

Fourth Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

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	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 21, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Ms. Fontaine: Pursuant to rule 33(9), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin). The title of the resolution is Mental Health supports needed for youth in Manitoba's North.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that pursuant to rule 33(9), the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas. The title of the resolution is Mental Health supports needed for youth in Manitoba's North.

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Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader): On House business, Madam Speaker, could you please call Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act; Loi sur le financement des élections, for second reading.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 204 this morning. So we will address Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 204—The Election Financing Amendment Act

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamont: The purpose of this Bill 204 is fairly simple but important. Currently, political communications by political parties and candidates during elections, like handouts, signs, ads, websites and so on are approved by a campaign's official agent. This is about financial accountability, which, of course, is extremely important, but when it comes to creating content or standing behind a message, it is not the official agent who is responsible.

We believe that a message from the party should be approved by the leader and a message from the candidate should be approved by the candidate, as a way of encouraging and ensuring accountability for the content of the message.

In other words, it's an attempt to assure that politicians are willing to stand behind what they say. I do think this is an issue, Madam Speaker, and something we've seen very clearly in an age of social media and Internet trolls. On the one hand, I don't want to conjure up false nostalgia for a golden age of politics that never existed where opponents were wonderfully polite to one another. And, of course, we need open criticism and spirited debate and given the extremely important issues we address on a daily basis, we can expect sharp and entirely legitimate disagreements.

But, as you observed, Madam Speaker, the members in this House sometimes lapse in their behaviour and this doesn't always translate well to a public setting. And, again, in an age of social media, the Internet makes it easier than ever for people to hide behind anonymity and not be held to account for what they are saying. And I think that there's a sense in politics, in our debate, that we are in an arms race

and that we have no choice but to keep escalating when it comes to attack ads. I think this is something that buys a short-term advantage for an even party, at the longer term cost of turning people off politics and even contributing to divisions in our society.

And I think the issue of what people will say when they're anonymous is to some extent—can bleed into political advertising by political parties and candidates, which seem anonymous when they're attack ads because they're not actually—a specific leader or a specific individual is not actually taking responsibility for that statement.

So, when a message is approved only by an official agent, it effectively allows political leaders and candidates to distance themselves from the content of the message. For example, in the 2011 election, or the lead up to it, the NDP ran attack ads against then-PC leader, Hugh McFadyen. Then the PC Party has already launched an attack website on the leader of the opposition. I'm sure the content was not assembled, prepared or published by the chief financial agent of the PC Party but that's who is apparently responsible.

So, the hope, the intention of this legislation is simple. That is, by requiring accountability and requiring party leaders, including myself, that we stand behind the official communications of our parties that we can perhaps de-escalate. On the other hand, if a party or candidate is going to run an attack ad, they are going to have to personally stand behind it.

So this is a measure that preserves free speech while adding it—to it the essential element of accountability and consequence. So, Winston Churchill, Madam Speaker, said that accountability was an essential—was absolutely essential to democracy. So we hope that this measure will earn the support of all members in the House and pass it—so that it can be passed in time for the next election, whenever that may be.

Thank you.

Questions

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

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to ask the member who he consulted with when he was developing this legislation.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I—we did not have a broad consultation on this; however, this is something we've discussed. No, I will be honest about it—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —this—but this is something that has occurred in other jurisdictions. For example, in the US, where ads are used to—where is an obligation an ad—or candidates have to say I stand by this message. This had been proposed before as a private members' bill for the—by the current MP for Winnipeg North. And it received—when it was proposed it received an enormous popular reaction, so I think this is an important step in having greater accountability to—for leaders and politicians.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I would suggest that there is actually something that members opposite and us will agree this morning is that when you propose a bill and you bring a bill before the House, you should do consultations on it and for the member to say that he didn't do any consultations but he's actually kind of referring, yet again, to the Liberals in Ottawa, I think, is problematic.

So, you know, we have very limited time for private members' business and he's bringing forward a bill that he hasn't consulted with on anybody.

Can the member explain why he thinks this is important?

* (10:10)

Mr. Lamont: No, it's important, I think because one of the things we've seen in attack ads especially, I think there's a tone in attack ads and some very negative ads and we've seen it directed against the member for St. Johns' (Ms. Fontaine) own party and own leader, that we see attack ads that are—that because they are not actually being—that the individual, the leader of the party, is able to distance themselves from those comments, that they're able to run ads that I think that if the—it would be a different story entirely if the Premier (Mr. Pallister), for example, were personally attacking the leader of the opposition in an attack ad, as opposed to saying, well, this is actually it's the official agent—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Our government is working hard to keep money on the kitchen table for seniors with low-fixed income, for young Manitobans, for small businesses, for single parents—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Reyes: And I just wanted to ask the member, can the member tell the House why he believes taxpayers should be—pay for political party election expenses?

Mr. Lamont: Frankly, Madam Speaker, I've been clear on this is that I believe that democracy is too important to be left to the whim of donors alone. Over the course of decades, the member from St. Norbert's party has in fact been the single greatest beneficiary of not just millions, but tens of millions of dollars in public subsidy. So, my concern, I believe that it's important that democracy and elections are too important to be supported entirely by private means, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Our government has been quite clear that we are wanting to give Manitobans a break when it comes to taxes. They are taxed quite high in this province, and our recent—a recent announcement that we are going to be reducing the PST—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —which was unfairly raised without consultation.

I'm curious about whether the member can please explain for the House why he disagrees with Bill 16 and our government initiative to lower the PST?

Mr. Lamont: I'd be happy to answer that question at some other point when we're not—when we're discussing that and not the bill that we're putting forward, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): I'm just curious, does the member plan to bring more bills before the House that would promote his own arguably desperately needed name recognition among the ridings of other candidates of his party?

Mr. Lamont: No, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I'm just wondering, he has clearly stated that he hasn't consulted with anybody outside this House. I'm just curious if he's consulted with anybody inside this Chamber, maybe with the member from Elmwood,

that, you know, covers up NDP in his signs, never mind, you know, potentially the leader's name or something.

Has he consulted with any other people inside this Chamber?

Mr. Lamont: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Again, I just—I want to put it on the record here that the member—I don't know if this is the member's first bill that he's actually bringing forward to the Chamber this morning. But of all the things that Manitobans are dealing with, because of this member's opposite and this Pallister government's cuts and austerity, this is what the member—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —for St. Boniface brings forward: a bill that he hasn't consulted with, and a bill that I would actually ask him how he believes this is actually going to help Manitobans on the ground dealing with the issues that they're currently dealing with under the administration of this Pallister government?

