

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

HONOURING
FIRST NATIONS TREATIES DAY

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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HONOURING FIRST NATIONS TREATIES DAY

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The ceremony began at 10 a.m.

At 10 a.m., the procession, comprised of the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, Marilyn Brick, the Honourable Greg Selinger, Mr. Hugh McFadyen, the Honourable Jon Gerrard, Grand Chief Ron Evans, Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird, Executive Chiefs and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, entered the Chamber escorted by the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The procession was drummed in by the Spirit Sands Drum Group.

Ms. Patricia Chaychuk (Master of Ceremonies): Would you please remain standing for the playing of the Vice-Regal Salute.

The Vice-Regal Salute consists of the first few bars of "God Save the Queen" followed by several bars of "O Canada." The Vice-Regal Salute is played but is not sung.

The Honourable Philip S. Lee, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, entered the Chamber.

The Vice-Regal Salute was played.

Ms. Chaychuk: Please be seated.

I would now ask Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker of the House and MLA for St. Norbert, to come to the podium.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Deputy Speaker): Welcome to your Legislative Assembly. I want to say how very proud and honoured I am to be given the opportunity to welcome you here on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly.

This is a very special day and it's a great day. It's Manitoba Day and it's a very fitting day for us to be welcoming you here today. So please know that we're all thrilled to have this special Treaty Day happening here in Manitoba and here in the Legislative Assembly.

It is also my pleasure to introduce your master of ceremonies, Patricia Chaychuk. She has been the Clerk for the Legislative Assembly and she was appointed by the Legislative Assembly in January 2000. She's been serving for the last 10 years as the Clerk.

I had the opportunity today to ask her what really is her role, so I'm going to tell you officially what her role is. Her role is the chief procedural officer for the Legislative Assembly, and also she holds the equivalent title of the deputy minister, only with the exception that she doesn't answer to the government. She answers to the entire Legislative Assembly. She has been serving here, as I said, for 10 years. She has a Masters in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Arts. She also was the—in charge of the Association of the Clerks-at-the-Table for Canada and also the past president for the Canadian Study of Parliament Group. So it's my pleasure to be able to introduce your master of ceremonies, Patricia Chaychuk.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Good morning and welcome to the Chamber of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. As mentioned, I am Patricia Chaychuk and I will be the master of ceremonies, and it is indeed my great pleasure and honour to be acting as master of ceremonies for this event. I really do feel touched and humbled that I was asked to be here on this occasion.

Today is a very special day where, for the first time in the history of our province, we are gathered together in the Assembly Chamber in celebration to honour the treaty relationship between all peoples in Canada. It is very fitting that the ceremony is being held in the beautiful Chamber of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, as the Legislature is the seat of democracy for the Province of Manitoba.

It is also an appropriate setting for the celebration as the beautiful murals which adorn the Chamber represent a number of concepts, including justice, wisdom, knowledge, tolerance, prudence, temperance, fortitude, mercy, understanding, faith, hope, charity and generosity. Together, these murals depict that justice is available to all without distinction in age, social or cultural background.

The artist who created these murals, Augustus Vincent Tack, tried to represent the ideal that if justice prevails then the nations of the world will be healed and the earth will be a flowering field. I don't know about you, but I find that to be a truly wonderful sentiment, and to me it is one that is very

appropriate to the context of the celebrations being held today to honour First Nations Treaties Day.

We are now going to hear "O Canada" being sung in Cree by the Niji Mahkwa Singers. Niji Mahkwa is an elementary school in the inner city of Winnipeg where students are able to learn and participate in traditional teachings in addition to attending Ojibway and Cree language classes. Following the singing of "O Canada," the Spirit Sands Drum Group, an Anishinabe drum group from the Swan Lake First Nation, will play the "Flag Song."

I would ask you all to please rise and remain standing for the singing of "O Canada" and for the playing of the "Flag Song."

Niji Mahkwa Singers singing "O Canada" and the Spirit Sands Drum Group playing the "Flag Song"

* (10:10)

Ms. Chaychuk: Please be seated.

Thank you very much to Niji Mahkwa Singers for such a beautiful rendition of "O Canada," and thank you very much, Spirit Sands Drum Group, for honouring us with your talents this morning. We are honoured to have you here.

I would now call upon Anna Parenteau from Roseau River First Nation to please come forward to give the opening prayer.

Ms. Anna Parenteau (Roseau River First Nation): *Ojibway spoken.*

Translation

Hello, my relatives. The One who is Sitting in the Day Ceremony is my name. The lynx is my clan. I am second degree Mide. Thanks. Thanks for asking me, for being offered tobacco for the prayer.

I think of my ancestor from two generations past; the late Stone Man was his name. He was present there during the signing of the treaty. He was a young man then and he was told to listen.

In the East where you are, grandfather and grandmother; take from us this gift of tobacco; in exchange, love and care for us, give us the gift of your kindness. I beseech you, grandfather and grandmother.

In the South, grandfather and grandmother; where you are, take from us this gift of tobacco; in exchange, love and care for us, give us the gift of

your kindness. I beseech you, grandfather and grandmother.

In the West where you are, grandfather and grandmother; take from us this gift of tobacco, in exchange love us and care for us, give us the gift of your kindness. I beseech you, grandfather and grandmother.

In the North where you are, grandfather and grandmother, take from us this gift of tobacco; in exchange, love and care for us, give us the gift of kindness. I beseech you, grandfather and grandmother.

I ask you, the traveller, young Mide helper, carry our prayers to the heavens, carry them on our behalf, through the first level, the second level, the third level and the fourth level, as we look to you, Mide spirit.

