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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
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PROCEEDINGS
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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
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 26, 2017

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, 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): I ask House for leave to consider our private member's bill on the Nanking–232.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave this morning to consider Bill 233, the Nanjing Massacre commemoration day? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 233—The Nanjing Massacre
Commemoration Day Act**

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, that Bill 233, The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day Act; Loi sur la Journée de commémoration du massacre de Nankin, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Marcelino: Any armed conflict brings so much pain and suffering. The loss of precious lives, destruction of properties and the indelible trauma brought by the acts of aggression, cruelty and inhumanity to victims of war are horrendous. We do not wish these to happen on anyone, anywhere.

While my colleagues and I—I think all of us here were born after World War II and thus spared from experiencing an actual armed conflict—vicariously we get to experience these horrors when we see the graphic images and hear through media the detailed accounts of the carnage, savagery and depravity

committed by the aggressors on fellow human beings happening in many of the world—in the world today.

Madam Speaker, through you I speak to my colleagues in this House. Today, Bill 233 is before us which seeks to designate December 13th as the Nanjing Massacre commemoration day, honouring the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre.

It is—the Nanjing Massacre is one of the many dreadful and abominable acts of barbarity committed during World War II on the residents of the city of Nanking, then the capital city of China. By approving this bill, members of the Manitoba Legislature stand with many peoples in the world who believe in the sanctity of life, the protection of human rights, and the desire for world peace.

Madam Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the presence of many members of the Winnipeg Chinese community here with us today, many of whom were descendants of some of the victims of the Nanjing Massacre, which tragically occurred for six weeks beginning on December 13th, 1937.

Madam Speaker, many countries in Asia were occupied by the Japanese imperial army, one of the three countries which comprised the Axis powers during World War II, the other two being Germany and Italy.

Growing up in the Philippines, one of the Asian countries invaded by Japan during World War II, I have heard of personal accounts from relatives and neighbours who witnessed the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Some 10 hours after Hawaii—Pearl Harbor—was invaded on December 8th, 1941, the invasion of the Philippines started.

To avoid further destruction to life and property the Philippine government of the day declared Manila, the capital city, an open city. Sadly, that did not spare the city and its population from the horrific acts perpetrated by the invading soldiers.

Last night, while researching on the history of the Nanjing Massacre, I saw the disturbing black and white, graphic images of bombed buildings, mangled bodies, children hoisted in the air by soldiers impaled by their bayonets, women raped and killed by

desecration. These were the very stories I heard from many people growing up.

We happened to live briefly in a community in a southern province in the Philippines and I heard the painful account of a neighbour, an elderly widow, whose father, her husband, three brothers and a teenage son were forcibly taken by the Japanese soldiers. She was left to care for her two daughters, her mother and four sisters. This happened to all households in that community. For years that community was called the community without men.

This story was repeated in many parts of the country where an entire community lost all their men, never to be seen again. The families did not even know where their loved ones were buried.

We can't even imagine these things happening in our country, Canada, today or even in the past. What will we feel if all male children and adults of, say, the West End, downtown Winnipeg, or in Brandon, be rounded up, never to be seen again? Or mothers, sisters, daughters, being raped in front of their own husbands, brothers, sons? That was what happened to many people in Asia during World War II, particularly in Nanking—or Nanjing, then the capital of China.

* (10:10)

We do not find joy in remembering the atrocities of war and the untold havoc and sufferings it brought. We find no comfort in knowing Nanking residents and these armed combatants, estimated to be around 300,000, were brutally murdered. We will never feel good remembering women and girls were systematically raped, brutalized and killed, or for those women who survived and were left alive became comfort women to be sexually abused whenever soldiers wished to satisfy their carnal desires and then treated them as slaves afterwards to do cleaning, cooking, washing clothes for them.

Painful and uncomfortable as it is, we need to set a date of commemoration so we, the living, now, and then the succeeding generations to come will be taught to reject these things and internalize that these things, this atrocity should never, never, never, ever happen again.

Thank you to all my colleagues. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your kind understanding and agreement on the importance of this bill. I also thank Jennifer Chen for her leadership in bringing forward the importance of this bill and to the Chinese community in Manitoba and to all our guests from

the Chinese community. Welcome and thank you for your attendance.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Yes, thank you very much. My question to the member for Logan is: Could she please tell this House how she approached the various communities to consult them on the legislation and could she just give us a little bit of an indication how many individuals she spoke to when she drafted this legislation?

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I thank the minister for the question. Very—I'm very pleased and gratified that Jennifer Chen of the Winnipeg Chinese community brought this attention to us and we're very grateful for her leadership on this front, on this issue, and Jennifer did a big favour to us, to our caucus, for gathering the support and—which is, as we see, brought this number of big attendance to the House—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I just want to thank the member for putting forward Bill 233. I think it's very important for all of us to recognize and—these atrocities so that they never happen again.

So I would ask the member, you know, why should December 13 be chosen as the Nanjing Massacre commemoration day?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my colleague for the question. December 13 was the date in 1937—December 1937 when the invading Japanese forces began their atrocities in the city of Nanking, so I thought—we thought it's fitting that the commemoration date be on that same day.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I want to thank our Chinese community and Jen for coming out today. Thank you so much for joining us in the Legislature.

I want to ask my good friend from Logan, how is this—how is the memory of this event commemorated

across the world—in that we can maybe take example from, here in Manitoba?

Ms. Marcelino: There are other jurisdictions that have already started this. I know back home in my old country, this was being remembered too because we commiserate and we—in our country, our countrymen suffered almost the same atrocities. And I thought here in Manitoba—I'm not so sure if other cities or provinces in Canada have this—but I thought it would be a very opportune and significant way if our Legislature will start this.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to thank the member for bringing this motion up.

Canada recognizes five genocides officially. They're referred to in the human rights museum. Why aren't the atrocities and genocidal behaviour of the Imperial Japanese Army included as one of—an official recognized atrocity, genocide by the federal Canadian government? And should the government federally contemplate such action?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my friend and colleague for that very important, substantial question.

Indeed, this should be done by the federal government, as well. And to their credit, they have done several apologies already for wrongs done in the past. And this should also be done by provincial jurisdictions, because it's very important that we, the citizens, know of this atrocity so it should never be repeated again.

I thought our province, by funding and being one of the supporters of the museum—Canada—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Fontaine: I just want to take this opportunity to welcome all of our guests in the House. And in particular, honour and lift up the work of Jennifer Chen, who has been such a champion in respect of this commemoration day.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member what opportunities do people have on December 13th to raise awareness or come together on this day?

Ms. Marcelino: I could imagine that right now Jennifer and her community are thinking of many, many ways by which to significantly commemorate this—December 13th, and I'm looking forward to hearing more on—from her on what significant ways or events or activities will be done on that day.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Can the member tell us when the Japanese soldiers were finally ejected from the city of Nanjing and after how long a siege?

Ms. Marcelino: The—several countries were finally saved—or, redeemed from the atrocities of the Japanese imperial army when the Japanese surrendered. I don't have the exact date, but it's some time in 1945. May?

An Honourable Member: September.

Ms. Marcelino: Okay. September 1945, when they surrendered to the Allied forces. And that was a day that was well celebrated in the Philippines, as well.

Ms. Fontaine: Would the member please tell us how the province can help in achieving a more inclusive environment for Chinese Manitobans?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my colleague for the question.

We should be grateful that we live in Manitoba, where multiculturalism is welcomed and celebrated. We value all our ethnic communities, our Aboriginal communities, our new immigrants, and even the pioneers from Europe who came and built our province.

* (10:20)

And so for—with this as an honour and as a show of gratitude, Manitoba leads the entire country in welcoming diversity and inclusion, so we should be all proud of that.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I'd like to thank the member for bringing this issue forward this morning and also welcome our guests today.

I would like to ask the member if other legislatures in Canada or possibly in other nations have recognized this, a preferable emphasis on Canadian recognition. Has this been recognized in other parts of our country and if not, or perhaps as well, in other nations too?

Ms. Marcelino: I thank my colleague from Rossmere for the question, a very important one. I'm not aware if other jurisdictions in Canada have done this or similar commemoration like this. And if not, it would be a unique pride and honour that Manitoba started it. I'll endeavour to find out if other jurisdictions. I'm sorry I didn't know that right now.