Mr. Lamont: Again, Madam Speaker, I think that it is—one of the things that's absolutely critical when it comes to elections and democracy is elections be free and fair and we try to discuss them on the basis of issues and not just personal attacks, and that's part of what this is seeking to do. I think we've had a really unpleasant turn, I mean, outside of the general way the discussion has been in the course of the debate partly driven by social media, but I think, frankly, that this is a way of trying to ensure accountability during elections. And, as I said before, accountability is absolutely essential to democracy, and it's important that people are willing to stand up behind and to take responsibility for the communications that they're—they—that they make and that their party makes.

Mr. Johnson: I'm curious if the member can tell us how much his party got back on the last couple elections through this. Us, as the Conservative Party, we are giving up over \$1.1 million and leaving it in the hands of the taxpayer, more on the kitchen table. I wonder if the member can maybe reflect on what—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnson: –his party claimed back in the last couple of elections.

Mr. Lamont: The course—the question, of course, is completely irrelevant of the issue at hand. But I won't be—I can't say exactly. I know that it—that in terms of rebates it was an absolute—it was a fraction of whatever the PC perceived.

My major concern, as I expressed in the House yesterday, is that this—that the effort to get rid of rebates is an attempt to avoid audits which by an oversight by Elections Manitoba, which have often uncovered illegal activities on the part of the PCs and the Conservative Party.

Mrs. Guillemard: I'm just curious because we've seen that the federal cousin counterpart in the federal government has clearly—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: –been a little bit hesitant to allow their members to speak freely and share their own messages. I'm wondering if this particular bill is reflective of his belief that leaders really should be dictating to their caucus members what is and is not said.

Mr. Lamont: No, absolutely not, Madam Speaker. I think the member from Fort Richmond may be engaging in an exercise in projection. I—because I'm not sure that the members opposite are terribly free to speak their own opinions rather than—as we saw the other day when they were all singing from the same songbook about the, frankly, disastrous budget that's being pushed through.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I want to congratulate the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont) on this bill.

However, he has commented against subsidies for political parties in the past, and now he loves political subsidies and he wants kickbacks for him. Will he flip-flop on this issue about attack ads later in the future as he has on other partisan issues? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, I think it's absolutely shameful to use the word kickback to talk about something that's been thoroughly audited. This is something that was originally a law that was passed by the PC Party of Manitoba and, frankly, it's—the member is misrepresenting my position. My point about what I did was to point out the sheer hypocrisy

of the PCs and Pallister government in changing, essentially manipulating the campaign finance system as a way to rig the system in their benefit and to punish and reduce competition from other parties.

I've been quite consistent about the fact that democratic—the democratic process deserves a public support.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, brought by the Leader of the Second Opposition.

I am a little disturbed in his comments that he is taking guidance from the federal government and federal legislation, and is guided by their ethics and lack of accountability. We've seen ample demonstration recently in the federal government's lack of ethics and their ability to muzzle all of their members, and that type of a process is still being played out, Madam Speaker.

So it is of a concern that he wants to bring that type of guidance to the Manitoba Legislature. We—where we have free debate and I know, certainly, in our caucus there is ample free debate that occurs. I know that the opposition parties may not be familiar with that type of free debate. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: They expect that everybody else does the same thing that they do, which is, you know, muzzle and tell falsehoods about what happens in their caucus and force people to sign, what was that, loyalty pledges and such—

An Honourable Member: Solidarity.

* (10:20)

Mr. Helwer: –solidarity pledge, that was the, yes, and disclose people that—who wouldn't do that—so out people of some nature.

So it is a little concerning that the, yes, the Leader of the Second Opposition is taking his guidance from the, you know, the federal Liberal Party that is down in the dirt with the ethics right now.

You know, good governments do make the difficult decisions necessary to ensure that we protect sustainable quality services for our citizens in Manitoba, and we've been doing that, Madam Speaker. You know, we've been working hard to try to fix the things that the previous government made in error, and some of those things are still showing up. There's always some surprises that they left for us. Other parties of—I could use the example of the NDP in Saskatchewan, they actually pave the path to better government but, you know, our NDP in Manitoba decided that they would devastate and burn things down as opposed to create an opportunity for growth in Manitoba. So we've had to repair a lot of things here.

But now we see the federal Liberals trying to manipulate how things work in Canada, and I think we see the same thing with the leader here in Manitoba.

You know, putting leaders' names on signs, Madam Speaker, it's something that's happened in the past and I'm sure it will happen again. It's the choice of the leader and the party on how they decide to present themselves. I'm sure you know that you've, in past elections, had the leader's name on signs and sometimes you haven't and I've been the same. We've had the leader's name on signs and other times it's been our names on the signs and authorized by the official agent, of course.

And perhaps the member that brought the bill forward here is not familiar with how you delegate responsibilities during an election campaign that, indeed, the candidate can't do everything. You need to depend on a lot of people to make things happen during an election campaign.

And I am always, you know, very surprised and just thrilled and feel so, you know, wonderful with the type of support that I have had in campaigns, Madam Speaker, with the things that people do on your behalf, and they have to do all the work that you can't necessarily do as a candidate. You're out there representing yourself and answering questions. I know in Brandon West, we've often had up to 14 debates during the election campaign, so it's a lot to ask of the person that is putting themselves forward to also be responsible and sign off in every particular sign and make sure that everything is done.

So that's why you have official agents that work on your behalf, Madam Speaker, and you make sure that—they make sure that things are done in an appropriate manner.

One of—the other things that this would damage, I think, in our system, is some of us are able to reuse signs from one campaign to another and that means that we don't have to print new signs. We don't have to go through the destruction or the recycling of the old signs and, in fact, it's better for the environment if you want to use those signs, Madam Speaker. So, if I had signs with a particular leader on that was, you know, didn't follow-up in the following campaign, well, I can't use those signs, can I? And it looks kind of odd when you tape over the leader's name. I think that some of the—or even the party name for that case—but we try to prevent—present ourselves as professionals, and if you were just putting new tape of the leader of the day over the last leader, well, I think that that shows that maybe you're not a serious party.