And for Mother Earth, for the ones on the first level, the second level, the third level, and finally, the fourth level; to the one who sits on the third level; take the tobacco from us; hear us as we speak our words;

Love and care for us, Creator; love and care for us, Creator; love and care for us, Creator; love and care for us, Creator; Thanks, I say to him.

Ms. Chaychuk: Please be seated.

Anna, thank you so much for sharing those beautiful words with us.

I would now invite His Honour Philip Lee, Lieutenant-Governor for the Province of Manitoba, to please come forward for his address.

His Honour Philip Lee (Lieutenant-Governor): Bonjour, mesdames et messieurs [*Good day, ladies and gentlemen*], friends, Manitobans, treaty people. Today, we are honouring Manitoba Day in a way that reminds all Manitobans of the foundation of our province. By honouring treaties between the Crown and First Nations, we honour the spirit of sharing, understanding and partnership that represents the best of our nation and our province. Today, we will have the opportunity to share in ancient and sacred teachings, to explore the spirit of and history of treaties through music, dance and theatre, and to affirm our belief in the importance of these agreements. And, by doing so, we hope to work towards a better future.

I'm pleased to see so many leaders gather here: chiefs, MPs and MLAs, elders, deputy ministers and

directors, legal and public policy advisers, representatives of police and social service agencies, educational institutions and the business community. Perhaps even more important is the participation of the young generation in the performances in the school program that will begin after this formal ceremony. Nothing is more important for the future of Manitoba than keeping the flame of justice, human rights and learning alive. And nothing is more in keeping with the spirit of the treaties than working to ensure that they are understood and valued by future generations.

* (10:20)

As Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and representative of Her Majesty the Queen, I join you in celebration. *Merci beaucoup [Thank you very much].*

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Your Honour, for your kind address.

I would now ask the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, the Honourable Greg Selinger, MLA for St. Boniface and Leader of the New Democratic Party, to please come forward to address the group and to sign the Treaty Day Proclamation.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Your Honours, Madam Deputy Speaker, Commissioner White Bird, Grand Chiefs and chiefs, elders, Members of Parliament and the Legislature, special guests, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls.

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you here today to be part of an historic and important day for Manitoba. Today marks the 140th anniversary of the Province of Manitoba entering into Confederation on May 12th, 1870. It was one year later that the first of the numbered treaties was signed at Lower Fort Garry. Without these treaties between the Crown and First Nations, the establishment, growth and prosperity of Manitoba and Canada would simply not have been possible.

Never in the 140 years of the history of this Legislature have we come together in this Chamber to show appreciation to the First Nations and acknowledge their significant contributions to the creation of this province. We are all here this morning, united by a common understanding of and belief in the First Nations treaties and the enduring treaty relationship that exists today in Manitoba.

While it's easy to think of the treaties as history, we must keep in mind they are as relevant today as

the day they were signed. The treaties are not frozen in time. They are living agreements fundamental to the Manitoba we know today. Understanding the treaties is crucial to understanding where we've been and where we're going collectively, as Manitobans and Canadians.

We must also be honest in acknowledging that many of the Crown's promises so central to the treaties have not yet been fully fulfilled. As a Province, we have an important role in the treaty relationship through the transfer of lands to the federal government as part of the treaty land entitlement process, who, in turn, transfer lands to the First Nations.

But honouring the treaty relationship extends well beyond land. As a government, we take the fundamental responsibility of upholding the honour of the Crown very seriously in everything we do. We are proud to work in partnership with First Nations, and we have a strong record of moving forward in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples.

We are working with the First Nations to build an all-season road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. We've entered into community benefit agreements to ensure jobs and training opportunities are available for residents of the east side. Wuskwatim represents the first time we have entered into an equity partnership with a First Nation on a generating station project. This partnership includes extensive training and jobs for local people and local contracts.

Through the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund, we are aiding Aboriginal businesses with the cost of starting up a business. Through our Bright Futures fund, we are collaborating with community groups to work with schools, to provide students with a variety of supports, including tutoring, increased family involvement in schools, mentoring, goal setting, career exploration and bursaries.

We have recently introduced The Aboriginal Languages Act to recognize for the first time Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway and Oji-Cree as the Aboriginal languages of Manitoba, a first step towards ensuring Manitoba's proud indigenous language heritage will be preserved for the benefit of all future generations.

We have invested in a new Crown-Aboriginal Consultation Participation Fund and will co-host a round table discussion with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on consultation and accommodation

to ensure Manitoba meets its section 35 duty to consult Aboriginal people meaningfully.

As we move forward, we will continue to value the voices of Aboriginal peoples in the development of political policy. We know that to move forward as a province, we must move forward together. Today, as we celebrate Treaty Day, we pledge to continue to respect your voices, your teachings, and your rights.

It took many people to make this day a reality and I'd like to take a moment to thank them. In particular, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and reverence to the late and forever honourable Minister Oscar Lathlin—whom we miss a great deal at our Cabinet table and in this Assembly—for getting us started on the path to today's celebration. The presence of the family of the late minister serves as a reminder of the outstanding contributions he made to our province. Today, we honour our brother as a champion of the treaties of Manitoba with a new award in his name.

Thank you also to our Deputy Premier, the Honourable Eric Robison, for his hard work in organizing today's events. Also, thank you to the office of the Speaker of the House, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Assembly of the Manitoba Chiefs, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Government of Canada, all of whom worked very hard to ensure that this celebration would be a special and memorable occasion.

Thank you to all the performers, the drummers and the singers and the school children who sang so beautifully for us. You are now part of the Manitoba history by virtue of your presence and participation here today, but most importantly, I'd like to thank all the First Nations peoples of Manitoba. Your culture is treasured. Your generosity is appreciated and your contributions are valued. You have shaped our history as Manitobans and continue to make Manitoba the great province it is today.