Ms. Fontaine: I would like to ask my colleague how her Bill 233 would actually promote racial equality in Manitoba.

Ms. Marcelino: Bill 233 will promote racial equality, acceptance as well as appreciation of other cultures, as well as appreciation of the sufferings of many during armed conflicts whenever they occur because it will tell us we are humans and we are members of—we, as members of humanity, should not ever, ever tolerate these atrocities being done on anyone. Thank you.

Mr. Curry: Again, I would like to thank my friend from Logan.

I wanted to know if she can talk a bit about any other events that are commemorated in China in relation to Second World War, especially any commemorations to Victory Day that's celebrated across China.

Ms. Marcelino: Our Chinese community are very active, socially, politically, economically. They have not only festivals but also celebrations of the many accomplishments of their members of their community. Not too long ago in this House, we welcomed the daughter of a Chinese diplomat who, in the kindness of his heart, saved several thousand Jews from extinction during World War II against—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired. Debate is open.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I'd first of all like to welcome our guests from the Chinese community here to the Chamber today when it's blustery snow outside and it's getting a little bit colder.

Events like these seem very distant. They seem very far. In fact, the date when this started was December 13th, 1937, and even that seems a long time ago. What is important that we have these debates isn't that we focus just on one event, although that is important. There's an overriding concern that we must have, as human beings on this earth, and it is to what depravity we, as a human race, can go to, over and over and over again. And there are consistently examples, historic examples going back hundreds, probably thousands of years, and some as current as 15, 20 years ago.

So it is important for us as legislators, those who have been elected to sit in legislative bodies, those who have been chosen by the population to sit and make decisions. To make decisions, some of which historically led to these kinds of horrendous acts. And we have to remind ourselves as legislators that it was a legislative body—whether it was a royalty or whether it was a dictator or whether it was an elected body, but someone made the decision to do this.

We have seen through various periodicals, through books, even through movies. We can see how horrendous acts are decided by seemingly very civilized individuals. And they sit around, they have a conversation as if they're talking about mere numbers, or they're talking about a fruit-grow farm. And they're talking about human lives.

We should start this debate. And we've had debates like this previously in that we must never forget. Because if we forget our history, we are doomed to repeat it. And if we go through history, we know about the Holocaust. At least 6 million Jews. The Holodomor, where a leader starved his own people to death—up to 7 and a half million. And, to make it a little bit personal, my family left Germany, were given wonderful land in Ukraine, and I can say thank God it was in western Ukraine, because if they would have gotten land like others did in eastern Ukraine, how different things would have turned out. Our family would have also have been starved to death in the Holodomor. The Cambodian genocide—up to 3 million. Armenian genocide—1.5 million. Rwandan genocide—at least a million. And the list goes on and on.

What happened in China is another one of those examples, and it is so important for us to always have a debate like this. And in my years here—when I first started, we had a debate on recognizing the Holocaust. And we have the Holocaust memorial outside on the grounds. I was here when we did the Holodomor remembrance day. Very important. And so, too, is the importance of recognizing this day. And it's not to pick on anybody, it's not to push anybody down or lift anybody up. But it is to point out to us as human beings how absolutely cruel we can be to each other.

Madam Speaker, many of us—many of us in this Chamber, many of us across this great province and this wonderful country we call Canada are here because they were facing tyranny, because they were facing situations like this. Many of the Ukrainian community, many of the Jewish community are here

today because of the Holocaust, because of the Holodomor. Some got out before, very few got out after.

And I'd like to point out that not just—is Canada, lily white in all of this. We had the residential schools. We had other issues that we had to deal with. And if there was a proud moment as a Canadian, it was the day that our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, stood up in the House of Commons with many residential school survivors invited into the Chamber. And, on behalf of the Government of Canada, apologized to them. That is what we have to do. And it's not that many of those who died can forgive us, and not that many of those maybe even have the love in their heart that are still alive to forgive us.

* (10:30)

I always tell my family the reason why you apologize isn't for the other person; it's for you. It helps you heal. The accepting of the apology is not for the other person. It's also for that person. It's a healing process. And we have to learn, as Canadians, that these apologies were warranted, were long overdue, were necessary and were part of the healing of our national psyche. It was very important that we did that.

I would like to say to the Chinese community here we very much appreciate what you bring to this great city, this great province and this great country. You are a blessing on this country, and we are very pleased that you are here today. We also stand with you today, we put arms around each other and we say we will remember this because those pains, that anguish, in some cases, that fear gets passed on from generation to generation. We know in the case of the residential schools, the after-effect of the residential schools has played out for generations, and it's important to go back and start that healing process.

So, too, is it for the Chinese community, for those who lost loved ones, for those who perhaps were told, we don't talk about that anymore. We don't talk about what happened to family members. That is very unhealthy. It's important that we do talk about it, that we do have those conversations about what happened, and we want to put our arms around our Chinese Canadian community today and say that we're with you today.

Many of us come from varied experiences in our life, and we are a product of those experiences in our families. A lot of us carry a lot of hardship. We carry

a lot of sorrow. There are things that happen in our families because of what happened in the past. And we want you to know that we share this moment with you. We feel it's important to remember. It's important to stand up and remember today what happened in 1937, and it is even more important that we stand today and we say, as legislators, we will never allow that to happen here in Canada. We will stand against it anywhere where it happens around the world.

Let us as a human race, let us as human beings, again and again, commit to never forgetting, but more important, never letting it happen again. Let us stand for each other, and it shouldn't matter if it's a person down the street or if it's a person halfway across the globe. Let us stand up for each other that we can say, for as long as we've been legislators in this Chamber, for as long as we've been free citizens in this great city, free citizens of this province and this country, that we stood up and we countered what goes on in other areas and we stood up against this kind of evil, this kind of cruelty, this kind of depravity that is happening in other areas.

Let's continue to stand up as a human race and stand up for what's good, right and just, and we definitely support this legislation.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm proud to put a couple of words on the record in respect of bill 333 that my colleague has brought forward today. And, again, I just want to take this opportunity to just acknowledge Jennifer Chen and everybody that's in the House today for coming to sit in the Chamber with us and hear the discussion and hear the debate, you know, for something that is obviously so personal for our guests in the gallery.

And it is—I just want to kind of lift up Jennifer Chen. She has done a lot of work. She's so active in Manitoba, and her husband and her little baby, he just turned a year old and he is very, very sweet and, actually, he is everywhere. I think he's actually probably more places than most of us. Like, every time you go to events, here is Jennifer Chen's son, and so I really lift that up. I think it's very special when we can have the next generation participate in all of these things. They may not know what's going on, at this point, but it becomes a part of their daily experience and their teachings, and so I really do lift up both Jennifer and David in respect of participating in everything and again lift up everybody that's in the House today.

Certainly, we support recognizing very traumatic and horrific events in the lives of our Chinese brothers and sisters and certainly from an indigenous perspective, you know, knowing the history on these territories that have occurred in respect of our people, it is something that I feel very deeply and am profoundly sorry that this has to occur. The member and I were talking about many atrocities that we've seen in the world, and it is inexcusable that as human beings that we would do that.

And certainly this private member's bill is, you know, something very personal in the sense of the savage violence that was perpetrated on the bodies of women and little girls, and again, I say little girls because some of the victims were as young as 10 years old when they were taken from their families and were raped, you know, repeatedly and taken as sex slaves. And, you know, I think sometimes we use a very soft language. I—in some of the research that I've read they—the discourse or the narrative is that, you know, these little girls or these women were taken as comfort women, and that doesn't really—that discourse doesn't really get to the horrific nature of sexual violence and the collateral damage of war on women and girls' bodies.

And when we think that thousands upon thousands upon thousands of women and girls were taken against their will and were repeatedly raped day in and day out as a methodology and a practice of war—and if you look across the country there—across the world when you look at war, often it is borne on the bodies of women and girls and children. And, in fact, we saw that in Rwanda, where women and children were raped and we see that today all across the world, where women's bodies and little girls' bodies are used as a means of war.

And, certainly, I think that supporting Bill 233 sends a very strong message that it is simply unacceptable—it's—that we in this House fully reject any sexual violence on the bodies of women and girls, certainly here in Manitoba and in Canada but to our sisters across the world. This is something that we face on a daily basis and is certainly not acceptable, and I'm hoping that we take a very good stand in respect of that through this bill, through recognizing and commemorating those women and those girls that suffered such a brutal, brutal, brutal acts of terror, really, on their bodies.