So it's a nice approach that he's kind of taken here, but as we've seen with some of things that have come forward from this party and the federal Liberals, they do like to be entitled to their entitlement. And I think there is a concern here of the direction we're going with this bill, that it is more of an authoritarian overall top-down type of management style, which is not what we see in some of the other political parties, ours in particular, Madam Speaker—that it's particularly—we engage all of our volunteers and perhaps the members opposite aren't familiar with volunteers because they do get them from the unions.

And I know that for one instance, in what we saw in Brandon, is many of my friends in fire protection service told me in 2011 that they were being forced to do eight drops for the NDP and it was a moral suasion, if you want to call it that. They were told that if they enjoyed their job and wanted to continue their job, they had to do these literature drops for the NDP, even though they were not directly compensated for it. It was made clear that their job and their union support would be challenged if they did not do this work for the NDP.

And now they—we fast-forward to the last election, Madam Speaker. They told me that they did that the previous time but certainly in the last election they were not doing that again. The NDP was not getting their forced support, so I'm pleased to see that at least the NDP saw the light or the unions did, that we do have to give people free choice, so perhaps the leader wants to see that type of thing where you can direct people to do particular things.

But democracy is much more important, Madam Speaker, and we want to make sure that we work through the democracy as opposed to—I know he's the leader of his federal party that tried to present to Canadians that we were going to go to a different type of a ballot, a different type of election, something that might ensure the Liberal dictatorship for years to come and then he found out once he got into power that wasn't so easy to do and that was one of those first promises, I think, that they broke, so perhaps that's the direction that we would see with the local Liberal Party as well.

But, you know, I am interested that at least he is paying attention to The Election Financing Act because it is an important act, Madam Speaker. It is something that all of my volunteers paid a great deal of attention to through two election campaigns and made sure that we were doing everything in appropriate manner, that the bills were being paid on time with the money that we had been able to raise from our particular donors. We had great support from Brandon and Brandon West, and it was just—you know, it's very humbling, very humbled to see the type of support that you get from people—you know, some cheques of all different sizes and cash donations, and of course we can't do that now, but the people would come to give you because they believed in you and they supported you.

And that is the type of grassroots campaign that we saw throughout all of our jurisdictions, Madam Speaker: that we were able to encourage and bring people in to help us, bring people in that would give you \$10 or \$20 or more, whatever they were able to do, and volunteer their time is an even more valuable thing. The time that our volunteers would put into those election campaigns and their utter belief in you as a candidate is—you want to make sure that you represent them well and listen to them, not only during the election campaign but throughout the time between the elections and to make sure that we are always present and available for those people to bring issues and challenges that they have to us so that we can help to fix their problems if there is an opportunity.

And, of course, those stories belong to the individual. We can't disclose what we have done and have not done when it's a particular individual in your constituency that you've managed to help navigate the bureaucracy, but that is, of course, the majority of what we do. Even though we do spend a great deal of time in this fabulous building, it is somewhat of an area that is, I think, a little bit

removed from what the public understands and we do need to get out there in the constituency a great deal to make sure that we listen to those people, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm actually not going to take up too much time because again I think that it's problematic that the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) in his first bill brings forward a bill to the House that he hasn't consulted with on Manitobans, and, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, does really nothing to help Manitobans. So I'm not going to spend all that much time.

I do want to just say that obviously the NDP supports legislation that is transparent in respect of electoral advertising and obviously, quite obviously, we feel that fairness and integrity in campaigning are important components of any democratic process.

I think that it is, while we were discussing the member for St. Boniface's bill here this morning, I think it's important to put on the record again some of the things that this Premier (Mr. Pallister) has done in respect of elections here in Manitoba. And, really, that in the last three years or going into the third year, going into the fourth year, whatever it is, that we see that this Pallister government, this Premier has put in place a legislative framework to attack democracy in Manitoba by ensuring that it will be more difficult for some parties or independents, and, certainly, folks that would be interested in seeking nominations and being the candidate to run. And I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that in particular, we're talking about racialized and economically marginalized Manitobans that would like to be able to take up space in this Chamber, to have a more of a reflective representation of Manitobans.

* (10:30)

Because the bottom line is, whether or not people realize this, we do not have a representative body in this Chamber of who Manitobans are. You know, I know that we're all so blessed. It doesn't matter what political party or where you sit in this Chamber. We're all so blessed when we have those opportunities to go to community events or to go to schools and go visit with the next generation of Manitobans. And what I see every time I'm invited to schools—and not only in St. Johns—I'm invited all over Manitoba to go and visit students, and what I see, no matter where I go, is beautiful diversity. Manitoba is a beautiful province made up of individuals who are from the African-Canadian

community, from the Muslim community, from the LGBTTTQ community. Obviously—quite obviously, indigenous peoples are the founders, the original peoples of this territory. We see Asian-Canadians. We're so blessed in Manitoba to have such a representative population.

And yet, when we come in this Chamber, we don't see that. It is not—the folks that are elected to this Chamber do not reflect Manitobans and the diversity and the mosaic of Manitobans. There are literally only a couple of us that represent the rest of Manitobans.

And so, to see the attempt by this Premier (Mr. Pallister) to ensure that his PC government gets re-elected by actually targeting individuals who will not be able to have the means or the supports to be able to run just ensures, Madam Speaker, that this is what you're going to see next time around, certainly from—on the PC side. I know that we're very proud on the—in our caucus to be able to reach out to a wide range of diversity of candidates—potential candidates.

And so, you know, we know that the Premier is putting in place a legislative framework that will make it harder that the folks elected to this Chamber will actually represent what is Manitoba's population. And, you know, I suppose that it's easier for members opposite to be able to swallow that and sit by while this legislative agenda puts—is put in place because the reality is that, you know, I would suggest that most members opposite have access to wealthy donors. I mean, it's no secret that PC donors are typically more well off—and not all. That would be silly, Madam Speaker, to say that all of them are. We know that that's not true. So, but I would suggest—*[interjection]*

I would ask that I not be interrupted, Madam Speaker. I would suggest that—I know that the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I talk about this all the time and quite openly and honestly how we struggle to—and how we feel bad actually, often to ask folks to help with donations. And, you know, the member, our leader, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), when he was running for leadership, he shared this story of an individual who was on social assistance, who was really struggling and—but actually believed so much in what the NDP were doing and wanted to support the member for Fort Rouge's leadership, that he gave his last \$5 or \$6 to buy a membership. That's huge. Like, just the ability to buy a membership, you know, for five or six dollars is huge, and I really appreciated when the

member for Fort Rouge shared that story as he was going through his leadership race because that is a perfect illustration of what, you know, many of us on this side, many of the folks that believe in the work of the NDP and are more in lined with our values and our visions than members opposite, but that they just don't have the means—and to no fault of their own.

