grow our sport. We have had a little bit of a dip in the last couple years, but we know that the various variations of the game has changed over the last couple years in regards to the new mixed doubles, and we would be remiss not to give a shout-out to Kaitlyn Lawes, who's the reigning gold medalist, and, of course, her teammate, Mr. John Morris.

* (11:10)

And here in Manitoba, we also have the reigning world women's team of Jennifer Jones as well, which just basically tells us that here in Manitoba, each and every day, if you go out and you participate in the sport of curling, you actually have a chance to compete, to meet and have a pop with after the game of some world curling talent. And I think that's what's so special about this sport.

I must say that I'm also joined today by my wife Tracey and my son Brayden, who—for many, many years, Tracey and I have curled together since we were kids, and we continue to do that each and every year. And this year marks the third year that Tracey and Brayden and my son Jarvis were able to play in the Beausejour open bonspiel together.

And I think that, as well, exemplifies the reasoning for this resolution, is that this is a family sport. You can play this for many, many years, and you can enjoy those long-lasting, lifelong friendships that you make each and every day on that curling ice. So I'd like to thank everyone who joined us today in the gallery, and thank you—

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

Mr. Ewasko: I would ask leave to enter the names of our guests in the gallery into Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to have the names entered into Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Janet Arnott, Arnold Asham, Craig Baker, Guy Beaudry, Lauren Beaudry, Paige Beaudry, Larry Borus, Theresa Bouchard, Ryan Buss, Resby Coutts, Brianna Culien, Brayden Ewasko, Tracey Ewasko, Lynn Fallis-Kurz, Kyla Grabowski, Lorne and Chris Hamblin, Kathy Isaac, Keith Johnston, Amanda Kintop, Pamela Kok, Connie Laliberte, Val Letwin, Laurie Macdonell, Morgan Maguet, Elizabeth Mathew, Jayan Mathew, Bryne McKay, Bill Menzies, Julia Milan, Rose Neufeld, Connor Njegovan, Gordon Stelmack, Patti Ulrich, George Vargheese, Tom Want, Ron Westcott, Kevin Wiebe

Questions

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

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I want to commend the member for Lac du Bonnet for bringing this resolution forward today. I'd like to ask him: For those in this Chamber and those Manitobans who may not be as familiar with curling, what is the significance of the third week in January, which is

what would be named curling week under this resolution?

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to thank my honourable colleague for that question. What is the significance of the third week in January? Well, the significance of the third week in January, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that that is the kickoff of, sort of, our season of champions here in Manitoba.

That starts off with the Manitoba open curling bonspiel, which is the—still the largest curling bonspiel held in the world, and that's generally when our provincial championships happen. Except for the years when we have Olympics, where the ladies provincial championship is held prior to that bonspiel.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I want to thank the member and congratulate the member from Lac du Bonnet for bringing this very important resolution to the floor for debate. I know the sport of curling is important to many Manitobans across Manitoba, and there should be a dedicated week to this sport.

So where did the member get the idea for this resolution?

Mr. Ewasko: I thank my colleague from Dauphin for the question. As I chatted about a little bit earlier is that I had a constituent of the MLA for Southdale come and meet with that member and myself, and her name is Patti Ulrich. And she saw that New Brunswick had passed a similar resolution and thought that it would be very important to pass that in Manitoba.

And so it gives me great pleasure to bring it forward to the floor for debate, and hope to see all party—all members of the house support it and pass the resolution today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): The Jets are in the playoffs, but in curling, Manitoba is always winning. We expect it. I want this member to agree with the majority of Manitobans that curling is a superior sport to hockey. I don't want him to hide or curl under his table. Don't give me a wishy-washy, Kumbaya, hunky-dory response that we're so used to hearing from this member.

Manitobans want to know: is he for curling or is he against it? It's a binary answer, yes or no. Go hard on the answer. Go hard.

Mr. Ewasko: To—and I'd like to thank my colleague from Assiniboia for that hard-hitting question this morning.

Actually, to give a little bit of a history, I had actually quit hockey when I was 14 years of age to take up curling full-time. So, yes, curling is my No. 1 sport, and I absolutely love the sport, love the fact that I can go around to almost every curling club in this great province of ours and see somebody that I know or have a connection with because this great sport of curling, there's not a degree of separation between people; it's a sixteenth of a degree between the relationships that we all have with Manitobans.

So, yes, curling is the No. 1 sport in my eyes.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Can the member explain to us how he believes that introducing this curling recognition week will encourage or allow more people in some of our northern communities to participate in this sport?