On behalf of the people of Manitoba, *ekosani [thank you in Cree]*, *miigwech [thank you in Ojibway]*, *mahseecho [thank you in Dene]*, *wopida [thank you in Dakota]*, *merci [thank you in French]*, and thank you.

The Treaty Day Proclamation was signed.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Mr. Premier.

I would now invite the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Hugh McFadyen, MLA for Fort

Whyte and Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, to please come forward for his remarks.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Good morning. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*]. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this historic event on the occasion of the 140th birthday of the Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Day.

* (10:30)

We realize the history of this province goes back much further than these past 140 years, and the people who are represented today in this room have been the creators of that great history and continue to do so in very many important ways.

Your Honour, Mr. Premier, Grand Chief, Chief Dennis White Bird, chiefs, elders, colleagues in the Legislature, honoured guests, thank you all for being part of this important occasion. And I want to just add my thanks to those of the Premier to the great performers, the singers, the drum group and everybody else who has contributed to making this such a beautiful and meaningful occasion.

We know that the treaties are a part of our history, as well as part of the current fabric of the province of Manitoba. The treaties are more than words on paper. They are more than understandings and agreements; they are embedded in the Constitution of our country. And they are also a fundamental defining aspect of the relationship, not just between groups of people within the province of Manitoba, but also a recognition of the obligations we all have individually to one another as Manitobans.

The treaties are important because they signify mutual respect, a desire to work together toward a better future, a recognition of the importance of all people on this land that we all love and share and that we know as the province of Manitoba. The good will that is inherent in the idea of treaties is important because, as we look at our history, we know that too often, through either neglect or a deliberate policy, good will was not present and has had very damaging results and implications for many people, and we need to regain that sense of good will that was present at the time that the treaties were signed as we move into the future.

And as we consider today the history of our province and history of this land and the people who've occupied it, I believe it is also just as

important, if not more important, that we begin to forge a common vision for a better future for Manitoba as well, bearing in mind the obligations that we have toward one another, but also working together through dialogue and mutual respect to explore together what that future may look like. I believe that that future will be better than our past. I believe it can be better than what the past has been and that a better future will arise through respect and dialogue. And so, as we forge that vision for a better future, we begin with the realities of today. Many of those realities are not positive, are things that we need to be mindful of and to address. Many are positive as well and that needs to be acknowledged. Progress has been made, and that is important to acknowledge as well.

But, as we look to that future, we are all committed together to begin to move beyond some of the negativity of the past, begin to build a better future of mutual respect. And, I believe, as I think many do, that at the heart of our ability to make progress together lies the importance of education for all people, and this generation, this group of people is the future of Manitoba. It is them that will define that future, and their ability to get an education that prepares them for the future and for the modern world, at the same time as it respects cultural traditions and our history, is going to be the key to building a better future for the province of Manitoba.

And so I want to share with the Premier my thanks to those who have made today a reality, in particular acknowledge the late Oscar Lathlin and his family, who is represented here today. I want to acknowledge, as well, the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), who, I know, was instrumental in helping to bring about this morning's important event.

And so thank you all again. I'm looking forward to hearing from other speakers, also looking forward to enjoying Ian Ross's play later this morning. Again, thank you to all of you. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*], and we look forward to a great future based on respect and an optimistic view of a future of progress. Thank you very much. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*].

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Mr. McFadyen.

I would now like to call forward the Honourable Jon Gerrard, Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba and MLA for River Heights, to speak to the group.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Thank you, Patricia, Commissioner White Bird, Grand Chiefs, chiefs, elders, distinguished guests, colleagues in the Legislature.

Today, on our 140th anniversary of the birth of our province, we recognize and celebrate the treaties between Aboriginal people and of the Crown, and, in Manitoba, this refers to Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

Let me start with what I believe is an important message that the Treaty Commissioner has been communicating: We are all treaty people. All of us were represented when the treaties were signed, either by the chiefs and councils of the First Nations involved or by the Crown. The treaties involved shared benefits, benefits to Aboriginal people and benefits to the government of Canada, and the benefits have been passed down on the years since the treaties came into effect and are still with all of us. These shared benefits are reflected in how we, today, share citizenship and residency in our country, Canada.

Today, this day is about improving understanding and about education. You know, education was an important part of the vision of each treaty, and included in each treaty was the commitment of the Crown to ensure that there was a school and educational opportunities in each First Nations community.

Since we're talking today about understanding, let me take a moment just to talk about my own journey of understanding. As I grew up, I learned about our history as Canadians, about the treaties and, increasingly, I read widely to learn more. But it was only gradually as I met people in different parts of Canada that I came to more fully appreciate the situation of many Aboriginal people. I remember one day in 1967, at Montreal Lake in Saskatchewan, meeting with teachers in the Aboriginal community, and they pleaded for books and materials which were relevant to the experience of the children they were teaching. They told me all the books we have are about—are animals like cows and buildings like skyscrapers, and children here have never seen either a cow or a skyscraper. There was clearly something wrong. The children need to learn what is relevant to them, and that includes the animals and houses and communities in which they live and which they relate to.

Now, of course, times have changed, and as we understand the importance of culture and education—

that we have much more culturally relevant books and much more culturally relevant education.

Not long after this, I was in La Ronge, Saskatchewan and talking with Aboriginal people there, and they complained to me about the movies available in the local theatre. They said: All they play here is movies featuring cowboys and Indians, and the cowboys are always the winners and the Indians are always the losers. What's going on? This is wrong. How can our young people grow up feeling proud and strong of being Indian when this is being what's presented day after day and week after week in La Ronge?