And so we—but instead of supporting democracy, instead of supporting and ensuring that we have a robust exercise in democracy, this Premier has actually just put in place measures that actually just rips all of that apart.

And somehow they couch it in language that, oh, you know, we don't want to have taxpayers dollars go to this or that, and yet they have no qualms about, you know, giving taxpayers' dollars to their PC friends. You can't have it on both ends, like on one end you don't want to take taxes and for, you know, blah blah blah, but they have no problem giving \$20 million contracts to their PC friends, so it's quite hard to swallow listening to some of the rhetoric from members opposite and from the Premier as he actually systematically dismantles democracy here in Manitoba.

So, you know, I know that—I think that it's important to put that on the record again, and I will continue to put all of that on the record as we go by in respect of what this Premier has done to democracy in Manitoba. And I think that that's my comments for this morning.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Well, first of all, I just want to say to the member of St. Johns, congratulations to the St. John's Tigers. I used to play for that basketball team, but I disagree with her making that comment racialized, because I knocked on doors, I got my donors, I did the hard work, and to say racialized, I take offence to that.

So—but I'm very happy to put some words on the record on this Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections.

Madam Speaker, when our Progressive Conservative ran in 2016, we had one goal: to make Manitoba the most improved province in five priority areas; better jobs, better care, better education, better together, better value.

Better jobs: most improved province in family tax relief. We ran on better jobs. Most improved

province in job creation performance. Real jobs, jobs created by the private sector. And as we know, Manitoba's now leading private sector capital investments—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Reyes: —creating those jobs.

We also ran on better care: most improved province in shortening ER and other wait times, and since we've had—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Reyes: —the PC government governing, wait times are down and the quality of care is improving.

Better education: we want to be the most improved province in educational results and that is why funding for K-to-12 is increased by \$6.6 million, and while the K-to-12 capital budget increased by \$56.1 million to \$202 million.

Better together: back when the NDP was in power we never were part of the new west trade partnership agreement. In fact, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) said the website didn't exist, it didn't ever exist. Now thanks—now we are, thanks to a—our PC government, by formally signing on—in November of 2016.

So which now brings to the fifth priority, which touches on Bill 204 on better value.

Now the member of St. Boniface claims that we are undermining democracy and fair elections by making—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Reyes: —it more difficult for anyone other than the wealthy to participate.

* (10:40)

Pour ceci et ces électeurs, et certains des miens de Saint-Norbert qui écoutent, je parlai—parlerai aussi en français.

Maintenant, le député de Saint-Boniface affirme que nous minons la démocratie et les élections justes en rendant plus difficile la participation de personnes autres que les riches.

La confiance et l'intégrité sont au cœur de ce que les Manitobains attendent de leur gouvernement. Il était urgent de rétablir la confiance et l'intégrité du gouvernement du Manitoba. Cela commence par le ton au sommet.

La première étape consiste à définir des attentes claires concernant les règles d'éthique et de responsabilité du gouvernement et des députés. S'assurer que l'argent des contribuables est dépensé avec prudence et correctement en est une autre.

Être ouvert et responsable avec plus d'accès à l'information et des rapports réguliers aux Manitobains sur ce que leur gouvernement fait est important chaque jour.

Quel était le motto du NPD? Confiance brisée, gouvernement brisé.

C'était la devise du dernier gouvernement néo-démocrate et c'est pourquoi ils ne gouvernent plus. Au sujet de cet amendement au projet de loi du député de Saint-Boniface, nous savons que le NPD et les libéraux veulent retirer plus d'argent aux Manitobains. Ils veulent prendre plus d'argent de la table de la cuisine et le mettre dans leurs poches politiques.

Nous avons déjà pris des mesures importantes pour rétablir la responsabilité dans notre processus électoral en exigeant qu'une élection partielle soit déclenchée dans les six mois suivant la vacance, création d'une période électorale normalisée avec une date d'élection générale fixe, et suppression de la subvention taxe de vote pour les partis politiques.

Madame la Présidente, si vous deviez demander aux Manitobains quelles sont vos priorités pour améliorer notre province, que pensez-vous qu'ils diraient?

Comment répondraient-ils, Madame la Présidente? Ils diraient des soins de santé, ils diraient l'éducation. Je pense qu'il serait également prudent de dire que ce serait aussi l'infrastructure.

Mais le chef libéral pense que les contribuables devraient payer les dépenses électorales des partis politiques.

Translation

Regarding this, and for those constituents and for some of mine from St. Norbert who are listening, I will also be speaking French.

The member for St. Boniface states that we are undermining democracy and fair elections by making it harder for people other than the rich to participate.

Confidence and integrity are at the heart of what Manitobans expect from their government. It was urgent to re-establish confidence and integrity in the

Manitoba government. This starts with the tone at the top.

The first step is to define clear expectations concerning rules of ethics and responsibility for government and MLAs. Making sure that taxpayers' money is carefully and adequately spent is another step.

Being open and responsible, giving more access to information and regular reports to Manitobans on what their government is doing is important at all times.

What was the motto of the NPD? Broken trust, broken government.

That was the motto of the last NPD government, and that's why they are no longer in power. Concerning this amendment to the bill presented by the member for St. Boniface, we know that the NDP and the Liberals want to take more money away from Manitobans. They want to take more money off of kitchen tables and put it in politicians' pockets.

We have already taken important steps to re-establish responsibility in our electoral process: by mandating that a by-election be called in the six months following a vacancy, by creating a standardized electoral period with a fixed election date and by eliminating the vote tax subsidy for political parties.

Madam Speaker, if you ask Manitobans what their priorities are to improve our province, what do you think they would say?

How would they answer, Madam Speaker? They would say health care, they would say education. I think it's also safe to say that it would be infrastructure, too.

But the leader of the Liberals thinks that taxpayers should pay for political parties' electoral expenses.

English

He wants to continue to take money off the kitchen table. Off seniors living on a fixed income, single parents, small business owners, students and young Manitobans entering the workforce.

Madam Speaker, sometimes I think the member from St. Norbert is more left than the left.

