

Third Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXXI No. 53A - 10 a.m., Thursday, May 24, 2018

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 24, 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

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker. Is there leave to consider concurrence and third reading of Bill 213, followed by Bill 219 and followed by debate on second reading of Bill 226?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to debate concurrence and third reading of bills 213 and 219 to be followed by debate on second reading of Bill 226? *[Agreed]*

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 213—The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act

Madam Speaker: We will then begin with Bill 213, concurrence and third reading of Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de reconnaissance des professionnels paramédicaux, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Swan: It's a pleasure to get up and stand and speak about third reading of Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act, an opportunity for all of us in this Legislature to really

recognize and say how much we appreciate the work of Manitoba's allied health-care professionals.

I want to thank all members of this House for the comments that were put on the record in debate on this bill and also a very positive committee meeting that we had a couple of weeks ago.

I want to thank members of the allied health-care community that came out to present at the committee hearing, including Mr. Bob Moroz of the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals, Jennifer Wojcik of the Dietitians of Canada, Mr. Jim Hayes of the Manitoba Physiotherapy Association, Ms. Esther Hawn and Ms. Heidi Garcia of the Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists and Mr. Bram Kok of the Manitoba Orthotics and Prosthetics Association.

They gave us a tremendous view, if you will, of the breadth and the width of allied health-care professionals in Manitoba. Again, I want to thank all members of this House for what was a very informative and positive evening, and we look forward to May 14—or the week of May 14 being Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week in 2019 and all years following.

With those comments, Madam Speaker, I am quite happy to hear what other members have to say, but to pass this bill this morning.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate on the bill? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act.

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

Bill 219—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Inappropriate or Unsafe Footwear)

Madam Speaker: We will then move on to the next bill, 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Inappropriate or Unsafe Footwear).

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Fontaine: I'm pleased to stand in the House today to offer a couple of words in respect of Bill 219.

First and foremost, like my colleague from Minto, I do want to thank everybody in the House for supporting this bill and standing with Manitoba women, ensuring that Manitoba women are given the safeguards that they need to be able to execute their duties in the service industry and restaurant industry.

I think that, as everybody—and we have repeatedly said on a variety of different fronts, it is 2018, and we should be ensuring that women are safe in the workplace and that we're not further entrenching a system in which women's bodies are sexualized and putting them at risk in the workplace.

I do want to also just say miigwech to all of the presenters that came and presented a couple of weeks ago at the standing committee on private members' business.

There was some phenomenal presentations, including from two women, Amy McGimpsey and Allison Ferry, who've actually been working on a variety of different fronts for the last couple of years to draw attention to women being forced to wear high heels in the work place, so I do want to just take this moment to acknowledge and honour them, and I look forward to having this bill come into effect.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate on this bill? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Inappropriate or Unsafe Footwear).

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

I declare the motion carried.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

Bill 226—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move on to debate on second reading of Bill 226, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon West, who has five minutes remaining.

* (10:10)

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise to continue debate on this bill. It was some time ago—I had to go back to the notes—almost a month ago that we did first start to debate this, and I know the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) seems to think it's a critical piece of legislation, but if it took another month to come back, obviously, it's not that important to them.

You know, we did have debate about—that this was already under way and is being dealt with at the national and provincial level, and he could have found out had he only taken the time to go and meet with the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson). She could have easily told him that the vital statistics council of Canada has been dealing with this issue for a number of months now in a interjurisdictional advisory group, and we're making sure that it will be appropriate for all Canadians and not just individuals in Manitoba.

So, again, the NDP tries to divide people rather than being inclusive. We saw that they tried to do that with Bill 18 and at that time they promised—and several members that are still in opposition here now promised when they were in government that Bill 18 would end all bullying in schools, Madam Speaker, and we know that that would not be the case.

We tried to amend the bill at that time to make it more appropriate for the school divisions so they could deal with cyberbullying and other issues of that nature, but the minister at the time, Nancy Allan, denied all amendments, said that there would be no amendments to the bill, that it was the best thing that could possibly happen, but all it really did was divide Manitobans.

And that is the culture of the NDP. They like to see division. We see that within their own caucus. When we saw them in government, there was lots of division there. We continue to see division in the caucus here now, Madam Speaker, so if the leader would only talk to people he would find out this is

already in process and it can be a very inclusive process.

As, you know, as we saw recently in Brandon, Madam Speaker, on the weekend, obviously, we had some serious issues there with devastating fires. The Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Cullen) has spoken about it in a ministerial statement in the House. We thank the minister for coming to Brandon to meet with people there. The MLA for Brandon East and I have been in Brandon often over the last week meeting with individuals that were displaced and business people in the city of Brandon and various people out there, and making sure that we're moving ahead in the best way possible.

While it is a devastating fire and displacement of many families, they are dealing with it as best they can being accommodated in the Victoria Inn. Donations are coming in from around the country for these individuals, not just financial but clothing and all of the necessary things that you need to raise a young family.

We're working with Manitoba Housing and the other two groups that are involved in Massey Manor to make sure that we can place these individuals and their families as quickly as possible. And even Monday when the MLA for Brandon East and I were there, we saw the children going off to school so there's some—or not on Monday but on Tuesday—some normalcy in their lives, people going back to work and, you know, we're trying to make things as normal as possible with them.

Everything—although it was devastating, Madam Speaker, everything really worked. You know, the mutual aid with the other fire departments coming in, setting up shop and fighting fires immediately, the geo-positioning of ambulances that the Minister of Health has spoken about, how that system works. That worked as well because the ambulances of the city of Brandon were busy with the fires. We brought in other ambulances from around the region that were ready for any emergencies that would entail, so we know that that all works.

The Bear Clan has been exceptional, as has been St. Matthew's Cathedral, Manitoba Health as well, even things you don't think about. When people left Massey Manor, they left their documents, they left their prescriptions there.

Manitoba Health and the nurses have been integral in that in replacing those prescriptions for

the children, for the families, to make sure that they can move ahead with their lives, Madam Speaker.

So I just can't say enough about the people of Brandon, the governments that are involved. The City of Brandon has been an integral part of this and we thank them for their time. I know they're still there on a daily basis dealing with the families, and this Friday we hope to be able to take some of the individuals in to collect some of their significant documents. It'll be a challenge for them seeing their suites that have been damaged, but we hope to make their lives a little more normal.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to support this bill.

This is a bill that, you know, we're in 2018. This is a bill that should've been passed, you know, probably 10 years ago.

We're going to be celebrating our 25th year Pride parade in Manitoba, and Manitobans are asking for this to be something that's included on their Vital Statistics birth certificate. It's already an option on passports. We're behind times in our province. I urge this government to support this bill.

If they're listening to Manitobans at all, they would know that this is something that prevents bullying. As an educator myself and as someone who worked very closely with our GSA groups in our schools, children want to be called by pronouns. They want to be recognized by who they are, not by what it says on their birth certificate, and parents as well. Parents want the option, if their child wants to change that, to be able to change that. What parent wants to tell their child that they can't—that they have to identify as a male or female, when that's not who they feel they are? You know, what are we saying to our children when we're not giving them the options?

Working in the school division, we see many kids that often are falling through the cracks because of this very reason, because they have to be called male or female, or go to the male or female bathroom in Seven Oaks School Division. We have gender-non-gender bathrooms. That was a big undertaking by the division because of what the students were saying that they needed and wanted. So all of our new schools don't have male and female bathrooms anymore; it's gender-inclusive bathrooms.