I'll keep my comments very brief. Again, I just want to recognize everybody in the House. I do also want to point out that Jennifer's partner is also a

descendant of the Holocaust, and so it is fitting that they are both here today as we recognize again the brutality and the atrocities of war and hopefully taking a stand and saying never again in this House.

So I say miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I want to thank all my colleagues, especially colleague from Logan, for bringing this important issue for debate.

* (10:40)

Again, I want to thank the Chinese community for being here. Jen, it's so nice to have you here and it's so nice to be able to discuss something—unfortunately this is a very tragic topic and the atrocities that the imperial army of Japan committed against the Chinese people during their war.

Of course, we think of the Second World War beginning in Europe. The people of Japan and China had been fighting for many years before Poland had ever been invaded by the Germans and Russians, and the fighting was especially bitter because of the incredibly evil mentality of the empire of Japan. A 'xenocidal' group of people had decided that they were not interested in sharing the Pacific Ocean with anyone other than themselves, and this mentality spread across many places.

I think we'd be remiss if we did not remember, of course, Chinese people were targeted when the city of Singapore was defeated. The description of that massacre is simply called the purge, and it was an idea to eliminate as many Chinese people as possible from Singapore that had been occupied and controlled by the British. It was a shameful display that happened in 1942—the winter of 1942—something that the people of Singapore still have the emotional scars of, and something that few will ever forget: the up to 70,000 people who were targeted for killing. Neighbours, friends looked on in terror as this happened.

It would be something also important to recognize—the atrocities committed—that the Japanese imperial army had no fear of offending anyone. The creation of the Burma railroad saw people from British descent, people of Chinese descent, people of Burmese, people of Indian descent. It seemed like almost every person in the world suffered and died to build the railway to expand the imperialist ambitions of the people of and the empire of Japan.

The famous book and movie *Bridge over the River Kwai* tries to take a window into that terror,

but no book can really demonstrate the amount of dead. I think important to note that up to more than 180,000 Southeast Asian civilian labourers died either on the rocky terrains—blasting without any safety—either from starvation, malaria. And up to 60,000 Allied prisoners of war were killed in making this railroad—a human rights crime as prisoners of war under—every country recognizes that they are not to be used in forced labour.

And I would not be without remiss that we must also talk about Canada's own shameful past. My colleague from St. Paul, Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), brought up residential schools. We can't forget though, that despite the many evil actions by Japanese soldiers in Nanking, here in Canada, for some reason, we decided as a country that people of Japanese descent shouldn't have freedom when we were at war with Japanese people. Of course, German people were free to walk the streets. People who—people of Italian descent, people like my wife's family, were allowed to walk free, but if you were Japanese, you were placed in internment camps. And my friends across the way, I believe recently had David Suzuki at one of their events and of course, David Suzuki is a survivor of the internment camps.

I know my colleague the Deputy Premier, Auditor General, Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), recently met with George Takei—a personal hero of mine—for his advocacy in human rights, for his excellent screen time as Lieutenant Sulu. And, unfortunately, he himself was also a survivor of Japanese internment camp simply because he looked different, sounded different, and it was thought that he—at 12 years old—could have done something to harm the country that he went on to serve and continues to serve with his advocacy with distinction.

We can never forget that these atrocities sometimes go both ways and we like to think that in Canada, we're always the good people, we're always the good guys, but that's not fair at all, and the same mentality happens too often. We must always recognize that these terrible things permeate throughout our society.

I want to again thank my colleague from Logan. Her and I were able to join with, I want to say, hundreds of people at Chinese Gardens on Canada Day for a wonderful drum celebration. The Chinese community, what an incredible, incredible job. They performed as hosts for us who are not in the

community, but also the drum event was something across Canada in cities from coast to coast. There were drummers, and at the exact same moment, everyone set their drums. And I have to say, it was an impressive show. It was standing-room only except for the few dignitaries. They made sure that we had to sit, and as—if you've been to a function with our good Chinese friends, if they ask you to sit politely, you do so. You were very kind. And the gracious hosts that they were, it was incredible. Such a wonderful community, and I was so happy to join my colleague from Logan at that wonderful event.

I also have to make note that Canada's own conflict in Japan, certainly we had our bad shots, but we sent 'soldiers' to Hong Kong to help defend, certainly British holdings there, but the people of China. In 1941, we sent a detachment to Hong Kong. Atrocities were well known by that time, and the British Empire certainly, seeing that their imperial holdings, aside from the discussion of that state of British history, but certainly the people in those holdings, like Singapore and certainly like Hong Kong, there was fear that violence from the Japanese imperial army could've been grave. And many Canadian soldiers gave their lives that day defending the ground of Hong Kong. Many Canadian soldiers would spend the next almost four years in prisoner of war camps, many of them dying, more of them dying in prisoner of war camps than in the conflict, in the fighting in the streets of Hong Kong.

Many of those men never had any qualms with the Japanese people, of course, but the treatment in those prisoner of war camps are an unfortunate chapter that cannot be forgotten and the forced labour, the forced starvation, the tortures that many POWs, not just Canadian soldiers—many Australian soldiers, many American soldiers, many Filipino soldiers, especially in the Philippines, suffered unspeakable tortures and horrors.

I have to comment, of course, that John Robert Osborn of the Winnipeg Grenadiers died on 19 December, fighting against the Japanese imperial army. For four years his friends and colleagues would languish in prisoner of war camps, maybe not even thinking about the old sergeant major, but after they were liberated and they told their stories of the events of that battle, it was quite clear from their superiors in Ottawa that Sergeant Major Osborn died of extreme gallantry. A Japanese assault on their position, grenades were thrown into their room, and he, without any care for himself, threw his body on top of those grenades, saving his friends and his

comrades, himself dying in the action. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for valour, posthumously.

It's those acts that really draw to light the importance to remember, as my colleague brought up—colleague from St. Paul brought up, that we cannot have history just as some idle thing to sit on the shelf and every once in a while for enjoyment we look for the pages.

History has to be living; we have to learn from the experience of history. We have to share the stories of history. We can never think that history's written in stone. History is a conversation, and we have to continue to have those conversations. I'm so happy to have that conversation here.

I'm so happy, of course, in preparing my notes last night and today, I completely forgot my good friends Pris and Jay, both of our Chinese community, and their daughter Ellie Mak was born at the Women's Hospital on October 24th at six pounds, one ounce, to Priscilla Liu Mak and Jay Mak. Another wonderful addition to our Chinese community here in Winnipeg. We look forward to seeing her once her weight is a bit up and she's able to receive some guests.

Priscilla, Pris as Ellen calls her, went to school with my wife. Her older brother, Jay, and I went to kindergarten to grade 8, and I'm so happy that I was able to know the Chinese community, as youngsters sometimes don't realize their differences. We have different, maybe, cut of hair and different shirts, but when you're in kindergarten, you get to just play on the swings and enjoy the freedoms that we have in this country, and we don't learn about these things. But here in the Legislature we do when we get to discuss this important topic.

There's so much more to bring up, of course. I wouldn't be remiss on the question I want to leave with my colleague from Logan, that in China, for the 70th anniversary of victory against the Japanese, tens of thousands of people, soldiers and seamen, airmen, line the streets and parade, hundreds of thousands of people celebrate across the country, the republic—People's Republic of China—to celebrate and commemorate the end of the Second World War, not just for the Nanjing Massacre, not just for the tragedies across the empire but for all the wrongs and all the victories that the people of China were able to accomplish over that terrible enemy, and I'm so happy that we're able to discuss this topic here today. Thank you.

* (10:50)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, until now we've not had in this Chamber a thorough discussion and examination of the World War II violence in Asia, and many are unfamiliar with this part of history. It's important for all Manitobans to reflect and to educate themselves about the enduring lessons of the Nanjing Massacre. It's time for atrocities in Asia to be as well known as those in Europe or Canada.

While this bill may be divisive between Japanese and Chinese people in Manitoba, it's important that we recognize our collective world history. We must learn from what has happened in the past to ensure these types of horrors never happen again. We need to move past the fear and rage that separates us. We need to recognize, to remember and to address the capacity of human beings for barbarity.