Of course, today, we have a much more progressive perspective of Aboriginal people and we have many excellent role models in our Aboriginal community. But we have to remember that it was not so long ago when the view that was presented was far too negative, and that was a problem.

Several years later, when I was in medical school in Montréal, I volunteered to help at a medical clinic at the Kohnawake First Nation community just outside of Montréal, and it was there that I learned the differences from community to community. The people in Kohnawake not only knew all about skyscrapers, they'd actually played a major role in building the skyscrapers in New York.

As I read more, I was drawn to the history of Poundmaker, a renowned Cree leader. I'd known a little about him before, but was astonished to learn of his huge efforts to build an agricultural base in his community. And, in the end, his valiant efforts were completely thwarted by the Indian agent and patriarchal Department of Indian Affairs, which wouldn't even allow him to market the grain he'd produced. It seemed absurd, now, that that had happened, but it did. And we need to recognize some of the barriers that Aboriginal people have had to face. Thankfully, the situation today is changing with more and more Aboriginal people becoming successful entrepreneurs and running very successful businesses.

*(10:40)

As the Member of Parliament for Portage-Interlake, I grew to know well many of the people in the First Nation communities in my constituency, and I helped where I could: in a marina in Fairford, in a health clinic in Dakota Tipi, for funding of schools in Peguis and Little Saskatchewan, trying to support economic opportunities like the opening of

the first bank in a First Nations community in Peguis, and in promoting and facilitating Internet access.

Oh, I remember the enthusiasm of a young woman in Lake St. Martin who was really keen to get Internet access, and she told me how she had to climb up onto the roof of a school to put up the antenna so that children in the school could connect to the Internet and to Schoolnet and educational opportunities.

I also learned more about the importance of treaties. And, of course, since then, Peguis has reached a settlement on its treaty land entitlement.

As Liberal leader, I've had the opportunity to visit many First Nation communities around Manitoba, as anyone reading my blog will know. I've learned of more details of the residential schools, of the scoop of the '60s and seeing first-hand the need for much improvement in our approach to children. And that's why I've been such a strong advocate for implementing Jordan's Principle.

I've seen first-hand last year the H1N1, the housing situation in communities like Garden Hill, and I've advocated for improvement.

The Northern Flood Agreement is today considered a modern-day treaty, and I've been in Cross Lake, Norway House, Nelson House, all of which are part of the Northern Flood Agreement—seen and talked to community members about their situation.

This last February I was in Bloodvein, Berens River, Poplar River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, and the visits, like to many other First Nation communities, have increased my understanding and emphasize the need to ensure we do better in carrying out and implementing what was promised in the treaties so many years ago.

I want to thank, in particular, Dennis White Bird, as the Commissioner, who's done so much to promote a better understanding of their treaties.

And today I stand, with my colleagues, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, on this important occasion, where together we reaffirm our support for the treaties and we recommit to do what we can as individuals, as members of the Legislature, as members of political parties, to do better in the next century than we have done in the past. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*], ekosani [*thank you in Cree*], thank you.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Dr. Gerrard.

Our next presenter, Grand Chief Ron Evans, is the former Chief of Norway House Cree Nation and was elected as Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in 2005. He has received the Council for Advancement of Native Development Officers, economic development award, the Golden Jubilee Medal, and the Order of the Buffalo Hunt.

At this time, I would ask Grand Chief Ron Evans to please come forward to address the gathering, and, following the remarks of Grand Chief Evans, a gift presentation will take place.

Mr. Ron Evans (Grand Chief, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs): Thank you, Madam.

Tansi [*hello in Cree*], aniin [*hello in Ojibway*], wopida washte [*hello in Dakota*], booshoo [*hello in Ojibway*], wotziye [*hello in Dene*], hello.

I am pleased to be here on this historic occasion, in the wisdom and in the spirit of our ancestors, and all those who have sacrificed their lives so that we could be here on this special day to honour the First Nation Treaties that were signed as nation to nation, on our traditional lands from 1871 to the early 1900s.

I thank the elders from the Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, Treaty 1, for leading in today's ceremonies. I want to thank Elder Charlie Nelson, for the pipe ceremony, Elder Anna Parenteau for the opening prayer, and I want to thank Elder Peter Atkinson, who will be providing the closing prayer.

I also thank the Elders Council of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Treaty Relations Commission for their hard work, the Treaty Commissioner, and their guidance in planning today's event.

I want to thank the Niji Mahkwa Singers as well as the Spirit Sands Drum Group for participating and assisting us today.

Of course, I want to acknowledge the chiefs that are here, my colleagues, Grand Chief Shannacappo and Grand Chief Harper. Our regional chief, Bill Traverse, and our guest chief, Grand Chief Guy Lonechild from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian First Nations, and, of course, our Treaty Commissioner White Bird. And all the elders that are here with us, the women, the children, the young people, as well as the veterans and all the special guests that are here with all of us, and to the chiefs,

the chiefs that are here. There are chiefs that are here that are descendants from the original signatories to the treaties.

I acknowledge the coming together of the Manitoba First Nations and the government of Manitoba leadership here today.

As First Nation leaders, we join together with His Honour the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor Philip Lee, Premier Greg Selinger, Leader of the Opposition, Hugh McFadyen, and provincial Liberal Party leader, Dr. Jon Gerrard, as well as the many distinguished members of this Legislative Assembly.

I also acknowledge and recognize the late Minister Oscar Lathlin for his vision in ensuring that all Manitobans have a better understanding of a treaty relationship. I thank his family for their continued support and the honouring of his legacy.

Today, we join together with the provincial government in the Manitoba Legislature. Above the east door of this historic building stands a symbolic representation of the treaties. There you will find a First Nation chief and a soldier that flank the ark of the covenant, or, we believe, a war chest. This imagery could very accurately symbolize the solemn oath we all made in the eyes of our Creator when we signed the treaties with each other.