And, you know, children should not—and adults—you know, Sam was the one that inspired this bill, but there's many others behind Sam that also want this bill to pass. They want to be able to identify with who they are, whether they're non-conforming, whether they're trans, whether they're, you know, male or female. It's up to them to have the choice to be able to do that, and we're bringing this bill forward to give Manitobans a choice, that very choice.

And if this government is listening to Manitobans, they'll vote with us today and they will give Manitobans that choice and they will give those people the voice that they need to be able to make the choice that they want. Diversity, inclusion are values that all Manitobans strive for. You know, we live in a very diverse province here, and we're diverse because we are accepting. So why are we not being accepting of people who don't want to be, you know, identifying as male or female? If we're truly inclusive and we're truly saying that we support all Manitobans and that we support their choices, then this government will vote in favour of this bill.

The member was talking about people coming in from the North because of the fires. Well, many of our indigenous people are two-spirited people, and they're revered in our community as, you know, people who hold, really, both feminine and masculine sides and have a lot to contribute to our community. And we think that, you know, that's something that should be celebrated, not, you know, put into this corner where they have to say, well, yes, I'm born male, I have to identify as male, but really I'm not male, I'm female, unless I'm, you know, getting the operation to be identified as female.

Manitobans expect their laws to reflect these values. Well, if we're listening to all Manitobans—and, you know, I expect to see all of our colleagues on the other side of the House attending Pride, whether that's in Brandon or Steinbach or here in Manitoba or in Winnipeg, that you're going out and you're marching and you're walking and you're celebrating the diversity of Manitobans, because this is what it's about. It's not about excluding. It's not about judgment. It's about opening our arms and making space for people within our circle. And that's exactly in our indigenous communities: no one is above one another. There's no judgment. If someone wants to come into your circle, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, class or religion, our circle is open. We let that person in, we embrace them and, you know, we celebrate their gifts, always.

* (10:20)

So we're not a hierarchical system where it's, like, okay, because you're a woman you can only do this. Like, everyone has gifts and everyone has something to contribute, and we need to value what this bill will bring forward, which is choice for our Manitobans to be able to decide whether they want to tick off that X. That should be their choice, not ours, and this bill would essentially give them that choice.

By expanding the options of identification on government documents to provide individuals who identify as non-binary an option of making that choice, it's all about choice and if we're going to just, you know, vote against this and keep people from having that choice, we're doing a disservice to Manitobans. We have to ensure that they have choice to be able to decide who they want to be.

You know, I was born a woman, but when I was a young girl I was very much a tomboy. I played with trucks. I climbed trees. I hung out with boys. You know, I didn't wear my first dress 'til I was, like, 24 years old. You know, I was very much a tomboy and, you know, I raised my children to, you know, if they want to wear pink, my—I have two older sons—wear pink. If they want to wear purple, wear purple, totally up to them. It's not for me to decide. If my son wanted to play with a Barbie, power to you. Play with a Barbie.

Same with my daughter; my daughter's 15. She's a bit of a tomboy as well. You know, she dresses very much sporty and, you know, she plays rugby and that's her choice. I don't ever take that choice away from her. I'm not saying, hey, you're dressing too much like a male. Like, it's up to her and if she, you know, decided that she wanted to have a female as a partner, I would support that fully. And if she wanted to tick off that X in a box on her birth certificate, if that was a choice, I would support her wholeheartedly because that's the choices we need to make for our children and for our community of Manitoba here.

This is what Manitobans are asking for. They are asking for support from this government to be able to have that choice, and who is it for us to say that they shouldn't have that choice? So I urge this government to support this bill today.

My niece, she's now 23 years old—or, no, she's 24 now. She's a lesbian. She lives with her partner and she—I talked to her about this. If she had the choice, she would tick off that X box because that's

who she is. She doesn't want to be conforming to male or female. She's non-binary. She doesn't want to be—have to, you know, be put in a corner where she has to decide, but that's the way it is right now.

So we need to give Manitobans choices. We need to ensure that our children and our parents have those choices for their children and we need to ensure that all Manitobans have that choice, whether they want to tick that X box or not.

So, miigwech, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to put a few words on the record and I urge this government to support this bill. Manitobans are asking for it, and if they're listening they will vote with us today and pass this bill.

Miigwech.

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): I rise on this beautiful morning to join my colleagues to speak to Bill 226, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, brought forward by the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew).

As we have mentioned many times before, good governments make difficult decisions that are necessary to ensure the protection and sustainability and quality of service for the people we serve. A part of making those decisions is a consultation process, Madam Speaker, and our government knows this. It's our duty as elected officials to do our homework and not just play politics like we see from the members forward when they bring this bill forward today in the House.

What he is requesting today does not require legislative change. Making a change to a gender-neutral option for birth certificates does not require a legislative amendment. Sex is not defined in The Vital Statistics Act.

Madam Speaker, we are looking closely at this matter and we want to get this policy right. Our government has promised to be open and transparent and that means engaging with and listening to all Manitobans. *[interjection]*

You know, Madam Speaker, I hear comments from members opposite. I take this bill very seriously. I take this discussion because it is inclusive of all people in this province. I know that the member opposite may not agree with words that I'm speaking, but we are inclusive. We are listening. And I would ask members opposite to give that respect so that my words can be on the record so that my respect for all Manitobans in this province, just

like hers were, can be heard and represented. And I thank her very much for that option.

Is this bill just another example, Madam Speaker, of opposition failing to do their due diligence, like they've done before? Time and time again, the NDP made decisions affecting communities, people, businesses without proper consultation. It goes without saying that it is important work that committees undertake in areas like representing the underrepresented, speaking for the vulnerable and standing up for those who need our support. Our government is inclusive of the LGBTTTQ* community and we will continue to be inclusive of all Manitobans, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

I am proud, Madam Speaker, that we are the first Legislative Assembly in the country to have gender-neutral washrooms. Renovations that happen in this very Chamber or throughout the building have gone a long time to—have gone a long way in advancing inclusion, not only in this building but around our province.

We announced in September of last year three new resources to enhance the safety and well-being of our youngest community members: Creating Racism-Free Schools through Critical/Courageous Conversations on Race; Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Manitoba Schools; and Safe and Caring Schools, a whole-school approach to planning and safety and belonging.

In November of 2017, Manitoba Education and Training provided regional implementation sessions on the recently released support document, Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging. Sessions also continued to be offered for the provincial document Towards Inclusion: Supporting Positive Behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms. We have made and we will continue to make, Madam Speaker, meaningful progress in building a more inclusive school system and improving educational opportunities for students and their families.

Our government will continue to work with our educational partners, schools, educators, students, parents, to make all of our schools a safe, caring and inclusive environment, and as I have gone 'acround' this province and as a former school trustee in the Louis Riel School Division, I have witnessed the good work over many years that they have done, and it's refreshing to see that our children are in good hands because, you know what, Madam Speaker?

The right decisions are being made for those children because they're our future.

At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, our government wants to ensure that we are consistent with what is happening across other jurisdictions in Canada so we don't have a variety of policies from province to province and territories. We don't want to make the same politically motivated mistakes as the previous government made by implementing quick fixes that result in unsustainable spending growth and massive debt.

The Vital Statistics Council for Canada is an interjurisdictional advisory group composed of the heads of vital statistics divisions or agencies from all of the provincial territories—and territorial governments and the health statistics division of Stats Canada. It is currently looking at this issue, Madam Speaker. The council has been exploring options for uniform approaches and lessons learned from jurisdictions that have begun to implement alternative options to displaying male/female on birth certificates. I, for one, am looking forward to hearing the outcome of that review. I think that will be very inclusive for all Canadians.