Je ne sais pas pourquoi il est en désaccord avec le projet de loi 16 et notre initiative du gouvernement visant à réduire la TVP à 7 pour cent. Il semble qu'il vient de consulter avec lui-même, avec son idée.

Translation

I don't know why he disagrees with Bill 16 and our government's initiative to reduce the PST to 7 per cent. It seems that he's only consulted himself about his own idea.

English

Do you really think—do you really think his caucus of four agreed to this, Madam Speaker?

Il pense que c'est un avantage pour notre parti politique avec son amendement proposé à ce projet de loi.

Translation

He thinks it's an advantage for our political party, with his proposed amendment to this bill.

English

But in reality, it is a disadvantage to the taxpayers of Manitoba. The real answer is he doesn't want to work for it. Again, just like the NDP, he wants to take advantage of hard-working Manitobans: new immigrants, seniors, students and small business owners, by these excessive subsidies.

The Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont) and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), they are just the same. Tax and spend. Tax and spend, Madam Speaker, is what those parties are all about.

Notre gouvernement élimine la subvention de 50 pour cent des dépenses électorales des partis politiques et leurs candidats. Nous croyons qu'il devrait y avoir une égalité de traitement pour ce qui est du soutien limité fourni par les contribuables aux partis politiques.

La meilleure façon de le faire est d'utiliser le système de crédits d'impôt qui traite chaque contributeur et chaque parti de la même manière, indépendamment de la taille de la contribution ou de la structure du parti. Le programme actuel de subvention électorale pour les dépenses de campagne est l'un des plus généreux au Canada et soutient injustement davantage les grands partis que les petits.

Grâce au système, les contribuables versent 125 \$ pour chaque tranche de 100 \$ recueillie et dépensée par les partis politiques pendant les élections. Il encourage les partis à s'endetter et à dépenser pour ce qu'ils ont fait, ce qui est tout à fait

opposé à la façon dont le gouvernement devrait être dirigé.

Translation

Our government is eliminating the 50 per cent subsidy on electoral spending by political parties and candidates. We believe there should be equal treatment regarding the limited support given by taxpayers to political parties.

The best way to do that is to use the tax credit system, which treats each contributor and each party the same, regardless of contribution size or party structure. The current electoral subsidy program on campaign expenses is one of the most generous in Canada, and unfairly gives larger parties more support than smaller ones.

Because of that system, taxpayers are giving \$125 for every \$100 collected and spent by political parties during elections. It encourages parties to get into debt and to spend more, which is completely the opposite of how a government should be led.

English

More debt, Madam Speaker. I don't know anyone who likes more debt, other than the NDP and the Liberal leaders' federal colleagues in Ottawa. Oh, and I guess, he's into debt, too. Why this infatuation by taking advantage of the taxpayer? We will never know on this side of the House.

One thing I am very proud of, Madam Speaker, is our party, the PC Party of Manitoba, never, ever took the NDP vote tax.

Notre parti PC continue de montrer l'exemple; nous n'avons jamais pris la taxe de vote du NDP, et nous perdrons plus de 1,5 million de dollars à la suite de ce changement, la plus grande quantité de tout parti.

Translation

Our PC Party continues to lead by example; we have never taken the NDP vote tax, and we will lose more than one and a half million dollars following that change, the greatest amount of any party.

English

Because it was a matter of principle. But the member from St. Boniface wants to continue spending time at cafés in St. Boniface, sipping on teas, espressos, café au laits, whatever his drink of choice is, pretending he supports small businesses,

but really wants to take advantage of them by taxing them with this unfair subsidy.

Madam Speaker, our government is making our electoral process more democratic and more transparent for Manitobans. Our government has already taken significant steps when we passed The Fiscal Responsibility Taxpayer Protection Act, restoring the rights of taxpayers to a referendum for any increase to the provincial sales tax, 'pural' tax, or income tax rates.

Madam Speaker, I want to conclude by saying tax dollars should go to the front-line servicer families, not political payouts to parties, but the NDP brought in legislation to give political parties ongoing taxpayer subsidies.

From 2012 to 2015, the NDP and Liberals took over \$1 million of vote-tax subsidy, of which 70 per cent had gone to the Selinger NDP, 'whinch' included the member of Minto and the member of Fort Garry-Riverview.

Well, Madam Speaker, the vote tax was abolished because it was not fair for the Manitoban taxpayer.

The NDP and Liberals want to continue to try to rely on 'subsidies' from the taxpayer. Rolling up their sleeves and working hard does not fit into their repertoire. Once again, Madam Speaker, taking advantage of Manitoban taxpayers is what the tax-and-spend NDP and Liberals are all about.

The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) is obviously happy with the status quo in taking advantage of the Manitoban taxpayer. Our PC government will not allow that to happen.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that is keeping on our promises that we had made during the last election 2016, and as our Finance Minister stated and our Premier (Mr. Pallister) has stated, we promised to balance the budget in our second term, and we are on track on that commitment.

Madam Speaker, it's indeed an honour to serve the people of St. Norbert, and with the new boundaries I'm looking forward to serving the new constituency of Waverley in 2020. Our PC government will continue to listen to Manitobans and produce positive results by fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding economy.

Promises were made in 2016 and we have kept them.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): It is certainly my pleasure to stand and speak to Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, response here.

I just have a few words to add to this whole discussion, because it seems that we're just sort of practicing debate here, not really on relevant issues. Certainly the member may think that he's brought forth a very pertinent point during elections, but really it's very ineffectual in terms of looking at fairness during elections. It doesn't actually achieve the goals that he has stated he would like to see achieved.

It reminds me, actually, Madam Speaker, of a children's lullaby that I learned when I was learning the French language. And it goes somewhat like this: Une souris verte / qui courait dans l'herbe / je l'attrape par la queue / je la montre à ces messieurs. / Ces messieurs me disent / trempez-la dans l'huile / trempez-la dans l'eau / ça fera un escargot tout chaud.

Translation

A green mouse / runs through the grass / I grab it by the tail / and show it to these gentlemen. / These gentlemen say to me / dip it in oil / dip it in water / it'll turn into a very warm snail.

English

Madam Speaker, this bill makes about as much sense as the member's—or, this bill makes about as sense as that little children's lullaby. It's great words that sound great together, but only serve to help children sleep.

Madam Speaker, this province has seen a—quite a large amount of subsidies going to political parties before our government came into power. And, when we formed government, Manitoba's political parties enjoyed the most lavish and rigged taxpayer-funded subsidies in the country.