The treaty-making process has always been important for First Nations people, as we view treaties as living agreements which need to be recognized and renewed on a regular basis.

Our ancestors agreed to share our land with the newcomers, based on the understanding that First Nation peoples would benefit from an honourable, respectful, mutual relationship with the Crown, similar to the types of treaties and arrangements that were entered into between First Nations peoples prior to European contact.

As directed by our elders, one of the responsibilities is to bring life to our treaties, to advance an understanding of the treaty relationship, to protect, maintain and advance treaty rights and to work towards treaty implementation.

For First Nations, entering into a treaty meant entering into a respectful relationship, one grounded in our ancient practices of ensuring balance and mutual benefits. We understood that the treaty relationship would benefit both parties from our rich land and all our resources. So, though we had our own medicines, the treaties included the right to

medicines for new diseases that might be brought by the newcomers.

Though we had our own educational systems, our leaders knew that their children and grandchildren and future generations would need the education necessary to secure a livelihood in a changing economy.

The inherent and treaty right to benefit from our lands and resources, including water—all of these were planned for the next seven generations. It is for this reason that initiatives such as treaty land entitlement are so important for us. These must be fulfilled.

As one of our chiefs who negotiated Treaty 3, Chief Mawedopenais, and I quote him: "It is our Chiefs, our young men, our children and great-grandchildren and those that are to be born that I represent here, and it is for them I ask for terms." End of quote.

These terms include our culture and language which is the backbone of our identity. Our culture and language must be continually maintained and preserved.

* (10:50)

Honouring First Nations Treaties Day provides an opportunity for all Manitobans, especially our youth, future generations and new Canadians to understand the spirit and intent of the numbered treaties, specifically 1 to 11, to understand the honour of the Crown in this relationship and the treaties are the foundation on which both Canada and Manitoba have been built.

For as long as the sun shines, grass grows and the waters flow. Ekosani [*thank you in Cree*], miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*], mahseecho [*thank you in Dene*], wopida [*thank you in Dakota*], thank you.

I have two gifts that I will present on behalf of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. I would invite Deputy Speaker Marilyn Brick to come and receive it. So I am presenting this gift to the Legislative Assembly in recognition of our partnership to acknowledge and honour First Nation treaties.

Deputy Speaker Marilyn Brick, please accept this gift on behalf of the Legislative Assembly for the government of Manitoba.

Second gift: On behalf of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the next gift I am presenting is to

the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba in recognition of our partnership to acknowledge and honour First Nation treaties.

Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird, please accept this gift on behalf of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Grand Chief Evans, for your words and for sharing gifts with presenters today.

Our next presenter, Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird, served for 18 years as Chief of Rolling River First Nation. He is a former regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and is also a former Grand Chief for the Assembly of Chiefs. He was appointed Treaty Relations Commissioner for Manitoba in 2005.

It is my distinct pleasure to ask Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird to please come forward for his address to the group. And, following his address, Commissioner White Bird will present the beaded mace runner and star-blanket cushion. He will also present the Treaty Advocacy Award and also participate in the gift presentation.

Mr. Dennis White Bird (Treaty Commissioner): I want to say, first of all, *Ojibway spoken*.

Translation

Hello, my relatives. Nawikamigo is what I am called; the bear is my clan.

English

And I want to thank my good friend, the elder from Roseau River, Charles Nelson, for giving us a great opportunity this morning to experience one of our primary ceremonies in First Nations' way. And I also want to—on behalf of the Treaty Relations Commission, I want to welcome you all to this very historic day, particularly in Treaty 1 territory. And, with that, I also want to thank Anna Parenteau for leading us in an opening prayer.

In our way of doing business, we also want to recognize our youth, as well as the women in our community. There are many people that I need to recognize, and I apologize for that. I want to acknowledge the Honourable Philip S. Lee, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, for joining us here today and also for his words of—very wise words with respect to our treaties.

I want to also acknowledge the honourable—excuse me—the honourable Marilyn Brick, the

Deputy Speaker of the House, Grand Chief Ron Evans, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Grand Chief Morris Swan Shannacappo, Southern Chiefs' Organization, Grand Chief David Harper, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Grand Chief Guy Lonechild from the Federation of Saskatchewan of Indian Nations.

I also want to acknowledge the Honourable Dr. Gregory Selinger for—the Premier of Manitoba, the Honourable Mr. Eric Robinson, the Deputy Premier of Manitoba, the honourable Mr. Hugh McFadyen, the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Dr. Jon Gerrard, Leader of the Liberal Party.

I must also recognize the elders that are amongst us, our honoured guests. I also want to recognize the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Executive Council of Chiefs.

This is a really good time for me to be losing my voice. I apologize for that.

And I also want to recognize the members of the Legislative Assembly, those of you that joined us. I also want to recognize the Manitoba First Nation Chiefs that are seated amongst us.

I want to thank the Spirit Sands singers, the drum group from Swan Lake, and those of you that live here in the city. I also want to acknowledge Niji Mahkwa school choir for joining us today and giving us a great opportunity in language and also in music, and so on and so forth.

I want to say that, first of all, the drum—and this is part of the history of today—that this is probably the first time that we've ever had a traditional drum in this building. And the song that was sung is part of the history of today. And with the song that they sang, the songs that they sang for us today calls on the spirit of our ancestors, those that have left us the legacy of treaty 139 years ago. And I thank them very much for joining us today.

And, although he's not in attendance with us today, I would like to thank the Honourable George Hickey, the Speaker of the House, for his tireless efforts and support relative to this event. I spoke with George last Friday and I was upset with him and he—finally, he said, I will be there in spirit; I will be there to join you.