* (10:30)

We know that Newfoundland offers an X for birth certificates, and they are currently the only province that offers this. Ontario is looking at amending their legislation to enable the insurance of birth certificates without sexual designation or with an X. And in spring of 2017 they announced that an X option would be available for driver's licence and provincial ID cards. The Yukon, Alberta and the Northwest Territories have introduced similar legislation, but it has not been passed nor implemented.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, legislation of this nature varies across jurisdiction, and if I look to what some of the research that has been done about what the federal government has been looking into, as of August of last year, 2017, Canadians were—can—could—can request an X-gender identification on their passports as well as other documentations issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Bill C-16 passed in June of 2017, which added gender identity and expression of an explicit protected ground under the Canadian Human Rights Act, and also in January of 2017, to go back, followed a human rights complaint by trans activist Christin Milloy, sex gender information is no longer required for social insurance number cards. So at

least those are three options that have started the process of this conversation.

That said, Madam Speaker, Manitoba is participating in the interjurisdictional advisory group which is reviewing options to the traditional male-female sex designation categories.

Let's ensure we get this right. It's important for all Manitobans that we get this right. We want to respect the process, but more than that we want to ensure that regardless of anyone's gender identity or sexual orientation that persons feel confident knowing their government is working to ensure that Manitoba is a province that they feel accepted, safe and heard.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to rise to speak on this bill today and want to congratulate my leader, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), for bringing this bill forward.

This bill is actually very simple. They will amend The Vital Statistics Act to provide a gender-neutral option for designating a person's sex on birth certificates and other official documents issued by the Province of Manitoba. That's all it does. It just creates a third option for Manitobans who feel their own identity is gender neutral. It doesn't fit into either of the two boxes that they've been required to fill since this province began its history.

Now, I'm surprised by members of the government saying that we are somehow playing politics by bringing forward a bill which is going to provide more rights for Manitobans—rights, Madam Speaker, that are important to those Manitobans, and at the same time do not take anything away from anybody else. Sometimes there's a difficult balance to be reached when giving someone rights might actually take away from somebody else. This bill only adds to the protection that Manitobans have.

And I understand from the comments that the government members have put on the record last time this was debated and today, that somehow they feel the push for human rights is unnecessarily political. You know, next week, I and many of, well, almost all of my colleagues who are able to attend, will be at the Pride rally. That rally happens right here at the Legislative building. If you talk to people who've been pushing for improved rights over decades and decades, they will tell you there's a reason why that happens at this Legislature: because

this is where governments make decisions that impact people's lives. And in this province over the past 40 years, it has been progress in moving the goal posts in the way that government deals with the LGBTQ community, the way that we provide human rights to our citizens and the way, frankly, that we protect people, especially young people but not just young people, from discrimination, from harassment and also allow them to express themselves the way they want.

Now, we already know that Canadian passports changed last year. The member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) acknowledged that in her comments and I thank her for that. As of August 31st, 2017, any Canadian who wishes to express their gender as gender neutral has the ability to have an X on their passport. The Canadian passport, I think you would agree, Madam Speaker, is one of the highest levels of identification that anyone can have, and it's one of the great benefits of being a Canadian.

The Canadian government has actually moved with the very highest, most formal document with the most checks and balances and has said yes, we can add an X to the passport without there being any difficulty. We are simply asking that the same thing happen for provincial identification.

I was surprised time flies in this place, Madam Speaker. I was surprised to note that it was six years ago that I was very proud to stand in this House and introduce amendments to the Human Rights Code, the first amendments in some time in this province, and in that amendment, we made sure that gender identity was a characteristic that was prevented—or prohibited for discrimination, and I was very proud, first of all, that my caucus supported moving ahead on that.

I was also very proud that this Legislature actually passed that amendment to the Human Rights Code unanimously. I was very proud of that, and I thought it made a big difference, but moving ahead on human rights doesn't always just mean preventing discrimination. Sometimes it doesn't mean just bare tolerance that this person can do that but you don't have to like it; you just have to agree that it's legal.

This is taking another step further. This is saying to people who believe that their gender identity does not fit neatly into male or female, are safe, they're welcome, and they're entitled to do so.

I don't understand why the government wouldn't pass this bill on to committee. If there are challenges

with the timing, the government could discuss that with us. Perhaps the bill could then come into force at a date to be specified by proclamation.

The member for St. Vital went on and acknowledged the moves in different provinces. Ontario has now moved—Ontario, the largest province in Canada with over 14 million people, has moved in this direction. Newfoundland has moved in this direction. Northwest Territories has moved in this direction, and as the member for St. Vital has confirmed, there are several other provinces all moving in the same direction.

There is not confusion. There is not difficulty. We have provinces that have moved in this direction, provinces moving in this direction, and provinces that haven't moved yet, but we know that Manitoba can move ahead. There is no barrier to this happening. There will be some work that has to be done by Vital Statistics, by Manitoba Public Insurance, by other government agencies and quasi-government agencies; that's true, but there's no reason why it ought not to happen and it ought not to happen today.

And why is it important? Well, I would like to think that every member of this House understands that LGBTQ youth have challenges that cis-gendered youth do not have. There's a higher rate of bullying of young people that express themselves in a way that the traditional societal norm has not always accepted.

Unfortunately, we know that many youth are more likely to be prone to suicide, more prone to addictions, more prone to mental health issues because of the challenges in-existing in a society which, for a long time, has rendered them outcasts.

And this bill is not going to solve every problem, but this bill is going to take another important step on the way. It's going to move the goalpost just a little bit further and, yes, it is political. I'm standing here in the Legislature making a speech, but it's only truly political if the government refuses to even pass this bill on to committee; then, it is a political issue. If we can stand as one in this Legislature as we did when we amended the Human Rights Code just six years ago to protect people from discrimination based on their gender identity, it is an entirely non-political event.

So, with that on the record, Madam Speaker, I am hopeful when we rise to vote on this bill in just a few minutes that the government will keep moving

those goalposts, keep moving us forward, and let Manitobans who don't fit into box M or box F know that this Legislature has their backs.

*(10:40)

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I always find it a pleasure to take the opportunity to stand in the House and put a few words on record on any debate that's come before us. And this one, particular, I do want to thank the Opposition Leader for putting this on-moving this bill forward. It does give us an opportunity as government and opposition and everyone in the House to have a debate and to put out there the important information that so many people not only in our cities, but in Manitoba and across the country are not up on and should be.

When we talk about issues related to society and moving along forward in society, the different groups, whether it be an ethnic group, a cultural group or even the LGBT community, they've come a long way, Madam Speaker, and they have a right to move forward and I will stand in this House and say I want to see them move forward. They have as much right to be in this House as we do. They have as much right to live the life that they so choose, and who are we to say otherwise? We are on one team and I agree that we need to get together and we do need to work together in the best interests of all Manitobans.

And I've said it many times when I'm standing in the House talking, the opportunities that I get—but I truly do believe, Madam Speaker, that each one of us, every MLA that's sitting in this House are here with what we believe is the right reasons. I truly believe we put our best efforts forward on bringing what's right for Manitobans. Yes, I'll agree that there are some times that the opposition, their job is to oppose and that's what they do. And our job as government is to govern, and that's what we do. We will have our disagreements, but we certainly have an opportunity to agree on certain things as well.