Now, this included a generous 75 per cent tax credit for contributions to political parties from Manitobans. It also include a vote tax, in the form of an annual allowance to fund political party operations and it also included an excessive 50 per cent subsidy for election expenses, including campaign advertising.

* (10:50)

Madam Speaker, this is all taxpayers' money. None of it belongs to political parties, and it shouldn't, and it never should have. And our government fully believes that to—in order to be funded for our political activities, we need to humble ourselves, humble ourselves before the people that we serve and make decisions for. We need to humble ourselves and ask for their support. True strength is in admitting that you do need help, and those funds do play an important role in sharing messages and in supporting promotion of ideas, but you need to ask for it.

Madam Speaker, I will go over that list again. I'll summarize it by saying there's three different subsidies that we are looking at or various ways that taxpayers are funding PC—or sorry, PC—political parties. One is a vote subsidy tax that we are proud that we got rid of, but that was in existence. We have reimbursed expenses up to 50 per cent by Elections Manitoba. All of that is taxpayer money that we collect from taxpayers. And then there's the option of personal donations.

Madam Speaker, the one thing that all three of these subsidies have in common is that they all come from the same pocket. It's the taxpayers who are paying into this, but only one of those three that I've just listed is a voluntary action—a voluntary action of somebody who will say yes, I will support this candidate. Yes, I will support this party because I believe that the policies and messaging is exactly what is needed to make this province better.

Madam Speaker, that is the one element, the one chance we, as elected officials, have to directly involve people who support us and vote for us; to go face to face and justify why we think our policies, why our party is actually the one that will benefit them the most. Every other element of taxpayer subsidies—the vote tax that was brought in from the previous NDP government, the 50 per cent reimbursement—none of that was voluntary choices by our taxpayers, Manitoba—or Madam Speaker. The Manitobans deserve our respect and part of that is giving back the choice, whether or not they are going to support us.

Madam Speaker, this also goes back to the member's bill when he's talking about wanting to express the leadership's name or face on—and dictate that everybody has to include that on their material. Manitobans aren't stupid. They know who the leaders of every party is, and if they don't, I would question

the organization itself for not telling people and why would they hide that.

But, Madam Speaker, I'm really not sure how the members opposite parties are organized or maybe they're not. But we here in the PC party, we're all held accountable individually for the words that we share. We make a choice to share the messages with the information that we're provided.

Madam Speaker, this speaks to a trust. Our leader trusts every member that represents our party. And our leader has given us the freedom to share, according to our conscience, the various information we know is relevant to the constituents that we serve. And it definitely is a growing experience when you speak those words, are held accountable individually, but then are given space to grow and learn from every experience that we have within this party.

Madam Speaker, it's already implied that the leader of any party has built his team well with strong voices and that we work well together by listening to one another, by altering the course when we hear some red flags within our party, within our membership, within the people that we serve.

We have opened up our transparent nature and we have gained insight from feedback, from not people just within our party, but people from all over Manitoba, those who are not affiliated with any parties, or those who are affiliated with other parties.

Madam Speaker, we have been encouraged to listen, that we are not the experts. We were never meant to be the experts, but we are to trust in the experts. And that goes back to expert reports that the previous government received but didn't have the political will to proceed. They were too worried about their own power and maintaining that power than doing what's right by Manitobans.

So, Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —during this time that I get to share some of my own words and perspectives, you know, I understand that potentially the member who's brought this bill forward, you know, is concerned with not getting enough attention by his own actions and means, and so he needs to have his name highlighted on all of his caucus's material as a means to, you know, play on their own hard work and reputations, and this is a means by force, that, oh yes, you must have my name out there, this is how I'll get more attention.

But, Madam Speaker, that kind of speaks to a little bit of a lack of confidence, that he doesn't trust in his own good works, that that would give him enough attention that people would maybe be drawn to listen more to him.

Our team, Madam Speaker, willingly supports our leader because we have respect for the team. We have the choice and many of us do choose to add him to our literature because we are transparent. We are proud of the team, we are proud of the accomplishments, and that's what it takes. It takes every individual thought and voice in order to arrive at a position of a well-informed decision.

Madam Speaker, this province has been lacking in that for the last 17 years. There have been a lot of political decisions made and not necessarily in the best interest of Manitobans. We are bringing a fresh new voice, and we are seeing the results of working well together as a team. We actually like each other. There's no need to force us to highlight the benefits of a good leader. We willingly do so because that's the respect that has been developed within our team.

And, Madam Speaker, I would just say that again, our party does not believe in taking money from taxpayers, those who are politically involved or not politically involved, without their consent. They already are taxed through many, many means. Those dollars should be spent on services within Manitoba.

I think you'd be hard pressed to find anyone in this province who believes that the taxpayer money needs to go to political parties for any reason, Madam Speaker. It should be a voluntary choice. It is a good exercise to be at the doors and saying I need your support, and here's why. Please support me. Whether that's volunteering, whether that's with your vote, or whether you can afford to donate money.

Madam Speaker, we stand on principle. Thank you.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): The real question here, is there a real problem with having an official agent listed on a piece of door-drop literature instead of the leader's name? Is there—has there been an incident, is there a real problem that no one in the House is aware of except the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont)? I don't believe so, and my party doesn't believe there's a problem.

We're focused on real change to fix the electoral systems. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bindle: We're focused on real change to fix the electoral system, not gimmicks like this bill.

In 2017, our government introduced the fiscal sustainability impacts payer protection act to create a balanced and sustainable path to balance the budget by the end of our second term. It requires reducing the deficit by at least \$100 million each year. By shopping smarter, reducing red tape, getting better results, we're filling that mandate, while still increasing spending on health care by \$118 million and education by \$135 million to the highest levels in Manitoba's history.

After years of overtaxation and broken promises by the previous NDP government, Manitobans deserve a break and our government is giving them that break.

I'm happy to say on July 1st of this year, the retail sales tax will be reduced to 7 per cent for filling—fulfilling our campaign promise to decrease the PST by 1 per cent in our first term. This leaves more money in the pockets of Manitoba families, and this tax cut, the largest in Manitoba's history, will not only save on average a family of four approximately \$500 annually, residents will also save on large purchases such as vehicles, appliances and electronics.