So today is an excellent opportunity to celebrate treaty and the transfer of treaty knowledge. In 2005, the late Minister Oscar Lathlin, and the Treaty Relations Commission began discussions about the

concept of honouring First Nation treaties at the Manitoba Legislature.

The goal of the event, as discussed, is to promote and enhance the treaty relationship between the government of Manitoba and all First Nations. The concept was presented to the parties and submitted to Cabinet. Support was expressed to have such an event in Manitoba.

* (11:00)

Our planning committee's approach was cautious, was careful, and today here we are celebrating and honouring the treaties and the treaty relationship. As a treaty commissioner, it is my responsibility to articulate the role of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba is a neutral organization that works to educate all people about the treaties that were made 139 years ago between First Nations and the Crown.

The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba's mandate is to strengthen, rebuild and enhance the treaties, the treaty relationship and mutual respect as envisaged by the treaty parties.

The commission's work in the past five years has focussed on public education, research and facilitation. It is important to note that one of the guiding principles of the TRCM is that the involvement of First Nation elders is fundamental to understanding treaty relationships. The elders have stated that if you have history you have pride. The TRCM would like to thank the elders of Manitoba and the AMC, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Council of Elders, for their commitment, dedication and support.

With the support of the elders, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Treaty Relations Commission is able to create an environment for understanding and reconciliation to assist in relationship building and co-operation, as well as secure a foundation for future collaboration in areas such as environment, sustainability, diversity and a vibrant co-existence. The Treaty Relations Commission encourages understanding, understanding of the role that the treaties played in Manitoba's history and, by extension, Canada's history.

We encourage our neighbours to look at each other as partners in the future of this country. Their perspectives are essential and we must maintain principles of honour and respect in our co-existence.

As part of our public education and awareness campaign, the Treaty Relations Commission is proud to have spearheaded the Manitoba Treaty Curriculum: treaty lessons for grades 5 and 6. The curriculum will provide teachers with an outcome-based resource with foundation-building information, outside links and educational materials to facilitate teaching about the treaties. The Manitoba Treaty Curriculum will be piloted, starting September 2010, at several schools in Manitoba. It is intended that the curriculum will then be expanded to cover all grade levels in subsequent years.

The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba recommends and seeks commitment from all parties for mandatory treaty education in Manitoba. Other milestones in the Treaty Relations Commission public education mandate include the Treaty Relations Commission Speakers Bureau, which works to create an understanding about the numbered treaties. The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba has a Learning Centre, which provides a forum for all Manitobans to hear and learn first-hand about the treaty relationship.

The Treaty Relations Commission also launched the public awareness campaign entitled, *We Are All Treaty People*, in print media and television. The intent of the campaign is to present the concept to the general public in an effort to create dialogue about their understanding and role within the treaty relationship.

The Treaty Relations Commission is also proud to have commissioned a treaty play entitled *Kinikinik*. The Governor General award-winning playwright, Ian Ross, created the piece which serves to educate and share experiences relative to the treaty and treaty relationship. The play will be presented later today for your enjoyment.

Treaties were made in the spirit of co-existence for all people in Manitoba. With an unwavering commitment to ongoing dialogue and co-operation, the Treaty Relations Commission is working to create a better understanding of how the treaties relate to every Manitoban.

The treaty relationship is based on the following principles: respecting each other's sovereignty, developing a kinship-based relationship with newcomers, reciprocity through sharing of each other's best gifts, and mutual obligation to uphold the treaty.

The federal and provincial governments were reminded by the Queen Elizabeth II on her Canadian tour in 1973 of the treaty relationship: You may be confident of the continual co-operation of my government which represents your people as it represents all the people of Canada. You may be assured that my Government of Canada recognizes the importance of full compliance with the spirit and terms of your treaties.

The Manitoba government and all Manitobans have treaty responsibilities that began in 1871 and were recognized and affirmed in 1930 with the Natural Resources Transfer Act. Manitoba is constitutionally obligated under the 1930 Manitoba Natural Resources Transfer Agreement to set aside unoccupied Crown lands so that Canada can fulfil its outstanding treaty obligations to First Nations. In addition, Manitoba is also constitutionally obligated under this same agreement to ensure that First Nation treaty right to hunt, fish, and trap is honoured. However, the only treaty implementation that has occurred here in Manitoba is the ongoing development towards settling of outstanding treaty land entitlement. This must change. We must look towards reconciliation of our history and our obligations.

The Supreme Court of Canada has suggested that finality of agreements between First Nations and the Crown is not explicit but a process that continues and calls for consultation and accommodation, two benchmarks of reconciliation.

The first step of reconciliation began long ago when Sir John A. Macdonald stated: The only way to deal with the Indians was to be firm and just. After a treaty had been fairly made, it should be honestly carried out in spirit and in letter.

In addition, Alexander Morris, the former Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, stated: I consider it of importance that an officer or officers of the government should maintain constant communication with the tribes and see that all the provisions of the treaty are rigidly carried out.

Key principles expressed in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples with respect to reconciliation are mutual recognition, mutual respect, mutual benefit, and mutual responsibility.

The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba envisions that honouring First Nations Treaty Day at the Manitoba Legislature will help to revitalize and enhance the treaty relationship. When treaties were

entered into between First Nations and the Crown, they became fundamental building blocks to the rights enjoyed by First Nations and Manitobans. These rights are not only expressed in written form but also in the spirit and intent of the treaties.

The late Minister Oscar Lathlin understood this and he laboured hard to strengthen the treaty relationship. It is an honour to recognize him for his lifelong commitment to building a better future for all treaty Manitobans and by officially announcing the Treaty Advocacy Award. This award will be presented annually by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba to one recipient who has shown dedication and commitment to the building of a better relationship between First Nations and non-First Nations in Manitoba.