I know we heard earlier, Madam Speaker, that the Pride community is gearing up to kick off. I know tomorrow here in Winnipeg that they have the flag raising for the Winnipeg Pride and they're moving forward on their 31st Pride Festival which will run until June the 3rd, I believe it is, here in Winnipeg. I wish them all the best in their pride, and even speaking of that, a little closer to home, the Brandon Pride will run from the 11th of June 'til the

16th of June. And I want to give a big shout out to Kenneth Jackson, who is a big component in Brandon of moving the Pride movement forward. Both my colleague from Brandon West and myself, along with His Worship Mayor Rick Chrest, attend the flag-raising ceremony in Brandon. We attend the walk with them when we can and, again, it's simply because we're all in this together. We're all humans. We all need to have the ability to move forward.

Madam Speaker, I do want to just wave off just a little bit because this is my first opportunity to rise in the House and speak since last Saturday and, again, I know my colleague from Brandon West mentioned some of the efforts going on in Brandon and we talk about communities working together regardless of religion, regardless of sex, regardless of ethnicity. I mean, we had a catastrophe in Brandon last Saturday where we lost a number of businesses. We have almost 200 families of different creeds in the community that are right now in a hotel.

And I do want to put on the record the gratitude and the thanks I have for the Brandon Fire & Emergency Services and the outlying communities. It's the first time in talking to the deputy fire chief in Brandon, and he's been on the force for 30-some years, where he said he cannot remember in his history where outside departments came into the city of Brandon to help in a catastrophe, and that's what I'm going to call this because that's what it was at the time. Many times, the City of Brandon emergency services, fire and emergency services, have gone outside the community and assisted where they can, but never before have we had the need that we can remember in recent history of other forces coming in.

So a big thank you to the Shilo, Carberry, Wawanesa, Souris fire departments, Manitoba Hydro, firefighters. There were so many, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, even places like Portage that had offered to come in. Dauphin Fire Department offered to come in. You know, it just shows that we have so much community support and, again, that's why we stand in this House. That's why we debate these issues.

When we look at the outgoing support that we have in our communities and we relate it back to what this bill is, when we look at the LGBT community, that's something our government has been very inclusive with and will continue to be inclusive to all Manitobans regardless of their gender identity or their sexual orientation. I do know that the Vital Statistics Council for Canada, Madam Speaker,

is currently looking at this issue and we'll respect that process and look forward to their review when these issues come forward.

Again, I appreciate the fact there are two provinces in Manitoba, I believe, that have already moved forward and placed an optional X box on the birth certificates. Again, it's something that we need to have some jurisdictional coverage right across the country.

I know the member from Minto did mention that the passports have already been—I believe he mentioned the passports already have a spot on it where they don't have to identify M or F, that they can put an X, but I also know there's a cautionary note from the government that they cannot guarantee that you will have entry or transit beyond border controls in other countries. We don't know if they're going to accept that or not. So while it's out there in some areas, I still think there are opportunities—you know, places like the Yukon, Alberta and the Northwest Territories, they've introduced legislation, but again, they haven't moved forward on it.

Again, I—there is a 'judicial' thing going across Canada where we need to make sure that, you know, we're on the same page. Let's not reinvent the wheel when we don't have to. You know, we have a lot of opportunity here.

When we look at gender identity, Madam Speaker, it is protected under the grounds—under the Manitoba Human Rights Code, and again, this has been interpreted legally to 'include'—to include gender expression. I don't think in any way that any member in this House will stand up and not agree with people to have the ability to self-identify. That is an extremely important aspect we have in this day and age and especially in Canada.

You know, birth certificates for people in Manitoba are, as we know, are issued by the Vital Statistics Manitoba, and currently they do list the sex of the person on the document. So again, some of the issues I know I had when I looked at it originally is putting an X on a birth certificate. That's the day someone is born, to—who puts the X on it? Is it the mother? Is it the father? Or is it the ability to have a one-day-old baby put an X in a box on a birth certificate? I understand the desire to maybe go back and make changes to it by the individual when they self-identify, and I certainly support that.

However, again, to—*[interjection]* Absolutely, we support it, and I'm not saying that it's not. I'm just

saying that there's a process going on right now that we need to follow, and we hear a lot of times in this House that, you know, from the opposition, that we don't listen to the federal government; I've heard that we fight with the federal government. Well, here we are working with the federal government, and it's a great opportunity for us to build a strong, united Canada on this issue.

Again, you know, we have a society that has changed in many ways over the years. We've had a vast increase in immigration. I know even in some of the work that I've done previously, Madam Speaker, where I've had classes of people where I teach non-violent crisis intervention, and ninety per cent of the class were immigrants.

And, you know, they self-identify the issues that they face in the community, which is no different than the LGBT community identifying, you know, the trials and tribulations that they face in moving forward, but everybody is moving forward. Society is changing. I'm really happy to say that I believe that society is more acceptable, which we should be.

I mean, people—again, I've said it probably three or four times but I'll say it again—people have the right to self-identify. I do not stand in the way, in this House or any place, to get in the way of what their goal is. But again, I believe in process. And again, the process is already under review.

So, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —they want to change the law today. I understand that. But the law's—the review is already in process, so there is no need to rush it. Let's do it right. Let's do it the way we should be do it.

Again, the term non-binary can mean different things to different people. At its core, it's used to describe someone whose gender identity isn't exclusively male or female.

* (10:50)

Again, Madam Speaker, I could go on. I have lots of documentation. I did lots of research on this because I want to be fair, but my time is coming to a close so I thank you for the opportunity to raise a few points today.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure today to rise to put a few words on the record in regards to the private member's bill, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

And, Madam Speaker, it sure, as I was listening to my colleagues on both sides of the House today in regards to the bill brought forward by the member from Fort Rouge—and at this time I'd like to extend my congratulations to the member from Fort Rouge and his wife on their birth of their son. It is, as many of this House have experienced, quite the sort of rollercoaster of emotional times having newborns and there's the joys and the excitement and, of course, all the wonder and the—and how you watch them turn into little people as the days and the weeks move on, and I know that it's only been a short time now, but they will see that.

And it's not as if this is his first, so, I mean, he's gone through this already so I'm sure that they're adapting quite well and then every child comes into this world and then throws you different curveballs as parents, mostly good but there are some questionable ones all the time as well.

I've chosen to get up to put a few words in—the record in regards to this private member's bill. I know that there's members on the opposition side that still would like to speak to this bill. I know because there was many conversations happening as my colleague from Brandon East was speaking, and I know that the member from Point Douglas who stood up and shared some of her stories and used to on the bill—it was sort of a little disheartening when I was listening to my colleague from Brandon East that the member from Point Douglas still had quite a bit of things to say, but yet she had lots of time left on the clock and it was sort of, you know, then she should have used up her time at that time as opposed to talking when the member from Brandon East was talking—[*interjection*]-and she continues, Madam Speaker.

So it's interesting that the bullying techniques and tactics that she used in her educational world, she wants to now bring into the House.

So we know that gender identity—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —is a protected ground under the Manitoba Human Rights Code. This has been interpreted legally to include gender expression, and birth certificates for people born in Manitoba are issued by Vital Statistics Manitoba and currently list the sex of that person on that document. Individuals have been able to change the sex designation on their Manitoba birth certificate without undergoing or

having to prove gender reassignment surgery since 2014.