Mr. Ewasko: How is this—I'd like to thank the member from Flin Flon for that question, and it is; it's very important to encourage not only curling to expand just in Manitoba, but absolutely the whole country as well, and in particular the North. I know that because of curling, there's many of the northern communities that I've had the pleasure of visiting and curling in their curling clubs. If it wasn't for the sport of curling, I might still be trying to get up and visit many of those communities.

How are we going to encourage this? Because part of the resolution is for all MLAs to visit their curling clubs. And I think the more and more—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Michaleski: I'm just going to continue on with your question because it's very important. Part of the resolution is asking the members of the Legislative Assembly to visit and promote their local curling clubs. And I know in my constituency of Dauphin, I have five clubs, and I try to get out to bonspiel, and I've played at a number of them in league play over the years. So, yes, I have five that I routinely try to participate in the bonspiels.

So could the member talk some more about the importance of curling clubs to local communities here across the province?

Mr. Ewasko: It—and I'd like to thank the member from Dauphin for the question so that I can also

continue on with my answer from the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) as well.

It is going to be very important for all MLAs to get out and to enjoy their local curling clubs. I know that I've—I have seven curling clubs, and I've had the pleasure of playing in all of them. And I think the community members really enjoy seeing their elected representatives come out and throw the odd rock with them as well. Whether they are experienced curlers or not so experienced curlers, I think it gives everybody an opportunity to get out there and participate in the sport.

Mr. Swan: I have no doubt that if there was a thing called the Canadian legislative curling championships, Manitoba would win year after year after year.

I'd like to ask the member for Lac du Bonnet, though, who would be on the team?

Mr. Ewasko: Well, here it goes.

So, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleague from Minto. As he knows, we have quite a few very talented curlers on all sides of the House in this Chamber, and I would have to—and I didn't get a chance to mention it in my first 10-minute speech, but the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has actually won the Manitoba mixed title back in the year of 2000. And so I would have to say that the Premier would definitely be on the team.

And there's some other members that I know that we'd be able to fill in that team as well. Matter of fact, I think we've got enough members here that we could have a couple teams, and we would do fairly well in regards to our curling club leagues and that.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I certainly would put my name forward as a member of such a team. I had a—*[interjection]*

* (11:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Micklefield: I had an inaugural curling experience this—in recent months, and I'm told that the noses of everybody in the viewing area were pressed against the glass.

So the question that I have is, if I wanted to pursue a curling career more seriously, how long would it take to get up to a decent standard?

Mr. Ewasko: I'd like to thank my colleague from Rossmere for the question.

I did have a—the opportunity to witness the member from Rossmere starting to curl, to learn some of the curling, and as many of our members in the gallery and in the House—I mean, the first stages to promoting and to getting involved in any sport is just to get out there and start trying and then practise. Practise makes perfect. And to the member from Rossmere, I know that he's got a very well represented club in his area, and I encourage him to get out there, visit and throw some rocks.

Mr. Swan: Well, of course, the member for St. James (Mr. Johnston) says get the lingo down. It's mainly the excuses that are very important for anyone that's new to the game.

In—serious, though, of course, Manitoba is a very diverse population, becoming more and more diverse. And although we heard a great story today, if you go to any curling club in or outside of the city it is predominantly white. And I'm just wondering if the member can put some thoughts on the record of how this resolution could help or what else we can do to make curling more attractive to everybody who's chosen to call Manitoba home?

Mr. Ewasko: I'd like to thank my colleague from Minto for the question.

It is very important that we're showing our diversity, because Manitoba is quite the cultural-diverse province, and I know that in many situations, much like the story I shared earlier, is basically putting that invite out. And I know that there's many teams that have been put together for years and years and years, and in some cases you want some of those teams to basically say, you know what, we're going to have an opening of our team, we're going to go out and invite somebody new to curling.

And so I strongly encourage all those teams that are out there curling to take on a new member and definitely reach out into our new immigrant—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

The time for question period has expired. The debate is open. Any speakers?

Debate

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): There's few speeches in this House that I'm going to give that I think I'll enjoy as much as this one.

I thank the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) for bringing this on, and I do want to recognize and thank everybody from the curling community that's come down here to listen to what I think is less of a debate and more of a general agreement and support for the great sport of curling which, of course, has its heart right here in Manitoba, Canada.