Businesses will save over \$130 million annually allowing them to pass savings onto Manitoba households benefitting the average family of four an additional \$170 annually. The reduction represents an important competitive advantage for Manitoba businesses, and tax relief will be greatest for businesses purchasing more equipment and building materials, such as the—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Bindle: —manufacturing and construction industries. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have eight minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 4—Winnipeg General Strike

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolution. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Winnipeg

General Strike, brought forward by the honourable member for Burrows.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont),

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to celebrate the 100th-year anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and recognize the historical significance and incredible advancements in labour reforms across Manitoba and Canada. I'm going to try that again.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Ms. Lamoureux: I move, seconded by the member from St. Boniface that,

WHEREAS the Winnipeg General Strike made history in Canada and set the stage for future labour reforms making workplaces more equitable and safe for all employees; and

WHEREAS unions over the years have improved working conditions, benefits and wages for Manitoba workers, ensuring fairness and that the voices of workers were heard; and

WHEREAS the fight for fairness has never been more important due to the thousands of Manitoba workers who, despite working full time jobs, continue to live in poverty; and

WHEREAS unions have consistently contributed to the general wellbeing of society by advocating and supporting many social causes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to celebrate the 100th-year anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and recognize the historical significance and incredible advancements in labour reforms across Manitoba and Canada.

Motion presented.

Ms. Lamoureux: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and it's a pleasure to rise and bring forward this resolution on the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. This resolution means a lot to me as I believe in the important role that unions play in our society today and the many contributions that they have made over the years.

It was 100 years ago when tens of thousands of people gathered downtown here in Winnipeg and took a stand for workers. Madam Speaker, most

people will associate the 1919 strike with the historic photo of the trolley bus—a photo that I table now. This trolley bus was overturned on Main Street, right in front of our current City Hall. What is really cool is that this historic photo is going to be coming back as a permanent monument being placed in concrete, just feet away from where the real one was 100 years ago.

Madam Speaker, for me, the Winnipeg General Strike speaks to the importance of having unions today. The fact is that the 1919 strike made history here in Canada. It united workers with a common goal; it was all about the well-being of the worker. It was about fighting for a living wage, for working conditions and collective bargaining.

Madam Speaker, this strike laid the groundwork for the union movement that we have today, and let there be no doubt it was a historical moment for our entire nation. Our labour movement and the value of looking for ideas on how to improve quality of life for Canadians is not just for the workers, but it's much beyond that. For unions today at—our unions today advocate for workers and for strong, socially progressive policies. They have made a real difference in the lives of every Canadian.

Now why bring this resolution forward and what makes it so special? Well, I was actually inspired to do something tangible when I went on a bus ride along. We started on McPhillips Street, just north of Inkster Boulevard and we ended up at our City Hall. Prior to boarding our next bus, we talked about the 1919 strike and the overturned trolley. During this ride, Winnipeg Transit union reps talked to me about the working conditions of bus drivers, the issue of safety and more. It reinforced my appreciation for unions and the roles that they play.

Madam Speaker, what makes this resolution so appropriate is 2019 marks 100 years since the general strike, and this is an opportunity to appreciate the fine work that our union movement has done for all Canadians over the last 100 years. This is an opportunity to appreciate that the fight for fairness, as mentioned in the resolution itself, has never been more important due to thousands of Manitoba workers who, despite working full-time jobs, continue to live in poverty, and how unions have consistently contributed to the general well-being of society by advocating and supporting many social causes.

Madam Speaker, I don't want to use all my time because I would like to provide others the

opportunity to speak so we can pass this resolution unanimously this morning, but before I wrap up, I wanted to thank everyone who has taken the time to educate me on this.

I wanted to invite everyone out for an event that my father and I are actually hosting on May 18th at the Ukrainian Labour Temple in the North End.

And lastly I want to reiterate that this resolution aims to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and recognize the historical significance and incredible advancements in labour—labour reforms across Manitoba and Canada. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Can the member for Burrows tell us with whom she consulted with while she was developing this resolution?

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'd like to thank the member from Seine River for the question.

You know, it's really interesting. Over the course of the past couple of years we've had many, many different union reps actually approaching our caucus and asking us to really start representing them because they don't feel that they're being represented in this House.

And so we've got people from all sorts of different unions coming forward and giving their thoughts and sharing their concerns and that's who I've consulted with. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): So, I heard the member say that her and her dad are having an event, something to do with strikes.

So will you be apologizing, and will your dad be apologizing, for legislating workers back to work during the postal strike? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms. Lamoureux: And I'd like to remind the member from Flin Flon that he should be speaking through the Chair.

Madam Speaker, this—*[interjection]* This is an event that my father and I are actually quite excited about, and it's an event that we've been working on with many unions here in Manitoba. It's to gather a lot of people, get together and really appreciate this resolution, for one, and celebrate 100 years. Thank you.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Yes, the member for Burrows mentions that she's consulted with unions.

I was wondering if she can elaborate and be more specific of which unions she has consulted with. It might help our discussions here today.

Ms. Lamoureux: Absolutely. We've met with union reps from postal workers to firefighters to nurses—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. The honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), through the Chair, please.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, Madam Chair. I will ask my question through the Chair that hopefully the member who's introducing a bill to honour—or resolution to honour the 100th anniversary of the 1919 strike, will, in fact, encourage her father and herself to apologize to the striking workers during the postal strike that her father was a part of the government that legislated them back to work unconstitutionally.

Ms. Lamoureux: Again, I'd like to thank the member for Flin Flon.

You know, there's a lot of discussion that happens in this House about going to talk to the federal government.

Madam Speaker, we are in Manitoba; this is the provincial government. We are in the Legislative Building. I'm here to focus on provincial issues, and today what I am talking about, what I have the honour of bringing forward is the 1919 general strike. So, if the member from Flin Flon has questions about the 1919 general strike resolution, I'd be more than happy to answer them. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I would ask, and I do appreciate the member bringing this resolution forward, but I do like to ask, maybe she could

explain further her motivation behind bringing this resolution forward and maybe discuss maybe her party's relationship with organized labour?

* (11:10)

Ms. Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the member for his question. It's an excellent question.

Over the course of the past couple of years, after being elected in 2016, I've been learning a lot about unions, and it's been a wonderful opportunity. And I think what really, really triggered it for me, was—I mentioned it in my speech earlier—is when I got the—I had the opportunity to go for a ride-along.