We know that the Vital Statistics Council for Canada, this is the advisory council that basically sits as an interjurisdictional advisory group composed of the heads of the Vital Statistics divisions and agencies from all provincial and territorial governments, and the health statistics division of Stats Canada. The council provides a forum for developing common approaches for collecting vital statistics, sharing information and for facilitating problem solving by sharing experiences, research findings and expertise among the jurisdictions, Madam Speaker.

I just wanted to put a few of those facts on the record, Madam Speaker, because I see that there are jurisdictions throughout Canada that do have the authority and are working on various different topics throughout Canada to make Canada a more inclusive country, the great country that we stand up for each and every day, and as the bill has been brought forward, we know that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

In accordance with our rule 24 and as previously announced, I am interrupting this debate to put the question on the second official opposition selected bill.

The question before the House and a second reading of Bill 226, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (11:00)

Order, please.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 226, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Ewasko, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 13, Nays 30.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

RESOLUTIONS

Madam Speaker: The hour's now 11 a.m. and the time for private member's resolution.

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith). The title of the resolution is Celebrating Pride in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Point Douglas. The title of the resolution is Celebrating Pride in Manitoba.

Res. 17—Protecting Manitoba's Lakes, Rivers and Communities

Madam Speaker: The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Protecting Manitoba's Lakes, Rivers and Communities, being brought forward by the honourable member for Logan.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer)—Protecting Manitoba's Lakes, Rivers and Communities.

WHEREAS Manitoba's lakes, rivers and communities are special places which deserve government protection and investments so that future generations can continue to enjoy them; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg and Manitoba are home to beautiful natural rivers, like the Seine River, that are at risk of being degraded by pollution, climate change and public impact; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government should be investing in protections for rivers by restoring waterways and their habitats, establishing development authorities that protect water sources and educating the public on sustainable environmental practices; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government should be increasing protections for Manitoba's natural wonders but instead is loosening standards and weakening protections; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has removed a cap on hog barns that weaken environmental protections and make it harder for local residents to have their voices heard regarding the building of hog barns; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government tried to remove a ban on harmful cosmetic pesticides, some of which have been classified as possibly carcinogenic; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut a provincial agency that was responsible for delivering environmental protection programs; and

WHEREAS documented incidents of negative environmental effects, such as the impacts associated with the metal shredder in St. Boniface, can jeopardize the health and safety of families by polluting groundwater and causing dangerous air pollution; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government should work with private industry to ensure manufacturers are

properly regulated and take all precautions necessary to protect the environment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to stop its plan to weaken environmental regulations, reverse cuts to environmental programs and services, and instead strengthen laws and initiatives that will protect provincial lakes and rivers, as well as communities for families into the future.

Thank you.

Motion presented.

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to present this private member's resolution about protecting our province's lakes, rivers, and communities, and the resolution states:

WHEREAS Manitoba's lakes, rivers and communities are special places which deserve government protection and investments so that future generations can continue to enjoy them; and

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

WHEREAS Winnipeg and Manitoba are home to beautiful natural rivers, like the Seine River, that are at risk of being degraded by pollution, climate change and public impact; and

WHEREAS the provincial government should be investing in protections for rivers by restoring waterways and their habitats, establishing development authorities that protect water sources and educating the public on sustainable environmental practices; and

WHEREAS the provincial government should be increasing protections for Manitoba's natural wonders but instead is loosening standards and weakening protections; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has removed a cap on hog barns that weaken environmental protections and make it harder for local residents to have their voices heard regarding the building of hog barns; and

WHEREAS the provincial government tried to remove a ban on harmful cosmetic pesticides, some of which have been classified as possibly carcinogenic; and

WHEREAS the provincial government cut a provincial agency that was responsible for delivering environmental protection programs; and

WHEREAS documented incidents of negative environmental effects, such as the impacts associated with the metal shredder in St. Boniface, can jeopardize the health and safety of families by polluting groundwater and causing dangerous air pollution; and

WHEREAS the provincial government should work with private industry to ensure manufacturers are properly regulated and take all precautions necessary to protect the environment.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important resolution that our caucus is introducing for the safety, benefit and well-being of all Manitobans. We all know Manitobans are proud. We are proud of our many lakes, rivers and wetlands and it makes our province such a great place to live and raise a family.

For those young people, or younger families this resolution should especially be of importance to them because they're just starting to raise a family and children—their children, which are the most precious resources parents could have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that Manitobans value the environment and we are committed to fighting to protect our natural heritage for our current and future generations to enjoy, and we expect our provincial government to be taking steps to increase protections for Manitoba's natural wonders like Lake Winnipeg and Seine River, not cutting and weakening protections.

* (11:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to protecting our water and communities, we find our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government to be out of touch. Their policies are putting our environment and Manitoba families at risk. The regressive red tape bill last session and the newly introduced Bill 19 during this session weaken regulations on Manitoba's hog production, increasing the risk of nutrients draining into Lake Winnipeg and other watersheds such as the Seine River while also limiting local residents' ability to object to hog barn expansions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government is standing by idly while the North Dakota government is preparing plans to build major infrastructure projects which could damage provincial waterways through the introduction of foreign species and additional nutrients. This government have—has made zero commitments to assist the City of Winnipeg to properly upgrade their North End water treatment

plant or the sewage overflows that result from the combined sewer system and enter our waterways.

At this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we remember with great sadness one worker of the Winnipeg water plant and sewage plant who passed away in an accident last week, and our condolences go to their families and friends, to the workers' families—family and friends.

The Pallister government has also made little commitment to help protect residents of St. Boniface from newly identified health and environmental threats from the St. Boniface industrial area. Soil, groundwater and air are all at risk of potential contaminants that can have health impacts on local residents.

It is time our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government realized the effects their regressive actions and inactions on Manitoba's environment are having and the toll it's taking not only on environmental health, but human health as well. It is time that the Premier prioritizes the environment and human health. Our lakes, rivers and communities deserve protections and investments.

Speaking about the industrial shredder at St. Boniface, the people of St. Boniface are concerned about environmental pollution effects from the nearby Mission industrial area. Families and seniors are concerned that the operations of the industrial area are putting the air, soil and groundwater at risk. University of Manitoba researchers performed a number of toxicity tests and found high levels of lead, copper, zinc and cadmium in local soil and gardens.

These toxins meant residents were advised to not eat the vegetables they grow in their gardens. This especially concerning and hard for people who love to garden and grow their own vegetables. In this time and age when many people recognize the value of organic food, especially organic vegetables, many people are resorting to raising—or growing their own vegetables. And, if these toxicity tests have proven that these minerals and chemicals are in the soil, in their garden soil, that would be a very frustrating and sad situation for these gardeners who want to grow their own organic vegetables.

We believe, on this side of the House, that the provincial government should be working with St. Boniface residents and scientific experts to resolve this issue with long-term—and hold long-term independent testing. There is a concern about the

impact and the effect on human health and the development of children, of airborne pollution which might contain heavy metals less than 2.5 micrometres in size.

People in the surrounding area reporting increased health problems, including asthma and coughing. The government must prioritize St. Boniface and surrounding communities' health and quality of life by working to ensure the industrial area no longer has an impact on them. So we implore the provincial government, our Premier, the minister, members of the government, to be mindful of the effects of loosening regulations that they have introduced in bills in this House. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): And the members opposite talked about the auto shredder in St. Boniface and the environmental pollutants that they cause, and I wonder how the member felt in 2015 when her former leader, Greg Salinger, had expanded their environmental licence.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): That was a well-debated issue and I believe our former leader was kind of having very serious discussions with many of his constituents about it. Now, personally, I did recognize—or I was not privy to those discussions and was not aware of the outcome of those discussions.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Well, and on the same topic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what has this government now done since the University of Manitoba found in 2017, since their findings on the extent of pollution in St. Boniface, what have they done to help ensure residents in St. Boniface that their air quality's not negatively affected by the industrial areas' operations? This is this government's watch, now.