We wonder why is curling such a great sport and so popular in Manitoba. Well, it's a sport that has the advantage of being big yet small at the same time. We know that curling is big business for networks in Canada. We know that now, with the world tour and other events, there's high-calibre curling on television just about every week of our long winter.

But at the same time, even though people can watch curling on television and realize they may never be able to play as well as some of those teams, it's also a very small sport in that it is possible for anyone to get to meet some of the stars. I think—just in the past couple of months I took my daughter out to the Olympic trials for mixed doubles in Portage la Prairie, and we were able to actually sit in the front row, being just a few feet away from some of the best curlers in the entire world. We heard Jennifer Jones giving very clear direction to Mark Nichols—there was no question who was in charge of that team—and to see other great competitors.

Then, just a few weeks ago we were in the constituency of St. James. There was a grand slam event that was hosted by the Deer Lodge Curling Club next door to the civic centre and, again, we were able to come and watch some of the best teams in the entire world doing battle. And it was possible for those people who wanted to meet the players, get their autographs, get a selfie, perhaps even get a bit of advice—it's a sport that's very accessible.

Curlers are good people. Whether they are championship curlers, whether they're just the people you curl against on an evening in a recreational league, curlers are good people that are fun to be around and I'm very pleased we can recognize them today.

I curl at the Thistle Curling Club. The Thistle is one of the original clubs. I believe it was six that formed the Manitoba Curling Association more than 125 years ago. As I like to tell people, we are a drinking team with a curling problem and we are classic once-a-week recreational curlers.

One of the reasons why I love curling so much, though, is it is perhaps the only sport in the world where a team of once-a-week recreational curlers can actually step out and play against a world championship team without—unless you slip on the ice—the chance of any physical injury. There's not another sport in the world where that can happen.

And, of course, the third week in January is an exciting time for myself and my team because we always go in the CurlManitoba bonspiel, the biggest curling bonspiel in the world, and in that bonspiel the first draw is seeded entirely randomly, and in the course of our time in the bonspiel we've played some notable teams. One year we played Rainer Schöpp, who had won the German championship before, had gone to the then Silver Broom, and he and his team came to Winnipeg because they knew that was the greatest place in the world to go and tune up and play games.

Several years ago we played a team skipped by Pete Fenson. Pete Fenson had won the bronze medal in the Olympic Games the year before he played us. We held in there for about four or five ends. We came second. But it was a great opportunity to play against a team that had gone to the Olympics.

And I will never forget, in one of our first years curling at our club, then the Victoria, we were at the Calcutta, which, for those who don't know, it's another way for a curling club to raise a bit of money, where you get to bid on various teams to predict how well or how poorly they're going to do in the bonspiel. And at that time they would always give a little highlight of who the team was and who they were going to be playing, and this was before it was all online, so the club actually had the list that we didn't, and they announced our team and said, well, this team will be starting off against the defending Manitoba champion, Canadian champion and world champion Kerry Burtnyk rink out of Assiniboine Memorial. So there was a once-a-week recreational curling team playing against the defending world champions. Very nice guys, I might add, although they took it out on us on the ice, as they did to many, many other teams. We lost to the Burtnyk team, but it is something that I know my team will remember for the rest of our lives.

It is also the greatest sport if you are the parent of a participant. I know there's many people in this Chamber and perhaps up there that may have spent lots of cold mornings in ice hockey rinks, that may have driven their kids at 5 a.m. for swimming or

diving practice. I can say with complete assurance that being a curling parent is the best gig. You are always inside, you're behind the glass, you can be upstairs perhaps having a snack and even a beverage, and as long as you're watching your child throw their rocks, you have done everything you need to do.

My daughter has far exceeded my own limited successes as a curler. My daughter actually got to go to the Manitoba high school championships three years in a row where she and her city teammates found out that when you play country teams that might have played three or four times as many games there's sometimes a cruel reckoning, but they had a great experience.

She's now continued to curl and curls in a women's league at Fort Rouge, and they had the chance—and I believe Resby Coutts was there—she had the chance this year to score the very rare feat of cracking an eight-ender. An eight-ender, for those who don't know, is when all eight of your curling stones are in the rings at the end and none of the opponents' are in the rings or beating them out. And I had rarely seen an eight-ender—Lorne Hamblin, I'm not going to talk about that one—I had rarely seen an eight-ender, and the excitement that built in the curling club when one of the men who'd just come off the ice said, they're going for an eight-ender, and my daughter said, as she was ready to sweep her skip's rock, her skip looked up and saw nothing but a sea of faces upstairs at the Fort Rouge Curling Club. She did make the draw, they did get the eight-ender, and, of course, they will now be recognized with, I believe, a pin and a patch that they can be proud of.