During this time of reconciliation, we have learned that we cannot wash away the ugly parts of our history. But we need to educate future generations to ensure we move forward together, building better relations among and between peoples of different backgrounds.

The Liberal caucus agrees with naming December 13th as the Nanjing Massacre commemoration day to gather, to remember and to honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre.

Thank you. Merci.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this bill, the Nanking Massacre commemoration day act, and to welcome our friends in the gallery. We thank you for coming and thank you for listening. It's hard to listen, but it's important.

This bill recognizes a very dark period of human history when one race dominated and brutalized another race. And as news leaked out around the world, the stories were so horrific that others found it too difficult to believe, and the brutalization was allowed to continue, mainly throughout a six-week period from December 1937 to February 1938, but it also continued after that.

This was in a period leading up to the Second World War when the Imperial Japanese Army was bent on expanding into China and throughout Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia and other countries. It was also a time

when Hitler was rapidly re-arming Germany and expanding its borders throughout Europe.

It's a horrific time in history; we cannot forget about it; and without being able to understand it, I can just imagine the pain that people will still carry remembering loved ones brutalized in Nanking.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to thank the members for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) and St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) for bringing this very important issue up. Madam Speaker, the rape of Nanking is a seminal issue of the 20th century. It laid the very unfortunate foundation for atrocities to come.

I've been listening to the debate carefully, and may I say, when we are reflecting on the difficulties and the horrors of the past, it's very important not to create false equivalencies, and I regret to say that the member from Kildonan and the member from Springfield may not have appropriately described or compared the horrific atrocities committed by the Japanese imperial army and somehow making equivalencies to Canadian actions.

It is actually offensive to everyone involved to make those comparisons. It's offensive to the victims of the Japanese imperial army aggression. It's offensive to the people of Canada and our history. And I hope that we'll be more reflective and understanding of what we're actually talking about.

What we are talking about, the aggression of the Japanese in Manchuria, the rape of Nanking, where eight-year-olds were raped, 70-year-olds were raped, pregnant women, for months on end. Three hundred thousand women and civilians were killed. At the end of the Japanese occupations, up to 30 million people were killed.

Now, this has lasting effects. Now, Madam Speaker, I've had the pleasure of meeting and chatting with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. They're very nice people. However, they need—the Japanese nation needs to apologize for the atrocities they committed in the Second World War.

My grandfather was in the federated Malay volunteer force. He lived in Kuala Lumpur, and when the Japanese invaded he was on vacation in Australia and took the first boat to Singapore to defend that island against the Japanese. He had an opportunity to leave. He didn't take it so he could fight, and of course Singapore fell and he ended up on the Burmese railway: four years of slave labour;

he was put on a raft several times, left to die. The atrocities and the treatment that the Japanese imperial army inflicted on civilians and POWs is a disgrace, a stain on human history.

Now, where did they get—this all began with the invasion of China and the rape of Nanking. They deliberately committed the atrocities to toughen up the new recruits to somehow demonstrate that the Japanese were superior to the other people. This was a deliberate and horrific way of dehumanizing people—that's it, dehumanizing people—and that led to what happened to my grandfather. To this day my family does not buy any goods made in Japan.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'll just say this: It's long overdue that Japan apologize. Canada as a nation should recognize the atrocities committed by the Japanese imperial army as a genocide. It is on the scale of at least what we saw in Europe in the Second World War.

And to the people in the gallery, I say I'm sorry. Life is not fair, not to your ancestors or my grandfather and family, and it does last generations, and I carry it deep for my family.

May we all remember so it doesn't happen again, and I'd like to thank the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) for bringing this forward.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 233, The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

* (11:00)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): I appreciate the members this morning and their discussion this morning. I just wanted you to canvass the House to call the motion unanimous.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to call the motion unanimous? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Madam Speaker: The hour now being 11 a.m. and the time for private members' resolutions—the honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business.

Madam Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Ms. Fontaine: Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered the next Thursday of private members' business will one—will be one previously debated and put forward by the honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). The title of the resolution is Keeping Post-Secondary Education Affordable for Students and Families.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 33(8), the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one previously debated and put forward by the honourable member for Fort Rouge. The title of the resolution is Keeping Post-Secondary Education Affordable for Students and Families.

Res. 25—Action Against Industrial Pollution in St. Boniface

Madam Speaker: The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Action Against Industrial Pollution in St. Boniface, brought forward by the honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): The resolution was already put forward in the orders of the day, and I move, seconded by the member for Fin—Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), that

WHEREAS the residents of the Saint Boniface constituency are concerned about environmental pollution effects from the nearby Mission industrial area; and

WHEREAS there are a number of schools, daycares and public parks, as well as families with children living nearby; and

WHEREAS there is a concern about the impact of airborne pollution (which might contain heavy metals and be less than 2.5 micrometers) on human health and the development of children; and

WHEREAS people in the surrounding area are reporting increased health problems, including asthma and coughing; and

WHEREAS residents in the surrounding area have reported homes shaking, walls cracking, and are concerned about the possibility of an industrial disaster, and potential damage to the aqueduct; and

WHEREAS the South Saint Boniface Residents Association has economic concerns regarding the intensification of industrial sites, given the area's proximity to downtown and tourist destinations, the potential impact on residential property value, and the potential impact on future plans for infill projects such as the Public Markets Brownfield; and

WHEREAS the South Saint Boniface Residents Association has devoted an exceptional amount of time to research and community consultation; and

WHEREAS the South Saint Boniface Residents Association is working with the University of Manitoba to help fund independent third-party testing; and

WHEREAS Bill 220, The Environmental Rights Act is a legislative tool for residents to protect themselves from environmental harms; and

WHEREAS the South Saint Boniface Residents Association has a petition with 1718 signatures and have submitted 194 Odour/Noise Nuisance Complaints forms to Manitoba Sustainable Development.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Sustainable Development to meet with the South St. Boniface Residents Association and work with them in good faith to address their concerns with respect to human and animal health; to infrastructure, including the aqueduct; reduce property values; and to the need for a public disaster-management plan, all of which will improve Manitobans' quality of life by making the community liveable, safe, and sustainable.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Sustainable Development to meet with the South St. Boniface Residents Association and work with them in good faith to address their concerns with respect to human and animal health; to infrastructure, including the aqueduct; reduce property values; and to the need for a public disaster-management plan, all of which will improve Manitoba's quality of life

by making the community liveable, safe, and sustainable.

Mr. Selinger: I just want to say from the outset, I met with the minister last week, and simply, we discussed the idea of meeting with the residents, and I've received two dates from the minister's office for the first week of December, which will allow the residents to meet with the minister and tell their story and tell their concerns. So I'm hoping that today's emergency resolution—or, private member's resolution, will be unanimously supported by the Legislature, as it's supported by the minister, and of course myself, and the people of St. Boniface.

But I want to use the balance of my time to simply put a number of significant and important items on the agenda. First of all, I would like to table for the House the odour-nuisance complaint forms which have been signed by many people.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It's identified in the resolution—Madam Speaker, it's identified in the resolution that we have before the House today, that there have been many people that have signed not only complaint forms, but petitions. And there have been 194 odour complaints put forward, and there's also been a petition signed by 1,718 people. I'd like to put that on the record so that we have that for the benefit of the Legislature and the history of this issue.

Why is air pollution something to be discussed at this time in our history? Well first of all, it is an issue that's growing importance around the globe right now, around the world. And the best evidence for that is that the United Nations, for the first time in its history, is having a major conference this coming December in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss air pollution and to see what measures can be taken by that international body to put in place a plan and a strategy to reduce air pollution around the world.

So it is growing in significance, and we've—since 1992, we'll remember that we had the convention on climate change in Rio de Janeiro. And here we are, many decades later, still wrestling with how to address that. So this first conference coming in Nairobi, I think, will benefit from the efforts that have been made around the world to deal with climate change, because often the air pollution and climate change co-occur in various jurisdictions.

It is a major contributor, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a major contributor to premature deaths around the world. We have quite a bit of evidence

that's starting to come out by respected research organizations around the world. Pollution is the largest environmental cause of disease and premature death in the world today. They are—diseases caused by pollution were responsible for an estimated 9 million premature deaths in 2015; 16 per cent of all deaths worldwide; three times more deaths than from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined and 15 times more than from all wars and other forms of violence.