Ms. Marcelino: What we're hearing from the residents is that this provincial government, now, hasn't done enough. They haven't communicated enough and there has been no information regarding

any new studies or testing since December of last year.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Can the member of Logan please elaborate on how The Sustainable Watersheds Act does not increase protection of Manitoba's rivers and lakes?

Ms. Marcelino: The act, we believe, and stakeholders believe, are not strong enough to be able to protect foreign species coming into our waterways. And that is a very sad situation.

Mr. Altemeyer: Could my honourable colleague inform the House further? Are residents of 'Staint' Boniface still concerned about the quality of the soil, air and water that exists in their neighbourhoods and communities?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my colleague for that good question. I was just talking to a couple who just bought a property in that area and they love the area. They thought its diversity in that community is what attracted to them. But they was not aware that the air quality has issues such as what my colleague has mentioned. Yes, many people are concerned in that area. Residents are concerned about their decreasing property value due to the smell—

* (11:20)

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I thank the MLA for Logan for bringing up the issue of the industrial metals in St. Boniface. This is an issue which I raised in Estimates some days ago and is an important one.

My question today is, what does the member feel is needed in terms of monitoring of phosphorus, which is a critical component in producing algal blooms around the province, so that we know where there hot spots and we can take action?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my colleague for raising that question and appreciate his concern and his active role in making sure our government is accountable to the—people of Manitoba in raising these very important issues.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our government should be fully accountable to what's happening in the lakes. Like, phosphorus, we believe had been utilized in the past to lessen the number of—

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

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): My question to the member from Logan is, after 17 years of the NDP government, why have they failed to make any substantial action on the environment when it states that the Auditor General's report came out with a scathing report, I might add, that by 2009 they knew that they would not meet their 2012 targets, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to ask the member why her government, when they were in power for almost two decades, they did nothing on this file.

Ms. Marcelino: Under the NDP government, hydro—the use of hydro like electric bus and even wind turbines and the—what's this? The—for wind. *[interjection]* Yes, the wind turbine and even solar energy were introduced, were even—and supported.

And we believe these are—these not only provided economic activity, but also helped reduce green gas house emissions. So these are projects that have been undertaken by the previous government—

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

Mr. Altemeyer: What commitments has the government made to protecting and restoring Lake Winnipeg?

Ms. Marcelino: Sadly, this government has done very little to protect or restore Lake Winnipeg. Instead, this government continued to weaken protections for both Lake Winnipeg and all lakes and rivers around Manitoba by weakening environmental protections and restrictions, particularly with hog barn production. This causes increased pollutants to enter into Lake Winnipeg. Also, the government continued to sit idly by as just south of our border North Dakota is finalizing—

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

Ms. Squires: I had recently discovered last October that there were two reports that were commissioned by the NDP that were hidden that revealed lead levels in exceedance of the CCME guidelines in Point Douglas and in Logan, and I tabled those reports after the NDP had hid them for several years, last October, and I wonder if the member for Logan has read the report about the exceedance of the lead levels of the CCME guidelines in her constituency of Logan and if she is concerned about that.

Ms. Marcelino: I am definitely concerned, so I thank the minister for raising that issue. If that happened years ago, that's very sad, and although I

may not be knowledgeable—fully knowledgeable about it, I take responsibility for it.

But it's now 2018. They're now in government for two years. Rather than keep harping on the past, blaming the past, the thing that should be done is—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Marcelino: —work to—the thing to be done is—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Marcelino: —work to find solutions to the problem.

Mr. Altemeyer: Has the government committed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to increasing the number of conservation officers available to ensure the protection of Manitoba's waters?

Ms. Marcelino: Thank you, my colleague.

The answer is, no, they have not committed to increasing the number of conservation officers to ensure that Manitoba waters are protected from invasive species.

Water Stewardship—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Marcelino: —also has the highest vacancy rate in all the government departments this year. This is deeply concerning because lack of enforcement facilitates the spread and entry of foreign species from across Canada and Manitoba into lakes that do not already have them present.

Also, at the national level, national—

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

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Our government has fully committed to the Alternative Land Use Services model to help reduce flooding and improve water quality and nutrient management.

Can the member opposite please explain how this is not protecting Manitoba's lakes, rivers and communities?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, no projects have been done with the—this file yet. And we are committed to that project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for question period has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate is open.

Any speakers?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'm honoured to rise this afternoon—this morning, rather, and put a few comments on the record regarding the member for Logan's (Ms. Marcelino) private member's resolution to protect lakes, rivers and communities.

And I really do want to commend her for bringing this resolution forward and for furthering the debate on water quality. That is something that here in Manitoba is of critical importance to all of us, and we have a large amount of water in our watershed. We have more than 70 per cent of our water nutrients and 50 per cent of our water come from outside of Manitoba.

We receive water from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and four states south of the border. So the fact that so much water is coming into this watershed makes water quality a huge, important topic for us here in Manitoba.

I always compare ourselves to the country of South Africa and in particular the community of Cape Town. I had the honour of travelling to Cape Town before a few years ago, and it is a remarkable land, but they are suffering one of the largest droughts in their contemporary times, and right now, the water—the fresh water is running dry. They are on a conservation system where each household is allowed a maximum of 15 litres of water a day. And so if anybody took a shower this morning, and a rather brief shower, I would add, they would have exhausted or consumed all of their allowable water consumption if you were living in Cape Town.

And I know here in Canada we do have probably one of the largest per capita consumption uses of water and we—with our lifestyles and the way we rely and use and some would say take for granted our water supply. And living in a province that is shaped like a bathtub, where we do receive so much water from so many other jurisdictions, we tend to forget the importance and the scarcity of water around the world, and it is very important that we do always keep this top of mind and be incredibly mindful about water quality and what we can do for enhancing water quality.

And so I do thank the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) for raising this issue and bringing this to the floor today.

* (11:30)

Now, our government has taken a very serious approach to enhancing water quality. We are doing many, many things in regards to the nutrient-enhancing nutrient—or reducing the nutrients that are going into Lake Winnipeg, starting with keeping the nutrients on the ground wherever possible and advocating and promoting and implementing stringent policies and practices for our agriculture producers.

The one thing that I do want to point out is that in the past agriculture producers have often been blamed for the destruction of our lakes and rivers. And our agriculture producers are hard-working, honourable people who are good stewards of the land, have always tried to be good stewards of the land and, ultimately, are putting bread on the table not just here in Manitoba but around the world. And that is something that is commendable.

We want our producers to continue to feed the world and we want to do work with them in a harmonious way instead of pointing the fingers at them and blaming them for the problem with our lakes and rivers and streams. We are working together with them.

To that end, I want to thank my honourable colleague from Portage la Prairie who spearheaded a program here in Manitoba, and it has evolved into what we call the GRowing Outcomes in Watersheds where we have a program to enhance wetland restoration on farmland, taking acres of land that is not productive and just turning it into a wetland and working with our agriculture producers to see that work occur.