The first recipient of this award is the late Minister Oscar Lathlin, in recognition of his personal commitment to advocating the understanding of the importance of treaties and the treaty relationship to all Manitobans.

I want to share with you a biography of the late minister. Oscar Lathlin was born and raised at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. He left his community to attend high school at Frontier Collegiate in Cranberry Portage, where he graduated in 1969. Subsequent to his graduation, he returned to Opaskwayak Cree Nation where he was employed by Opaskwayak as a band manager. Oscar later worked for the federal government in various senior management roles.

* (11:10)

In 1979 Oscar became the executive director of the Swampy Cree Tribal Council and, in 1985, was elected Chief of Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Oscar had served as a board member of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and he had served on various committees for the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa. He also served as a member of the policy adviser committee of the Brandon University Native Teacher Education Program.

In 1990, Oscar Lathlin was elected as the New Democratic Party member of the Manitoba Legislature for the constituency of The Pas. On October 5th, 1999, former Premier Gary Doer appointed him to the Conservation portfolio. Oscar was previously the NDP critic for Northern Affairs. He had also served as a critic for Native Affairs, constitutional development and, finally, the

Aboriginal and Northern Affairs portfolio, with responsibilities for a Community Economic Development Fund. I am very proud and honoured to have been able to call the late Minister Oscar Lathlin a colleague and a friend.

I would like to call upon Councillor Amanda Lathlin, the daughter of the late minister, and Muriel Turner to accept this award on his behalf.

Treaty Advocacy Award presented.

I want to thank Amanda for joining us here today.

At this point in time, I want to call on Elder Wayne Scott, and also I want to call on the Deputy Speaker of the House, if you would join us, please.

The First Nation elders in Manitoba have reminded us that the treaties and the treaty relationship are vital to our future. These same elders have given us direction on how we are to remind all Manitobans and the parties to the treaties that our relationship is based on mutual recognition, mutual respect, mutual benefit and mutual obligation. An act of reciprocity, the Manitoba Legislative Assembly is honouring the treaties and the treaty relationship, and the treaty people in Manitoba are providing two gifts to the Assembly.

The first gift is a beaded mace runner. And I want to call on Elder Wayne Scott to speak a little bit about the mace runner and the pillow.

Mr. Wayne Scott (Elder): Thank you, Commissioner. *Ojibway spoken.*

Translation

Thank you. I greet everyone who is seated inside here today, I say thank you.

English

I just acknowledged everybody in my language that's in this gathering, and I thank everybody in my language.

I'd like to acknowledge our ancestors who were instrumental and were very much a part of the making of Treaty 1 in 1871. *Ojibway spoken.*

Translation

It is necessary for me to speak in Ojibway here. It is about that time when the Ojibway people made the treaty, he used the pipe, and it was from there, where he knew that he had to look for the well-being of his grandchildren and the future generations. He looked

far into the future, he knew that someday those children would be born, and so he was able to see far into the future, and that is what he knew, so he made an agreement for his children, grandchildren and future children to forever benefit from the lands. That is why we are here today to be able to discuss our land here even today.

English

I took this moment to acknowledge those elders that sat in that sacred circle back in 1871. During that time, there was great uncertainty and there was great concern for those children that shall come afterwards. At that same time, there was also representation made by the Crown on behalf of their own children that came afterwards.

It is with honour, pride and great respect that the First Nations people stand before you as representatives of those children that came after. It is because of that representation by the Crown and the representation made by the First Nations people during the treaty-making process that we can now say with confidence that we are all treaty people.

I would like to thank the artist, Debbie Desjarlais, who designed the mace runner. Can you stand up, Debbie, please. Thank you, Debbie.

The beaded mace runner depicts the treaty medal. It signifies that the treaty shall be sacred, the treaty shall be honoured.

Beaded mace runner and star-blanket pillow presented.

This beautiful, beaded mace runner, accompanied by the star-blanket cushion, signifies that as long as the grass is green, the waters flow and the sun shines, the sacredness of the treaty shall be honoured. And, with that, on behalf of the Manitoba Treaty Commissioners office, the Treaty 1 people and all treaty people, we present this gift to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. Thank you, my friends. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*].

* (11:20)

Mr. White Bird: Thank you. The Treaty Relation Commission would like to express our deep gratitude to the Honourable Dr. Gregory Selinger, the Premier of Manitoba, for recognizing the treaty relationship, affirming that we are all treaty people and honouring the treaties by proclaiming today to be the Treaty Day at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

And, before I close, I would like to thank everyone for coming out to join us in honouring the treaties and the treaty relationship on this special day, the Manitoba Day, the birthday of Manitoba. We thank you very much. We are all treaty people, and as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. Miigwech [*thank you in Ojibway*], thank you.

I have some gifts that I need to present yet, so I'm going to do that now. Thank you very much. It's been a great day.

Gifts presented to Lieutenant-Governor, Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Gerrard, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you very much, Treaty Commissioner White Bird and Elder Wayne Scott, for sharing those inspiring words with us.

For those who may not know it, the mace is the symbol of the authority of the Legislature and is carried on every legislative sitting day in procession by the Sergeant-at-Arms who leads the Speaker's parade into the Chamber. When the mace is placed on the table, it indicates that the Legislature is in session. For that reason, the gift of a mace runner and a star blanket is truly a very thoughtful and appropriate gift to the Legislature and will be used with pride.

I would now ask Elder Peter Atkinson from Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation to please come forward to give the closing prayer. And would you please stand for the prayer.