In the most severely affected countries, pollution-related disease is responsible for more than one in four deaths. Diseases caused by all forms of pollution were responsible for an estimated 9 million deaths in 2015. Non-communicable diseases are often the results of air pollution and account for most of the total burden of disease due to pollution, approximately 71 per cent, and one of the types of disease that can come from air pollution is neurodevelopmental toxicity. It's one of the most important consequences of lead toxicity in children, and the WHO, the World Health Organization, states that there is no known level of lead exposure that is considered to be safe, and so I just wanted to put those comments on the record to create context for our discussions today.

And all around the world, including in the developed world, we're coming to be aware of these issues more and more as the research continues to improve. Just last week The Lancet published new research that showed that this is a growing and significant problem. Now, in Canada, our rate of deaths is about 50 per 1,000, which is considered one of the lower rates in the world, but that's still 16,500 Canadians a year that suffer from premature death.

And, when they looked at the cities that have air pollution issues out of 30 cities, Winnipeg was the 8th worst. So the argument that if we have air pollution in one part of the city it's no worse than the other part of the city really doesn't help when we're No. 22—No. 23 out of 30 cities when it comes to air pollution. It means that we have a generic problem in our jurisdiction where over 70 per cent of the population lives.

But it's also the case that research is showing more and more that air pollution is concentrated in neighbourhoods with heavy industrial activity, and the Mission area—the Mission Industrial area in St. Boniface is a long-standing area of industrial activity, and that's the case in other jurisdictions such

as Houston, where they found a high correlation between an increased incidence of cancer rates in neighbourhoods which were in close to metal recycling plants in that jurisdiction.

The other part of this story is that air pollution is the result of specific emissions from specific industries and that means that it can be identified and it can be remedied or controlled, protect human and animal health as well as fresh air, clean water, healthy soils and healthy plant life and, consequently, healthy plant foods.

So I just wanted to put that out there as a form of context for the discussion we have today, and now I wanted to talk about the specific needs and history of this area.

The residents and myself, as MLA, have opposed since 2008 complaints—this idea of adding further intensive industrial use in the area, including recycling activities that involved work with metals, but it really picked up in the fall of 2015 when a new recycling operation opened up. There were explosions and fires, people were finding dust on their windows and on their cars and we're getting more and more concerned about what was going on. As I remember correctly, the regulators, which is us at the provincial level through the department of now called Sustainable Development, did a temporary halt to the licence until further compliance was incurred with respect to the requirements of the licence.

* (11:10)

And then concerns continued and I met with the residents and they remain to be concerned and we looked at different ways that that could be addressed, including, as noted in the resolution, the idea of an environmental bill of rights which would give more tools for citizens to be able to pursue these issues in the public interest, in the interest of public health.

The other thing is that, in the spring of 2016, the department, after meeting with the residents, agreed to do air quality tests in the neighbourhood in the spring of 2016. Those tests were held onto until about February of this year. And when the tests came out, the South St. Boniface Residents was fortunate enough to have a peer review done on them. And the peer review indicated that the tests failed to measure the small particulate matter under 10 parts per million, 2.5 parts per million, the small micrograms that most deeply embed themselves in people's lungs and livers and can cause increased incidence of heart

disease, increased risk of cancer, increased risk of other problems, including with the liver. So the results of those tests were very concerning because they didn't measure what needed to be measured.

The residents have also been complaining, as noted in the resolution in front of us today, about noise and about shaking of foundations and walls cracking. And they also have a long history of concern for natural disaster because of the speedway incident several years ago, where there was a major explosion in the area. Fortunately, no human life was lost, but it was an indicator of the risks of heavy industrial activity close to areas that were residential—where people live. And also where people work. That's another important dimension to this is what kind of conditions are people working in? So they've continued to pursue this.

The other thing that the residents have discovered is that the aqueduct is quite close to where these heavy industrial activities are occurring. And with the shaking going on in the ground, there is potential risk to an aqueduct which is over 100 years old. And one only hopes that we protect that adequately.

The minister has said that it's important to put the results in context, and I would agree with that. And some of the results were within residential levels or industrial levels. But two of the results, I think, need to be clarified. One of the results showed very heavy lead concentrations, exceeding both the residential levels and the industrial levels on the Plinguet Street area. And that was characterized as an industrial area. Having visited that area, I can tell everybody here that people live in that area. There are residents there, so it's very important that we get to the bottom of that.

The preliminary samples done by the researchers in co-operation with the residents were always only just to get an idea of what the challenge was. Nobody ever said there was a final—

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

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. And the questions may be addressed by the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member of another party; any subsequent questions are followed a rotation between parties; each independent member

may ask one question; and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Time for questions.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I want to thank members opposite for bringing forward this resolution and, more importantly, for coming to my office a few weeks back to discuss this issue. I appreciate his advocacy efforts on behalf of his community.

I just want to know if he drafted this resolution before or after I agreed to meet with the residents of south St. Boniface?

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Yes, I think the member will know that the resolution was drafted before because I indicated that to her when we met, and it was only yesterday that we got word that the minister was willing to meet with the residents, which is why I congratulated her for that decision to meet with the residents.

And with that decision by the minister to meet with the residents, the THEREFORE clause has been satisfied, and that's why I think it can be approved unanimously by the Legislature.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Has there been any community open houses in the area in question that residents have voiced their concerns at?

Mr. Selinger: Yes, I have been at meetings with the residents, along with other elected officials in the community where they made it clear in no uncertain terms that they wanted us to be supportive of them in pursuing these issues. And I give them credit for that. They've been a very active group, completely composed of volunteers, most of them holding down jobs and family responsibilities.

So there have been some open houses, and we've had an official out from the Department of Sustainable Development to talk to residents as well. So there has been a beginning dialogue.

But now we need to go ahead and do independent testing, because the first round of tests created a trust issue when the—it didn't measure the very serious, small particulate matter and failed a peer review.

But I do—

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

Ms. Squires: The member opposite, he talked about the intensification of licensing in that industrial area.

Could the members opposite explain why he, during his time as Premier, allowed his government to issue all these environmental licences?

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for the question.

As I indicated earlier, as the MLA for the area, we opposed this intensification. The residents opposed it. The departmental officials, after doing their due diligence, recommended it. The Clean Environment Commission took a look at it, and in spite of noting the 'objecives', recommended it. But the one thing that the Clean Environment Commission said at the time—that they only agreed to recommend this intensification of industrial use in the area on the assumption that the licence requirements would be complied with by the proponent of this industrial activity.

So the key here is proper and vigorous enforcement. And one of the things that we've discovered as we've gone along is some of the reporting on—

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

Mr. Lindsey: What do you think the residents may expect to hear from the minister, or more importantly, what should they expect to hear from the minister regarding an action plan for this?

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for the question.

As I was saying, one of the things the residents have discovered is that often the reporting is self-reporting by the industry itself, and that can create a confidence question. So I'm hoping that we can move towards a way of—as we reform our regulatory regimes in this province—smart regulation that allows for independent regulatory examination of these industrial activities to give greater confidence to everybody in the public that public health is being protected. And I think that will go a long way towards addressing this issue.

So the old way of doing things through self-reporting may longer—may no longer be sufficient to build public confidence that they live in safe neighbourhoods and that air quality is being properly looked after.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): I thank the member for bringing this forward. I think it gives an opportunity for us to show that we are listening and

that we're willing to meet with residents, and I commend the minister for her actions to date on this file, and I look forward to more. But I'm a little bit confused by what you were saying about how this came to be in the first place.

Are you asserting that while you were in office appropriate monitoring was being done by the department and those responsible?

Mr. Selinger: I think I've just explaining that. I thank the member from Radisson for the question because, quite frankly, this issue will have impact on the residents of his community. They're very close by, the industrial activity is—we share some common boundaries, some terms of the industrial activity in this area.

You know, hindsight's always 20-20. One of the things we've discovered through the residents and their due diligence, and I want to commend them for doing that, that it was in many cases self-regulation—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. I just want the member to direct to the Chair the answer.