*(11:30)

So there are many reasons why curling is a tremendous sport. I highly recommend a book by Sean Grassie called *Kings of the Rings, 125 Years of the World's Biggest Bonspiel*. I believe Sean was impressed by a speech that I gave at the opening of one bonspiel when I talked about the greatness of curling and the equity of curling, and that my team could be beat by any team regardless of their gender, their age, their sexual orientation or, indeed, their physical and mental disability. Nothing—nothing could prevent any given team from beating our team on any given day. I know that Sean loves the game and wrote a great book. He's a heck of a curler, too, and I encourage everybody to give it a look.

I also want to speak briefly about the time that we did outdo Resby Coutts. It was not actually because of our curling prowess; it was because of

our curling outfits. My team decided to invest in retro curling jerseys, our curling sweaters, and a photographer from the Free Press came out to take pictures of the game at Resby Coutts—I was playing in—but found our retro uniforms: shirts and ties and fedoras, so much more interesting that he decided to photograph us instead—which was a bit of a problem because—I will put on the record that my caucus was actually having a caucus meeting in Swan River and I had decided not to go, and that picture then made it onto the online and, ultimately, the print Free Press. And let me just say there was nothing that made Premier Selinger happier than seeing his Attorney General on the front pages of the sports section.

In all seriousness, there are some challenges yet. We know that a number of clubs inside Winnipeg and outside of Winnipeg have closed their doors in recent years, and I think of the CFB, the Grain Exchange, the Victoria, West Kildonan. I believe Rossmere is on a farewell tour that seems to be taking some time. It is a concern, and I hope that this resolution and the other efforts we can make as legislators, as influencers, can encourage more young people to take up the sport and also encourage other people who watch the sport on TV but have maybe never thought about actually going down to their local curling club and giving it a try.

We do need to work on making sure that curling reaches out to a diverse audience, and although I asked the question of my friend, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), I can say it was just a few weeks ago I was watching the city finals in high school and it was Tec Voc against Kelvin, and I do believe six of the eight players were visible minorities. Tec Voc actually won both the men's and the women's city championship just the year before, so I am hopeful that with our efforts and with some great champions for the sport we can continue to make sure that curling develops and, hopefully, the faces of the curling club look just the same as faces in the general public.

So let's hurry hard. Let's support curling and—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Yes, it's a real pleasure to get up and speak to this resolution from the member from Lac du Bonnet, and one that encourages all members of the Legislative Assembly to go and promote their local curling clubs, and

designating the last week—or the third week in January as Manitoba Curling Week.

So curling is big in Manitoba and my—most of my curling has been done in rural Manitoba out of Dauphin. But I have had a chance to curl in the MCA Bonspiel quite a few years back and was on that race around Winnipeg to get to game to game, so that was quite a—quite an event.

So—but it is, again, a big part of Manitoba. It's a big part of Manitoba's culture and history, and a big part of, you know, winter sports activities across Manitoba. And I think it's clear to—pretty fair to say that it's part of our fabric in the province. It's part of our DNA, it's been here for so long.

And, again, we have a lot of local clubs that I know, in my constituency, there is five, and of course there's different leagues for all ages and abilities to play. And whether you're men's or women or mixed or juniors or seniors, there's—in Dauphin—I—well, not unique to Dauphin, but there's legion curling teams and bonspiels and in Dauphin we have the farmers' club that's a really good club for people that are starting to get out and learn how to curl. It's—we play six short-end—or six ends, and a lot of times it's people that have never curled before. And the last time I had curled—I've curled there for a number of years, with some friends that'd came in, moved into Dauphin, and let's go. They didn't know how to curl, so we said, let's go. This is the perfect league to get involved in and so it was good. And that's really what curling's about. It's about getting people out. And then I think the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) said it right, curling are just good people.

But there's also a very social impact to this. Again, the whole exercise and active living promotion is good. And I'll just—I know it's been brought up here a couple of times, about the numbers and how to get people to get curling. I have a couple of, just suggestions. I know when I came back to Dauphin from Winnipeg, I didn't know—my friends at home moved away and I didn't have—so you just go down to the local club and put yourself up on the spare board and that actually, you know, you can get and meet a ton of great people at the local clubs, and it actually led into what started a very short, competitive, I guess—a quest for a little while. And I know it's—I know my son, he curls out of La Salle and—right now. And they're doing some door-to-door stuff. And a lot of people would like to curl. They don't know. And they did—I thought it was such a great idea to go around the community and ask

people, or just tell people, by the way, this is going on in our club. And it's just a great way to get the community organized and get the club re-building, so.