We also have a huge initiative in front of us about the no net loss of our wetlands, and we are looking to restore some of the wetlands that we have lost over the last century. We've lost over 70 per cent of our wetlands, and working very hard to restore them. They are the kidneys of our watershed and we do believe that they hold the key to restoring. They can absorb the nutrients so that they don't go into the water if the nutrients are running off the land and they are also huge sequestrators of carbon.

So we want to restore our wetlands wherever possible and I'm very pleased with our government's Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act, and the

work that it will do to reduce nutrients and enhance water quality.

I did want to also segue into a few of the comments that members opposite had put on the record that are deserving of a pause to consider fully what she had said, and let me pivot to the situation in south St. Boniface.

Now, I have worked with the South St. Boniface Residents Association on numerous occasions regarding air quality and lead in their soil, and we have ordered tests—we're actually partnering, the government is partnering with the University of Manitoba to ensure that we are sampling the lead—sampling the soils to ensure that the lead does not exceed the CCME guidelines thus far. And we've taken numerous samples and we've analyzed them and we have found that there are no instances of lead exceeding the CCME guidelines in any of the soil in any of the numerous samples that we've taken from that area.

The air quality issue is something that we're also monitoring. Now, those of you who know about when you can test air quality for greater effect would know that spring, summer is the time to do those air quality testings. So we've got the equipment. We recently did purchase some equipment for mobile air quality monitoring and we have the ability now to deploy resources to go into a region and study the air quality and have those results. And we are making all of this available to concerned residents because we don't want them to have misinformation about their soil. We don't want to—want them to have misinformation about their air quality.

But I would like to share with the House a conversation that I did have, and it was a very strange conversation that I had with the former member of St. Boniface shortly before he retired. He came into my office and he said to me, you know, he said, I've been reflecting about a decision that we made. And it was in keeping with a lot of decisions that were made during the 17 years of NDP rule, and he said, I'm deeply regretful and we certainly got it wrong. And I think that was a theme for him in the last election campaign, where he went to Manitobans and said, we got it wrong, or we have already—always got it right. And so he reiterated those exact words to me, and he says, we really got it wrong. We expanded environmental licences that ought not to have been expanded.

And, you know, the other day, just yesterday in this House, there was some talk about, you know, the

need for continuity for businesses and industries. And so I thought it was just really shameful that the member for St. Boniface—former member for St. Boniface, came to me, and he says, I did something that I wish I hadn't done. I can say that that was probably—they're—he could write a memoir titled, I did some things that I wish I hadn't done.

But he said I wish that I hadn't done that. And now I want you to take this business that we've—we've expanded their environmental licence. I want you to shut them down. And I thought, that is the most irresponsible thing I've ever been asked. How can I—you know, just two years ago—at this time, it was 2017 when he asked me to do that. I'm like, it was less than two years ago that you expanded their environmental licence, and now, you're asking me to just go in without any evidence of—other than that you have a feeling that you got it wrong and that you are mired with guilt and remorseful about all your bad decisions and your legacy of mismanagement, and you want me to go in and undo your damage and revoke a licence that you had, yourself, offered. And I just wasn't in—certain how or what to even say to the man other than farewell.

And so, here we are today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are monitoring heavily in St. Boniface. I am working the South St. Boniface Residents Association. We are partnered with the University of Manitoba to test—I believe it was 137 soil samples that were taken. We are testing them; we are analyzing them. We're monitoring the air quality. We're doing noise testing in and around the industry—the auto recycler, to ensure that they're not in violation and that they are in full compliance with the regulatory regime that we have in place.

So, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I—you know, I understand the minister's focus on St. Boniface, and it is important that it be addressed. I'm going to spend my remarks focused on the lakes and rivers of the province, which is really the primary part of this resolution.

The situation with Lake Winnipeg and the algal blooms there has continued to be a major issue.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

From what we know with the changes made to date, there has been not very much change, but maybe a very small change, in the amount of phosphorus—or the phosphorus levels in Lake Winnipeg. We are still standing and living at a

critical time for Lake Winnipeg and its future. I get regular emails from people around the lake; very worried about whether they're going to be able to swim in Lake Winnipeg as they have for years, as they have for decades. And, clearly, this is an area which we need to pay a lot of attention to.

There are concerns with the algal blooms that you can get the oxygen used up, and you can get fish die-offs. There may already, at times, be in certain areas where you've got algal blooms using up oxygen—be localized areas where there's not enough oxygen, and, as happens elsewhere for a short period of time, fish can move out of those zones, but for a long period of time, it's a problem. And you may—we may have the fish die-offs; we may have problems with the fisheries. We need to be paying a lot of attention to this. It is our great lake.

You know, that being said, there are other lakes which have algal problems. Killarney Lake is an example. Killarney Lake has been recognized as having severe algal blooms. People there are often not able to use the lake in the summer because of these algal blooms. It has had an effect, at least in some years, in the tourism to Killarney. It has effect on the economy of Killarney. And it, like Lake Winnipeg, we need to be paying attention to.

* (11:40)

There are, indeed, other lakes with algal blooms around Manitoba. And so this is a very important area that we're dealing and certainly an area which is not only important but timely, and I thank the MLA for Logan for bringing this up because it is such an important area.

One of the things that we need to be doing is much wider monitoring of phosphorus levels on an annual basis to determine where the hot spots are. And, fortunately, we have people who are very dedicated with the Lake Winnipeg Foundation. I talked recently with Dr. Alexis Kanu, who's their executive director, and she and others at the foundation are working very hard. They are, indeed, in their third field season, monitoring phosphorus levels in watersheds in Manitoba.

They are expecting this year, I think, to expand to 100 sites and 12,000 samples so that they can get an even better picture than the year before. It must be said that one year's data on a particular watershed may not be enough. And so it's very important to repeat these numbers on more than one year to make sure that what is being found is real.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The work to date appears to have identified a number of hot spots. These identification of hot spots in terms of phosphorus is very important because once you have identified a watershed where there is higher levels of phosphorus, and that phosphorus, of course, is going into Lake Winnipeg, we then need some more detailed research to better determine exactly where that phosphorus is coming from and why that high level of phosphorus is occurring. Well, there's been a lot of debate about the source of phosphorus in the rivers and the watersheds in Manitoba, and we now have an opportunity to get to the source and to much better understand what the situation is.

But it's also going to be very important—and I think it will need both provincial and federal support for this effort—to have the further research done on individual watersheds and to start developing plans that we can look at carefully for their impact on the phosphorus. Sometimes, in the past, the results have not been as initially expected.

I recall, for example, studies on the tobacco lake—or Tobacco Creek watershed which found that you had higher levels of phosphorus coming off ground which had been no tail or zero tail and presumably from the organic matter that was left on the surface. And so we need to have the definitive answers and we need, then, to be able to use the definitive answers to help us move forward.

It is interesting, in talking with Dr. Kanu, that they appear to be identifying not only areas of hot spots, but areas where phosphorus may actually be being sequestered. And if that's true, then that's fundamentally important, because it can help us understand how we can sequester phosphorus on the landscape; what sort of stewardship we'd need to be using; what kind of work we need, together with conservation districts, which will soon become watershed districts; so that, in fact, we can move this whole area forward and have the impact that we need to have on reducing the phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg.

We also critically need the solutions to decreasing the phosphorus going in from the city of Winnipeg into the Red River. Those solutions are there, are known. But it clearly needs determination at the provincial and the city level to move these forward. I asked recently of the minister in Estimates about what the timeline was. I didn't get an answer. I'm still hoping that I'll get an answer soon as to

when that timeline is for completion of the removal of phosphorus at the North End sewage plant and, of course, a longer term reduction from the phosphorus coming in through the combined sewers.