Mr. Selinger: Through the Chair to the member of Radisson, I would like to say that the self-monitoring done by industry has created a lack of confidence and trust in the results. We need independent tests. We need independent monitoring. We need independent regulatory enforcement that will serve his residents well, that will serve the residents of Winnipeg well. I'm sure that will serve the residents of St. Boniface well.

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

Mr. Lindsey: We recognize that more and more information becomes available all the time that may require a different mode of thought than what used to be in place as far as monitoring and things go.

Can the member just briefly touch on what the concerns are for asthma with the industrial pollution, and why it's important to really test the lower sized particles? Thank you.

* (11:20)

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member from Flin Flon for that question, because I know in his jurisdiction he's had similar experiences with his own citizens.

The small particulate matter, less than 10 parts per million down to 2.5 parts per million, are the most dangerous particulate matter. And we have had complaints from residents about increased coughing,

about increased asthma attacks, about increased problems with breathing, and tasting metal in their mouths. That's some of the things that we've heard from people.

One of the businesses in the area who's been there for over 30 years and has no interest other than providing a safe environment for his work—for his staff, said he felt it was like hooking up an exhaust pipe to his building in terms of the—

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

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and put a quick question on the record.

So, to—through you to the member from St. Boniface, he had 17 years as the MLA for St. Boniface and also the Premier, and we know that there was a catastrophic event happened in his constituency with racetrack fuels, and when questioned, he said that they didn't know about it. They didn't know that the tanks were there.

I do appreciate him putting on the record today that the old ways of doing things was not necessarily the right way. I have total confidence in our member, the member from Riel, to take this file forward and make sure things are getting done the right way.

And so to the member from St. Boniface, you had 17—

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

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) for the question. It's not a surprise. It's exactly the right question. There have been pursuit of air quality issues in the community over the years. Loveday mushrooms, where bunkers were built to protect people and there's still complaints. Rothesay rendering plant, where scrubbers were put on the plant, and yet we still get some complaints.

And as new activities have come into the area there has been a growing awareness that a heavy industrial area close to a residential neighbourhood may not be compatible with evolving standards on public health, and that is the issue here today.

How can we move forward together? I'm glad the member has confidence in his government being willing to move forward together. We will support that.

We all have a job to do, to keep learning about how we can make things better for our citizens, and I'm confident today—

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

Mr. Lindsey: I'd just like to know the community associations. The minister's agreed to meet with the communities that are concerned.

Are they going to be prepared to offer some suggestions for improvement as well as voicing their concerns and complaints, because that's always an important part of the piece is if they have suggestions that will help the minister do her job better.

Mr. Selinger: That's a very good question from the member from Flin Flon, and the residents have been remarkably constructive considering the stress—emotional stress and health stress that they've experienced. They have proposed better air quality testing done independently. They have proposed a permanent air quality testing site in a heavy industrial area, which only makes sense; we only have two or three in Manitoba. They have proposed a disaster management plan be put in place well ahead of any potential future disaster of which, we hope, we have none.

So they have made many constructive suggestions and I'm sure they look forward to meeting with the minister and offering a constructive way forward. That's a sign of good leadership from a responsible citizen organization.

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

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate is open. Any speakers?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I am pleased to rise today to talk about this very important issue of lead contaminants in soils, and I do want to thank members opposite for bringing it forward and also really for passionately advocating for his community. That is what we do as MLAs first and foremost, is always look after the interests of our community.

And so I thank the member for that, for bringing this forward, and again, I can reiterate that I have reached out to the community and am wanting to work with the community and I have taken many

steps on this file because we do recognize the seriousness of lead contaminants in the soil.

But let me start by giving a little bit of context to this issue in that there were some soil samples that were taken and that there were exceedances of the CCME guidelines for acceptable levels of lead. And now the CCME guidelines are used across Canada.

We have utmost confidence that these guidelines are the right guidelines, and so when I hear that there are exceedances in these guidelines I do get concerned.

So I did ask my department—as well as the University of Manitoba, to work with us and to look at where exactly are these exceedances. Because we know in our society today, we have, you know—there are many factors that have contributed to excessive lead in our soils, particularly exhaust from leaded gasoline in days gone by, and other—lead paint in our buildings, et cetera.

And so to put some context into the lead, we realized that the samples that were taken in St. Boniface from Happyland Park, and some boulevards, and some backyards where residents are growing vegetables, those soil samples were within the guidelines.

Where the soil samples showed excessive levels of lead were right in the industrial park. And we are working with the stakeholders in the park area—the industrial park, pardon me—to ensure that they are taking precautions. And we do know that there is new science coming out, especially from the state of California regarding metal recyclers, and we are ensuring that our industrial—the industries in St. Boniface are always being in adherence to the guidelines that our department puts out, as well as looking at new research coming out of other areas and how we can apply even more stringent regulations and requirements on these operators in St. Boniface—and throughout the province—so that we can work together to clean up the soil and the air quality.

We are also getting additional equipment that will be arriving this week—I'm told by the department—that will do additional air quality testing, because we do know that that fine particulate is of great concern, and we want to make sure that we've got our finger on the pulse, and if there are excessive levels at any time that our department can quickly react and take those steps.

So in the context of the soil report that was—raised the alarm bells, and there were media reports saying don't eat your vegetables, this did cause a lot of alarm in the community and I felt terrible for homeowners that were feeling that perhaps their houses were being devalued. But we really—so what we did is, we worked with the University of Manitoba, and I want to thank Dr. Zvomuya who came out, and he said to the residents don't panic, don't let your vegetables go to waste, you can eat them, we tested the soil in your backyards and they are fine.

And we talked about good management practices and how to move forward. So that's—like I said, we are continuing to work in St. Boniface and to do that work to assure the residents that their public health is priority and our government takes that very seriously.

Now I do want to provide a bit of a contrast to a situation that happened in years gone by under the previous government that commissioned a report on soil contaminants in other areas of the city; and I'm talking about the 2011 report on lead in soils that I tabled on Monday. And so members opposite know that I can quote from that report that was tabled on Monday.

So I took it with great interest when I listened to the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) when he said that he—in his speech, he said no known lead level exposure is considered to be safe. And he was quoting research that has come out, and this has been research that's been around, I would presume, for several years. This isn't a new concept and I'm sure that his government had concerns about soil level—lead in soil in other areas, because in 2007, they commissioned a report.

And in late August through September of 2007, 45 samples from six playgrounds, 97 samples from seven schoolyards, and 77 samples from boulevards in four separate residential areas were collected in Winnipeg. More sample sites were in older—or most of these sample sites were in older, inner city neighbourhoods and central Winnipeg.

So what did those reports find? That although the lead concentration levels were usually less than those that were recorded in the '80s, levels in sod and soil at a number of sites—seven to be specific—exceeded the current CCME guidelines. This included sod and soil samples collected from the Weston elementary school sports field in Logan, and it included from grass-covered areas in a number of

playgrounds, and from the boulevards along south—Sutherland Avenue in North Point Douglas.

* (11:30)

So, in response to the 2007 soil survey, a second survey was conducted in 2008. The sampling in fall of 2008 focused on collecting and analyzing surface soil, sand, pea gravel and other surface aggregate material from city of Winnipeg playgrounds and sport fields. Only one of the 90 samples collected from the sports playground—playgrounds and sport fields in 2008 had a lead concentration level that was above the CCME guideline. And this was from a grassed area in a playground bordered by Logan Avenue.

And so let me reiterate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government takes these findings very seriously. And here we have a previous administration—they commissioned these studies in 2007 and 2008, and what did they do with this report? They put it in the recycling bin or they put it in a desk. They put it in—they probably put it where they put their climate policy report. They shoved it in the desk and they turned their back on it. They did not make that report public. They failed to—they had no conviction and no courage to make that report public. They didn't act.

It didn't matter about the soil in Point Douglas. It didn't matter about the soil in Logan—in a playground in Logan. So here we're talking about soil in St. Boniface—and I'm not minimizing that problem whatsoever. I take that issue very seriously. We have challenges in St. Boniface and we're working on the soil and the air quality in St. Boniface. And we are working with industry in St. Boniface to ensure that they apply new standards and new measures to ensure that the air quality is safe.

But we have known reports from the department—from the Manitoba government under his watch. He put that report in the dark and he turned his back on North Point Douglas and Logan: the playgrounds where children play, the boulevards where people walk their dogs and other—and the schoolyard in Logan. And it was of absolutely no concern to this government—the previous government about this.