Anyway, we do have a proud and rich history in Manitoba. And it goes back to the 1800s, when—1880, with the Granite Curling Club—was the first club here in Winnipeg. And in the—by 1984, there was—sport had spread across Manitoba and 62 teams competed in the Manitoba's first bonspiel. So, in 1910, the Winnipeg was acknowledged as the curling centre in Canada. And of course, from there, 1927, the MCA Bonspiel, the world's biggest bonspiel, was held right here in Winnipeg. So we do have a long history of curling in this province. And even for the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), there was 50 sheets of ice at the Flin Flon Curling Club. So that's quite a—tells a story of—unique curling stories across Manitoba.

So, but since, over—in my life, we've seen a number of changes to the game. And brooms, I'm pretty glad that they went from corn brooms to these very light synthetic ones that are going on right now. And the change in the game, for the free-guard zone, and three-rock—it's totally changed the game. And, of course, our Manitoba curlers are just shining and playing that game at such a high level.

We have, again, a number of notable curlers in the province that are—have just been a tremendous inspiration to our kids. We've watched them on TV and they just play—they play at such a high calibre. And it's nice to—when we're watching those championships, that Manitoba—always you're—you always see them on the leaderboard someplace, and that's quite an achievement for Manitoba. Whether it's the—at the provincial—at the national level or international levels, you just keep looking for that Manitoba team to be there.

So the other part that's really important is—and I'm glad that we're moving ahead with this—is this International Curling Centre of Excellence. Manitoba, again, we're a proud province when it comes to curling. And this centre is really a showcase for our province, for the country and the world to see. We have—I'm really pleased that they were going to be able to move ahead with this and also, I'd like to say that the member's resolution is quite in line with this—with that move.

So, in closing, Manitoba is the curling capital and enjoyed and played by many Manitobans, of all ages. And we recognize Manitoba Curling Week will

only have positive outcomes. So, with that, I'll say again, hurry hard and get this resolution passed and we'll get it done. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (11:40)

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Thank you, Mr. Chair—or Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the comments that have been made. Thank you to the member for—from Lac du Bonnet for bringing this bill forward. I am a little bit disappointed he was wishy-washy in his answer to my earlier question about curling versus hockey. However, I think he is acceptably close to the right answer that I will focus these remarks on the importance of curling.

Curling is, as has already been mentioned, is one of those sports where it is inclusive. It's a lifetime sport. You can play it when you're a kid. You can play it when you're in university, parents, seniors. And you can play it at different levels of competition, and you can play it in teams of male and female at the Olympic level. There is no other sport like that. There was one suggestion that it's the only sport that you can't get hurt in. I'm not sure about that. Like, there's table tennis and swimming and sports like that. But maybe the member from Minto hasn't been involved in those sports.

But they—every member of this House, I'm sure, has curled, and, in fact, I think if one would look at the TV ratings, especially before the Jets came back, if there was an NHL game versus a Brier game or Scotties with Jennifer Jones in or Jeff Stoughton, the curling ratings would be higher. Now, there may be a blip in that now because the Jets are back, but even when they're back, there are some days where you can't go into a community club, a bar or public space without curling being on the, like, on the TV. That's how much curling is a part of the fabric of Manitoba.

And it's a unifier. My dad is a Jennifer Jones curling fanatic. And he's not even from Canada. He's from—actually, he's from Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia. Grew up in New Zealand. Comes to Canada. Curling fanatic. Go figure, unless you think about how he helped himself to integrate into our Canadian society. Curling, along with tennis—but we won't talk about tennis—curling helped him become more Canadian than many Canadians, if that makes any sense because curling is one of the most Canadian things that come to mind. When my brother—he's in San Diego—he talks about curling, they kind of look at him strangely, unless they're Canadians. And Canadians will play Canadians in the sport of curling wherever they are in the world. Sister's in Europe.

Same thing. You curl, you—they will find ice, and you will curl. You will find it. So it's not only a uniter in our country. It's a uniter for expats out of Canada.