Those are projects which we must not forget about, which we must continue to be engaged with. The removal of sewage at the North End treatment plant has taken far too long, and it is disappointing that we're not further along, but we hope that the minister will push it forward, and because it needs some ministerial pushing in order to make it happen sooner rather than later.

There are, in addition to these factors, of course, other municipalities which are putting phosphorus into the watershed. There may be other point sources or larger sources that we will learn about from the monitoring program which is now under way. I think there's a effort here that all members can support and all members can buy into because of the importance of Lake Winnipeg to our province and to all of us. And I'm hopeful that we will get on board, that we will work together, find the scientifically based answers and move forward with plans and projects that can implement solutions and provide us better stewardship.

I will add, briefly, that we need to prepare for, of course, floods. We need to prepare for drought. And one of the things we will need to do is a lot more storage of water on the land, partly so that we're ready for droughts, we can mitigate floods, and that will help us as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Good morning. I am honoured to rise and have the opportunity to put a few words on record with respect to the private member's resolution, Protecting Manitoba's Lakes, Rivers and Communities.

Manitobans pride themselves for the beautiful forests and lakes which welcome tourists every year. Manitoba is known as a diverse range of geographic areas ranging from our Sandilands to the marshlands. It is this diverse landscape which makes Manitoba not only a tourist destination, but a great province to sustain a diverse number of agricultural businesses.

Our government is focused on sustainability and science which will ensure the ongoing success and longevity of future agriculture, water and tourist businesses. This will require some work as, sadly, after 17 years of the NDP government, our government has had to restore the confidence of

Manitobans through our environmental stewardship legislation and programs.

One may ask why we have to do this. The answer is simple, but a harsh reality: In contradiction to our environmental policies, the previous government did not meet any of their targets for a clean environment. The previous government was unable to properly manage our waterways and lakes, all while failing to meet their promises to implement the necessary changes cited in the report in the 2011 flood.

The previous government had a history of ignoring science and instead basing its decision on political ideology. This has been highlighted by their failure to disclose scientific evidence received from experts on anaerobic digesters, fish sustainability and soil contamination in Winnipeg.

Deputy Speaker, further to this, the Auditor General reported that the NDP failed to meet their climate targets, which were so unrealistic that they would have required the equivalent of every gas- and diesel-powered vehicle off the road.

The Auditor General noted that there was a lack of progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as in developing a plan for adapting to climate change impacts.

Further, the opposition is now delaying action. To further support this statement, an article on December 6th, 2011, by Mychaylo Prystupa with CBC news stated, and I quote: The Manitoba government will break its own climate change law by failing to reduce greenhouse gases below its Kyoto target. Conservation minister, Dave Chomiak, admitted Monday the Province will fail to meet its Kyoto emissions reduction pledge. End of quote.

* (11:50)

Madam—or sorry—Deputy Speaker, the previous government did nothing to protect the environment while they were in power. They had 17 years to study the science and to implement the changes that would support a cleaner and healthier environment. One needs to ask why, after all of this time, they are concerned about the environment.

Deputy Speaker, Manitoba has a number of conservation districts. Our government is committed to long-term management plans for the land, water and related resources in the watershed basin. Our government has introduced The Sustainable Watersheds Act. We have taken steps to ensure that

our province has the most comprehensive water management system in Canada. The Sustainable Watersheds Act supports our election promises and recognizes the need for transboundary water management by implementing watershed-based planning for water resources management and a province-wide program based on the Alternative Land Use Services model for ecological goods and services.

Farmers deliver on a community-develop model which sustains wildlife, agriculture and natural spaces for all Manitobans. Balance is key, and maintaining the natural habitats of our wildlife while supporting viable agricultural businesses is important to Manitobans and the Manitoba economy.

This bill creates the means for water management groups, governments in Manitoba and other jurisdictions that share a transboundary river basin with Manitoba to measure water quality and track progress on reducing nutrient levels in water bodies. Our government is committed to long-term management plans for the land, water and related resources in the watershed basin.

Deputy Speaker, with this understanding and respect for the land and water, Manitoba has been able to maintain some of the most robust environmental protection laws. These laws are amongst the strongest in Canada. Furthermore, our government has developed a practical, measurable and realistic Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan that will protect the environment, foster green growth and spur innovation.

We are looking at the future and want to ensure that our children and their children will inherit a safe and healthy environment. The federal and government is imposing a carbon tax on all provinces. That is why we went with our made-in Manitoba plan which is good for the environment and the economy.

We have introduced The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act, which members opposite have decided to delay. The climate and green plan was developed through the direct input of Manitobans, drawing from more than a year of consultations with environmental, business and expert stakeholders.

This Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act puts in place a climate and green fund to protect our waters, conserve our environment and transition to a low-carbon economy. It provides a state-of-the-art, output-based pricing system for our large emitters to help them reduce emissions, all

while protecting jobs. We are now one step closer to making Manitoba Canada's cleanest, greenest and most climate-resilient province.

Deputy Speaker, Manitoba is a great province to live in. Our government is taking the necessary steps to ensure our families can enjoy all that Manitoba's diverse topography has to offer.

There are generations of farmers and ranchers in this province who have relied on the land for a living. Their knowledge of how to grow crops, raise livestock and understand the environment has resulted in the continued growth of our agricultural industry.

To ensure the continued growth in this industry, Manitoba continues to have the most stringent regulatory requirements in Canada for livestock, continues to ensure that all hog barn development decisions are based on science, continues to monitor soil nutrient levels and will continue to honour the winter manure application prohibition.

Our government is working with the agriculture industry to ensure land and waterways are sustainable for future generations.

Deputy Speaker, our government is also investing in our province's sustainable future. Our government has established a \$102-million conservation trust and a \$40-million climate and green fund to support our climate and green plan and make Manitoba the most climate-resilient province.

Deputy Speaker, we are practical environmentalists. We want to ensure that the natural environment is maintained. We want to maintain the physical, social and cultural aspects of an area. Through implementing—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte) will have two minutes remaining.

The hour being 11:55 a.m., pursuant of rule 23(5), I am interrupting the proceedings to conduct a recorded division that was requested during last Tuesday's private members' business.

Accordingly, call in the members.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS (Continued)

Bill 229—The Intoxicated Persons Detention Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the second reading of bill 229, the Human Rights Code amendment act.

* (12:00)

The question before the House is the second reading of bill 229, the Human Rights Code amendment act. All those in favour of the motion, please rise. [*interjection*]

Correction.

The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 229, The Intoxicated Persons Detention Amendment Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 15, Nays 30.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 24, 2018

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 17—Protecting Manitoba's Lakes, Rivers and Communities	
Concurrence and Third Readings—Public Bills		F. Marcelino	2539
Bill 213—The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act		Questions	
Swan	2529	Squires	2541
		F. Marcelino	2541
Bill 219—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Inappropriate or Unsafe Footwear)		Altemeyer	2541
Fontaine	2530	Morley-Lecomte	2542
		Gerrard	2542
		A. Smith	2542
Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills		Debate	
Bill 226—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act		Squires	2543
Helwer	2530	Gerrard	2545
B. Smith	2531	Morley-Lecomte	2546
Mayer	2533	Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills	
Swan	2534	<i>(Continued)</i>	
Isleifson	2536	Bill 229—The Intoxicated Persons Detention Amendment Act	2548
Ewasko	2537		

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>