So I find today's hypocrisy to be a little bit rich. And I can assure members opposite that our government takes this very seriously. Our government is out sampling these—is going to do these—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: –soil samples. And we'll ensure that public safety—and it doesn't matter if it's in Logan, it doesn't matter if it's in Point Douglas, it doesn't matter if it's in south St. Boniface. We take this issue very seriously. We will be ensuring that the public health of all members of this province is taken seriously, not just in the ridings in which we care about.

So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I want to talk a little bit about industrial pollution in general, as opposed to just St. Boniface. But certainly I will talk about St. Boniface, as well.

I came—I come from a community that was heavily polluted by an industrial corporation that operated from the 1920s, and is still in operation. And certainly, once upon a time back then, there was no thought towards what the results of industrial activity would be on citizens or communities or waterways or land or trees. Somewhere along the way, people began to realize that there were effects and that something had to be done.

Fast-forward to the 1970s and the Clean Environment Commission hearings that took place: corporations were dead set against having to do anything and constantly said that, well, if you make us clean it up, we'll shut down and move out and people will lose jobs. The government of the day did make them do something and did clean up the environment a little bit.

Just as an aside to that, I remember talking to a citizen who participated in the Clean Environment Commission and they were talking about acid rain, and one of the management representatives told him that, well, Coca-Cola has a lower pH, meaning it's more acidic, than what was found to be in the rain. Of course, the correct response to that was, it's not raining Coca-Cola.

So we have a history, not just in this province, but throughout the world, of the science slowly catching up with industry and recognizing that what was done yesterday can't continue to be done today.

So, from the 1970s, fast forward to the '80s in my community, and, again, environmental concerns were raised. Once again, threats were made. Once again they actually did stuff to clean things up. Fast forward to the '90s, same arguments again because the science had changed. Science had learned more. Fast forward to the 2000s, and once again, the levels of acceptable contaminants had changed because

there was more science that showed that exposure to lead, cadmium, mercury, arsenic was bad for people.

So now we look at what's happening in St. Boniface industrial area, which isn't really just an industrial area, is it? It's a community area. It's got playgrounds. It's a place where families live. So what was once acceptable in St. Boniface should no longer be acceptable. We talk about lead levels. And lead levels for grownups are different than they are for children simply because children's bodies are still developing and growing and exposure to lead has more serious detrimental effects on children than it does on the rest of us. It's not good for any of us; make no mistake about that.

So we need to really step the game up when it comes to protecting our children and our futures. So we know that in the past there were industrial emissions of things like lead in St. Boniface. There's been some monitoring and some of it has been called into question, and my understanding is that this Dr. Zvomuya has clarified his earlier statements and has suggested that there needs to be more sampling done to really get an accurate picture of what's taking place. And I fully support that, based on my own history of sampling that was done. There was an initial Flin Flon soil studies report done. Well, we'll back up; there was a previous report that caused a well-renowned scientist in Manitoba to regret that she'd ever suggested that something should be done and that people shouldn't eat the vegetables grown in Flin Flon because the weight of a corporation was brought to bear against her and pretty near ruined her career.

The levels of these contaminants do not go up; the acceptable levels always go down, and whether it's over the course of 20 years, 10 years, five years, a year, as new information becomes available about the harmful effects of these contaminants, the levels go down and something different needs to happen.

Now I'm sure the residents of St. Boniface are not suggesting that these industrial plants should shut down and all the jobs go away. That's not what they're after. What they're after is certain protections built in to those industrial operations to make sure that whatever's being emitted from the plant is safe for everybody in the community, as were the residents of Flin Flon. They didn't want the jobs shut down and gone away; they wanted things put in place, and certainly the member from St. Boniface has talked about some success they've had in the past

in that area with lovejoy mushrooms and another industrial plant. The way to find that information out is proper monitoring in the right locations at the right times by the right people.

* (11:40)

We need to make sure that a true and accurate picture of historical levels and current emission levels are presented to make sure the right steps are done to protect citizens. The only way to do that is to conduct the proper monitoring. And I understand that some of the monitoring that was done looked at some of the industrial pollution but didn't really look at the right pollution. It didn't focus on the smaller particle size, which is the really harmful stuff, because your body has a natural defence mechanism to protect from some of the larger stuff. It's more of a nuisance than an actual hazard, but it's the smaller particles that get deep in your lungs that cause cancer and lung disease.

So we need to make sure that the right sampling is done. And I commend this Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) for agreeing to meet with the residents and hear their concerns first-hand, because I'm sure once she meets them and hears those concerns first-hand that she will take the right course of action and side with those residents on their concerns and make sure the right protections are put in place once the right sampling is done.

But we need to look at not just the air; we need to look at water as well. I understand there's open sewers that come from some of the industrial plants in the Messier area that we need to really determine what's in that, where it's going and what the concerns are and what should be done. Just to look at the Plinguet neighbourhood—is not just an industrial neighbourhood; it's a community with people living, kids.

So we need to make sure that everything we're doing is the right thing for people. We can't focus on, well, somebody else didn't do something, so therefore we don't have to do anything. The correct answer is, what are we going to do today to protect citizens, children, for tomorrow?

It's always about what we can do now to protect people. That should always be the way forward. And I look forward to seeing what this minister does to really set the tone going forward that her department will take these concerns, not just in St. Boniface, but anywhere, whether it's Sherridon where there's concerns about what's being discharged into

Kississing Lake or St. Boniface, what's being discharged from industrial sites there. I really want to make sure that this—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): I want to thank the member once again for—member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) for bringing this matter forward to discuss. I think it's an important issue to discuss in general ways, the way the member from Flin Flon was talking about, where it affects all communities within our province, but also in specific ways where we could talk about a particular neighbourhood.

And in this case, the neighbourhood that's the focus of the resolution is one with which my own constituency shares a fairly extensive border as we—as, you know, I represent the area of Windsor Park which lies immediately to the south of some of these various operations.

And I have heard from community members about the concerns that they have about what's going on in that area and whether or not all the appropriate environmental protections are in place for their community and appropriate environmental protections in place for public health and safety and also for just the ability to live comfortable, happy lives.

You know, sometimes smells can be a real nuisance, and, you know, you hope it stops at that, but other times it can be an indication of a real significant potential health issue, and I think we all need to be aware of that.

I remember when I first took office, and even prior to that, I'd had contact with the local city councillor, Matt Allard, in this case, who also represents the area that the member for St. Boniface represents. He had gone so far as to create a website, St. B Smell, where citizens could be active, could engage with the government, and I applaud him for that because I think it's very important for governments at all levels to be listening to citizens and to also play a role, as elected officials, in guiding citizens through what can sometimes be a confusing bureaucracy.

You know, the member for St. Boniface referenced various agencies that are active and that, you know, make determinations around licensing, and all these things can be somewhat overwhelming for an individual citizen to have to deal with, so it's

good to see citizens gathering together and finding common cause. I think that's an important part of our democracy and I also think it's very respectful and commendable that our minister has already met the conditions outlined in this resolution by meeting with those members, and I hope she continues to maintain contact and to support them in their efforts to protect their children and to ensure that they're in a community that they can be comfortable and safe in.

And I think it's important to take a co-operative approach on this. I know we've mentioned a few of the industries in the area, and I just—I do want to go over some of them again. I mean, there's the industrial metals shredder one; I think that takes the lead at this particular time, but for many years that wasn't the case. I know when I used to bike downtown to work on a regular basis, I would take Mission road, and on Mission road there was—there were some places where, you know, you didn't necessarily want to keep breathing. Well, on a bicycle that's not necessarily a possibility. But I distinctly remember there's an industry called Carlson glass on that area. There was frequently a significant smell of fibreglass in the air, and I imagine that the people working there might actually come away somewhat feeling a little bit high, shall we say, from working in that kind of an environment. It was almost like sniffing glue.

And then you'd—and then two blocks later you end up at Loveday Mushrooms, and there, too, the—you know, despite the millions of dollars that they as an industry have invested in trying to mitigate and minimize the effect that they have on the surrounding community in terms of the smell, it is still an operation that is going to produce odour no matter what. So I applaud them for investing the millions, for being responsive to not just the demands of government but also the comfort of their community and to be sensitive to what their communities face.