Manitoba is particularly blessed. In fact, if you win the Manitoba Brier, you're more—like, that is really winning the world—like, from a—let's just—let's—okay, let's be honest. Manitoba not only does we—do we have the best curling teams, we probably have the best 100 curling teams. You come out of Manitoba, you are likely the best curlers in the world.

And yes, you know, Ontario might put in a team, or Quebec. I was in PEI many years ago, and I think it was the Scotties, and PEI, like, we all love PEI. They're adorable. But when it comes to Manitoba, it wasn't even close. I think Jennifer Jones just sort of walked away with that one.

The—if there is a curling superpower, it's called Manitoba. We have the—the government's introduced the facility for excellence in curling. I think that's great. So it could be a little redundant, because we already are excellent in curling, but why not share our expertise with the world?

I say, okay, that's a good—so people will come across the world to try and become better curlers. They can try, and it's always—if you're trying to become the best, it's always better to play against the people who are the best. So, obviously, Manitoba is the place to go for curling.

Another interesting thing about curling is there is disabled curling. And what, like, what do you mean, disabled curling? Is that the member from Lac du Bonnet's handicap for curling? No. First of all, there is no handicap in curling, that would be golf, which I'm not sure is a sport or not, but the—that's another debate. But people with—in wheelchairs, usually paraplegics, are able to curl. It's a thing. It's actually a big thing. It's one of those things that people with disabilities and occupational therapists use to bring people into the community.

And, when I was a federal Member of Parliament, we had this accessibility fund, and one by one, each curling rink—and each hockey rink, actually—we went around and we got grants to put in elevators so that not only could people in wheelchairs get to the ice, they could also get to the bar, which is on the second floor. And—actually, did I say bar—what I meant was the viewing facility with a beverage capacity at the rear for social engagement and critiques of the games that are happening from—

on the ice from behind a nice large window. And what other sport activity allows full inclusion—full inclusion?

Disability's one of the last frontiers—can you imagine, say, come on, let's all go out and play a sport or go and have a social event, but we're only going to—it's only men's only. You know, that's what happens a lot, or used to. We wouldn't dream of doing that. Now there's places where you wouldn't dream of saying, let's go, everyone. We'll just leave the disabled people behind. If that happens, it doesn't happen curling, because the people who I know who curl and are disabled could certainly beat everyone in this Chamber, especially the guy for Rossmere. In fact, the guy from Rossmere might get thrown down the ice.

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A point of order by the honourable member from Rossmere.

* (11:50)

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Yes, so I believe it is a breach of the rules to refer to the presence or absence of anybody in the Chamber, and I do believe that the honourable—my honourable friend from Assiniboia did just reference my presence in the Chamber which is against the rules.

I believe it's a legitimate point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on the same point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, Mr. Chair, I did not make comment if the member was here or not. I just said that if he was at curling, everyone I know—including those with disabilities—would beat him. And I never know if he is here or not, even when he's here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On that point of order, I declare that it is no point of order. He just—there was no indication there was any presence or—of—absence.

Mr. Fletcher: Congratulations to the member. Go curling, love curling, and we're on the button—on the time button. Go Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it is right and appropriate that we should have a curling week, and I'm pleased that the—this resolution has been brought forward.

There was a time when I was growing up when I used to do a lot of curling. You know, there's something very special about curling. The, you know, graceful swing of a rock, the slide out on—down the ice and excitement of trying to guess what's going to happen when your rock gets down to the other end. It's a really neat sport and in some ways it is Manitoba's sport. It's our provincial sport and we should be celebrating it. We are now going to be celebrating it with a curling week. We are also going to be celebrating it when it gets developed with an international centre of excellence here, and that, again, is appropriate given the incredible history of Manitoba as it comes to curling.

Watched with keen admiration to Jennifer Jones, Jill Officer, Dawn McEwen, Kaitlyn Lawes as they played in the championship recently and did amazingly well. They've got an incredible track record, have—as have other Manitoba curlers: the women's Cathy Overton-Clapham, Connie Laliberte and so many others.

And, of course, there's a similar list of—a long list

of men's curlers. There're really too many to name individually, but, certainly, when I was growing up I think it was Ken Watson's book on curling which was the bible at that point. It was a few years ago, now. But, nevertheless, it's an exciting game. It's an amazing game here in our province, and it's appropriate and well put forward that we now have—will have, I hope, with everybody agreeing—a curling week.

Thank you, Madam—Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any other further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): I'm wondering if you could seek leave of the House to see if there's agreement to call it 12 o'clock.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

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