Mr. Peter Atkinson (Elder): *Ojibway spoken.*

Translation

Hello. Low Flying Cloud is my name; the turtle is my clan. I am second degree Mide. The wolf is the one who also loves and cares for me.

English

First of all, I'd like to acknowledge the pipes this morning when we lifted our pipe. We've done that kind of work for a while now and we always recognize our history. We recognize our elders, recognize our relatives that have gone on and all the spirits in all the directions that we ask them to come—come to—come and be with us for that time, and it's a beautiful thing that we do. We do this together with the people that called this their new home. And it reminds me of that place there and Treaty 1 area, where they signed the treaty itself. I visited that

place, and you could feel the spirit of our ancestors there, and I was really honoured to be there.

And I also want to recognize and acknowledge—I know the women that lifted that water, a very beautiful ceremony that they did this morning. I want to acknowledge them for that and a very important part of our ceremonies, and also for the berries that we were given to break our fast. I want to thank you women for doing that for us and remembering us in that way.

So, when we do lift our pipe then, we ask all those spirits and all the directions, all the levels above the—above the four levels above the earth, the four levels beneath the earth and to mother, Mother Earth, and all those spirits that reside between those directions and between the levels above the earth and below the earth.

So, when we do our pipe ceremony then, it is like the whole universe is coming to sit with us and look after us as we do this, do the work that we need to do, do the work of our ancestors. It's a beautiful thing to see Anishinabe people come and sit with us and do come and acknowledge that pipe ceremony.

So, in closing prayer then, I want to say—*Ojibway spoken.*

Translation

Thank you I say to all of the spirits who came and joined us today, that we had beseeched to join us here today, I say thank you to them today.

In the East, there is a woman who is the leader there; White Thunderbird Woman is her name, over there she is the leader in the East.

Over there in the South, is the Spring; she is the one who looks after that doorway.

Over there in the West, is the Buffalo. Over there is also the spirit who is known as the Little Water Spirit who looks after the spirits who have gone on to the other side. His responsibility is to bring those spirits closer here, to come and observe what is that we do here. We are also loved and cared for by those spirits, those ancestors who have gone before us. They are happy, I also believe that. They are happy to see this day as we honour our legacy that was left for us.

Over in the North is the White Bear, he who carries the gift of the medicine that we can use for healing; that is the gift that he carries. And again in the fourth level, above the first level, the second level

and the third level, is the place where the lake is. It is a very beautiful lake, where the water was raised in honour today – the gift of water that was given by the Creator. I say thank you to the Mide spirit, he is the one who looks after us from that place, he will teach us when we return to the place where the Creator is. Thanks, I say to him for also coming here for witnessing this day.

And also to our Mother Earth who has given us the gifts of all that we need here to use for life, for everything as we walk here on Mother Earth. Thanks, I say to her.

And to those spirits who exist between all of the directions, I also say thank you to all of the spirits who were invited to come to witness here. I also say thanks to them for being a witness here.

Each of us are carefully watched over and so I say thanks to all of you for being here.

And each of you will go home in care as the young helper, the eagle will watch over you as each of you return home.

And so I say thanks to all of the spirits. Thank you.

* (11:30)

Ms. Chaychuk: Please be seated.

Thank you very much, Elder Peter Atkinson, for that prayer and for sharing your words with us. We are honoured you are with us today.

I would once again call upon the Deputy Speaker, Marilyn Brick, for some closing remarks.

Ms. Brick: Your Honour Lieutenant-Governor, Honourable Premier Selinger, the Official Opposition Leader, Hugh McFadyen, Dr. Gerrard, honourable ministers, MLAs, chiefs, Grand Chiefs, and boys and girls, police officials, RCMP officials, it's really been my pleasure to be here with you today on this very memorial and very auspicious occasion. I think we've heard the speeches that have gone before us and we know that this is a historical day. Treaty Day here in Manitoba, here at the Legislative Assembly—it's something that we have been so honoured to be able to share with you, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. And on behalf of all my colleagues here, I thank you.

First of all, what I would like to say is it's been a pleasure to have the boys and girls here from the Niji Mahkwa School and the Spirit Sands drummers to share your gifts of music with us. They have echoed through these halls and they have made this an even

more special occasion. The treasurable gifts that you've left with us, the mace runner, which, I must say, is so, so appropriate. Thank you so much to the Treaty Relations Commission for giving that and bestowing that on the Legislative Assembly. Also, thank you for the beautiful gift that you've given us from the AMC, for the beautiful statue that you've given us, the glass statue. That will be displayed in the Speaker's office.

I want to take this opportunity as well to thank Patricia Chaychuk, who did an excellent job of serving as our master of ceremonies. I know that this is something that's never happened before, and I really want to express my appreciation to her for doing that on behalf of all the members of the Legislative Assembly.

In closing, I want to also thank the grandfathers and the grandmothers who are here with us today who've ensured that the treaties are a living document, a document that are understood, a document that are treasured, and a document that are respected, and that's so very important. It's been stressed by all the speakers up here today, and I think that we all recognize the importance of the treaties,

but it's important that we take that forward and make sure that future generations understand as well. So, once again, I want to thank you for sharing this special day with us, for making it so historical for everyone here, and *miigwech [thank you in Ojibway]*.

Ms. Chaychuk: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you all for attending today's celebration. I have a feeling today is a day that's going to live on in our hearts and minds for a very long time. And I know I feel honoured to be here, and I'm sure a lot of other people feel it's been a special day, and we're very honoured and treasured to be here.

This brings the events for the Chamber portion to a close, but there will be festivities that will be continuing in the Rotunda. And I would now ask you all to please rise for the exit of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor and the honour party.

Procession leaves the Chamber.

Please feel free to exit at your leisure and enjoy the festivities in the Rotunda.