I believe, if I recall correctly, they went so far as to not only mitigate their own emissions but also to go to some of the neighbouring businesses. There's one on Plinguet where my brother used to work, big sign on the side of the wall that says, the factory. It's right by the water tower, there. And that business actually had extra filters added to their air intakes that were paid for by Loveday Mushrooms. So, once again, I commend the creative thinking that went into those kind of solutions as well, to say, you know, the comfort of people who are working in that area can

be mitigated in a maybe more cost-effective way by simply managing the air intake into their building.

One that does get mentioned to me quite a lot is actually Maple Leaf, which I find a little bit surprising, because in my experience, when they mention Maple Leaf, typically they're actually referring to the adjacent property of Rothsay rendering plant. And I've toured Maple Leaf, I've been there, and in my experience it smells just a whole lot like bacon. It's—and I like bacon a lot, so for me it hasn't been a problem.

But as a member of the community, I mean, I share some of the concerns that are brought forward, and I certainly, as an elected representative for that community, want to make sure that the citizens in my constituency, the citizens in the member for St. Boniface's (Mr. Selinger) constituency, are able to leave—lead happy and productive lives. I think that's ultimately one of the chief purposes of our government is—and any government—is to enable its citizens to be able to do that. And I think we have here something that is preventing that, and that's why I think it's important to discuss and it's important to take action on.

You know, I appreciate that in answer to the question that I asked the member about what was going on during his administration that he—I'm not sure if he used the word, but it certainly sounded like he had some regrets, maybe not just about that particular issue, but others as well, I suspect, but, in any case, on this particular issue, that he had some regrets about, you know, allowing the machinations of bureaucracy to simply proceed without taking a more fulsome evaluation. And that's why I think it's important, too, to take that kind of a holistic approach.

I'm really looking forward to tomorrow. Some of you may have already seen, there was a little bit of a sneak peek put out by the Premier (Mr. Pallister), I think it was yesterday, talking about what's coming out tomorrow. I'm very encouraged by the—what was alluded to in that video, namely that we're not putting forward a simple, top-down plan the way the Prime Minister seems to want to impose across the entire country—something that's not sensitive to local needs; something that's not sensitive, frankly, to the environment; something that only addresses one component of the mission control and pollution and not something that really represents, I think, the kind of progress that Manitobans expect and that Canadians expect us to take. I believe that we need

to, as government, we need to be good stewards of the resources that fall under our care. That we have to ensure that they're developed responsibly.

* (11:50)

I appreciate that our Premier (Mr. Pallister) sent a clear signal when he went to name the minister—not the minister of the environment, but the minister for sustainable development. Because to say that, you know, you can either support the environment or industry, and to pit these two against each other, I think, is inappropriate.

What you want is you want to have an environment—an attitude, I should say—that was maybe a poor choice of words in the context—but you want to have a co-operative relationship. You want everyone to be pushing towards the same goals, which is to have a society that's able to prosper, where all the members have good opportunities, where there's freedoms that can be enjoyed by all and where, frankly, the activities that industry undertakes are activities that are going to promote the wellbeing of our province, not just economically but also in these—some of these other ways that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), our own minister and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) have already brought forward.

So, as I said, I really am looking forward to tomorrow, and I encourage the members opposite to take a good look, to get on board with what's going to be revealed tomorrow. I think it's going to be a plan. It's going to be a plan that's holistic. It's going to be a plan that addresses not just one particular dimension, but multiple ones. And one that I encourage everyone in this House to be very supportive of.

I think Manitoba has an opportunity to demonstrate to the federal government a better way—a better way of dealing with environmental challenges, a better way of dealing with its citizens. We want to be a government, and we've committed to this in very meaningful ways. We want to be a government that listens to Manitobans, we want to be a government that involves its citizens in decision making, that consults with them on a regular basis. I commend the minister once again for taking the action immediately to meet with this citizen association from the south St. Boniface area, and I encourage her to continue in the faithful execution of her office, as I am confident she will do. And I look forward to what we're going to hear about tomorrow and how that will form a real plan for taking our

province forward in not just the weeks and months, but for the years to come.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): My colleague from River Heights had a few thoughts in response to the member from St. Boniface's resolution on pollution in St. Boniface.

The issue of pollution is a very important one wherever it is occurring. The issue of pollution in St. Boniface—not far from the Manitoba Legislature—is significant, which people have been aware about for many, many years. There have been previous discussions in this Legislature and at City Hall in Winnipeg, and it needs to be addressed.

It is curious and sad that, in his 17 years in government, there was not adequate funding or attention to this issue. One would have hoped that the former premier would have launched an initiative to help reduce in a major way the pollution in St. Boniface. It did not happen then, but, nevertheless, it is good that the former premier is now engaged with the issue. It needs to be addressed.

The Liberal caucus will support this resolution. And we see reducing pollution is an important part of building a better future for Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): I thank the member from St. Boniface for bringing this forward.

Environmental issues and air quality is quite important. As the member from Flin Flon and the member from St. Boniface referenced, the issue of illness and health—long-term health—is important to society.

St. Boniface, when it comes to air quality, has been an issue, unfortunately, for as long as I've been around. I remember as kids, dad driving downtown and it's like, don't go through St. Boniface. Please, Dad, don't. And from pretty much Lagimodiere until you were close to downtown, it would be—the contest would be who can hold their breath the whole—and you'd hold on because of the noxious odours unfortunately from the food processing.

We know there was the packing houses, there was the abattoir, there was East-West Packers, businesses that I was part of when I used to be in the family business. Actually our first grocery store that we owned was in St. Boniface right around from the member from St. Boniface's office now on Tache.

But that was a situation that those businesses—and the noxious fumes from them affected everybody in the neighborhood.

I'm glad he referenced Rothesay, as well as Loveday Mushrooms, which are still a concern to the people in the neighbourhood. I can't imagine what it would be like on regular basis to have to deal with that and hopefully our government and the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) continue to work with these businesses to improve the air quality.

Right now what we're discussing obviously is something more sinister than perhaps just noxious fumes. What we're discussing now is air particulate, we're discussing potential lead in the ground. In the Transcona area, we know ground contamination was a huge, huge issue. The former Domtar site which treated wood with creosote—horribly, horribly damaging. It had to be remediated. It is now a lovely park, but I'm sure there was millions of dollars spent and there was quite concern—huge concerns.

There's people that live near it now with no apparent problems, but that was a huge deal where industry—well, as the member from Flin Flon referenced, the science changes, the policies change, you never know what's going to be—you're going in the next level. This is what the business is now, is there any problem? No, there's no problem now, but there is in the future. So focusing on the science and the evidence that we have—and I'm very glad that there were further tests done in that area.

The member from St. Boniface references the Plinguet area where they had high lead levels. I would like to know—I'll talk to him afterwards—if tests were redone in that area to see if it continues to occur because retesting—sometimes you can get errors in tests, so retesting is important. But it's wonderful to know that the areas around—under the retest through the University of Manitoba, and trusting the science there—was less of a risk.

We would like—well, our government is really going to depend on the science, whether it becomes

with the changes of environmental regulations. We had discussions the other day in committee and we were discussing some of the regulations and some of the changes in terms of red tape and—to the hog industry. And we are relying on the science of the—from the University of Manitoba, stating that the phosphorous from manure, when injected—very little of it runs off, which was in opposition to what the previous government had said and put laws in place to limit hog manufacturing.

So trusting the science, I'm—I love the fact that the member from St. Boniface, when asked a question, said this issue is an—very important to his neighbourhood and he is willing to support our government in what they're doing in terms of 'environmentalling', moving things forward, and I thank him very much for that. I think that's important.

And equally on the other side, I think it's terrific that the minister has already agreed to meet with the people of St. Boniface to discuss with them—to discuss these issues with them, to come up with a plan. That's what being in this House is all about.

But one of the things that does really concern me, is there was a report released yesterday, the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General's report, which we know is a nonpartisan report on the administration of a government program—and there are concerns with how things were done environmentally. And I hope—I was recently at the Public Accounts Committee conference in New Brunswick and it was discussed at this committee on a regular basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about meeting regularly—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When the matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski) will have four minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 26, 2017

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