And while I was on this ride-along, we sat on this bus; we must have went on four or five different buses. We transferred throughout the city of Winnipeg, and they really explained how unions work for me. And it was nice to hear first-hand, in a non-political arena, the effect that unions have on people.

And so, Madam Speaker, that is actually what encouraged me and motivated me to want to bring this resolution forward. And it happens to—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Lindsey: And certainly 1919 is the 100th anniversary of one of the biggest strikes, possibly the biggest strike in Canada.

So does the member believe that the right to strike is a constitutionally guaranteed right?

Ms. Lamoureux: You know, I didn't catch the entire question. There was a lot of heckling going on.

If I understood the premise of it, it was—yes, it—that's why it's represented at the human rights museum.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I thank the member for Burrows for bringing forward this resolution. But in this resolution, she mentions that Manitobans continue to live in poverty. Does she not believe that overtaxation is also a cause for poverty?

Ms. Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the member from La Verendrye for his question.

I think that there are a lot of contributing factors to poverty here in Manitoba and in Canada as a nation, but I think that unions in particular are doing the best that they can to lift people out of poverty.

And that's why we need to work with them as elected officials.

Thank you.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, the 100th anniversary of the general strike in Winnipeg, 1919—it was a time when workers stood up for themselves because no one else would.

So does the member introducing this resolution support the Prime Minister's legislating postal workers back to work?

Ms. Lamoureux: Again, we are here to discuss provincial issues. Lots of rumours about people here in this very House wanting to run federally; I'm starting to get the impression that the member from Flin Flon wants to run federally.

Mr. Johnson: So it's—I appreciate the member for Burrows bringing this forward, and I understand that she supports the strike of 1919.

I just wonder if the member could clarify if she supports the methods used in the 1919 strike?

Ms. Lamoureux: I don't believe that looking back, we can get upset or frustrated with what was done, because it was a hundred years ago.

I believe—now, if something like that were to happen, things would roll out quite differently. But what we can do is appreciate what has come from that event, and we know that workers are better represented today because of the 1919 general strike, and because of that, I appreciate the event.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I want to thank the member for Burrows for bringing this forward.

And as a union member for 46 years, that I paid union dues—I would suggest that the—in this House, that there's very few people that have a union card or did have one.

However, having said that, I just would like the member for Burrows to expand on who all she has discussed this with, which union she has discussed this with.

Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux: You know, this is my last opportunity to stand and speak to this resolution.

So, again, just to reiterate, we had many union reps come and talk to us over the course of the past couple years, but in particular, in specific, we've met with firefighters, with postal workers, with nurses,

many, many different unions throughout the province of Manitoba.

But, Madam Speaker, in closing, I really just want to encourage the members of this House: this is a non-partisan issue.

I'd like to touch on the fact that I am the only member of the Liberal caucus where no one has supported my resolutions yet. Please get on board. Please support my resolution and let it pass unanimously today.

Mr. Johnson: So I'll give her one more opportunity to talk, and I appreciate her 'enthusiasm'—enthusiasm.

Does the member for Burrows support the union members' right to a secret ballot?

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe that having the right to a secret ballot is something that we've discussed in committees, and it is a very hot and heated topic and something that we look forward to further discussing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for the questions has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Good morning, thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to be able to stand up this morning in the Chamber and speak to Ms. Lamoureux's private member's resolution on the Winnipeg General Strike—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe I just heard the—I just heard the member use the other member's name and I would just encourage members and remind members that when referring to another member we refer to them by their constituencies or by their ministerial titles.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Thank you. I'm sorry, I apologize. The Winnipeg General Strike was an extremely important event in Manitoba's past. However, its impact spread nationwide to become one of the most influential strikes in Canadian history.

As with many issues, Manitoba has led the way in policy innovation, and the strike was no different.

The events laid the groundwork for future labour reforms across the country.

I'd like to put into context the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and its impact for Manitobans and Canadians nationwide.

The year was 1919. The time was marked by significant change worldwide. With the seeming success of the Russian Revolution two years earlier, the labour unrest in countries across the globe, workers everywhere decided enough was enough.

Tired of dismal wages, awful working conditions, inflation and post-war unemployment, the people decided to fight for rights to better working conditions. Thousands of striking workers from all sectors took to the streets, even the essential public employees.

Although their individual motivations for striking may have differed, all joined the strike with the same common goal: the right to just treatment and a living wage.

Within hours, almost 30,000 workers left their jobs. The almost unanimous response by working men and women closed the city's factories, crippled Winnipeg's retail trade and stopped trains, proving just how essential their positions were to the functionality of the province.

Madam Speaker, the magnitude of the strike and involvement of provincial and federal governments made the strike known as one of the most influential in Canadian history.

Imagine a city being brought to a halt because those who provide the basic services made a stand to fight for better working conditions and a living wage.

Since the strike, significant labour reforms and improvements have taken place, making Manitoba and Canada as a whole among the safest places in the world to work.

The strike in 1919 resulted in an agreement being brought forward between the governments, labourers and employers. It is part of Manitoba's history and our province will celebrate its 100th anniversary this June.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

The general strike is a reminder to everyone of the importance to support individuals and their right to fair representation.

The workers came together to achieve a better working environment and to work for a living wage. The ability to do so supports the rights of all workers.

* (11:20)

Today, many individuals can thank the supporters of the general strike for their efforts. Safety on and off worksites has ensured members and their families that when they say goodbye to their loved ones in the morning, that they should be returning home that evening safe.

Madam—or, sorry—Deputy Speaker, there are many positive actions that have come out of workers and their movement to ensure fair wages and safe workplaces for employees. The secret ballot is a significant piece of ensuring employees who want to have their fair say and representation in their workforce. Knowing that their voice will be heard and become a part of the larger working environment opens the door to fair discussions and the confidence for individuals to put forward the concerns of any of the working—or any in the working environment.

The secret ballot ensures anonymity and the opportunity for workers and members to be open with workplace concerns. Anyone can feel secure knowing they are able to be a part of a democratic and supportive work environment.

Our government believes in the important role that unions play in our labour force, and we also know the importance of workers basic democratic right to a secret ballot. The ability for a person to vote on their working conditions and to have a say in their work environment began as a result of the efforts of thousands of workers. Thanks to the safety standards and guidelines for working conditions, going to work ensures the employee and his or her family, that the work environment has followed a standard which will heed to guidelines ensuring that staff and members are all safe.

Working for a fair wage validates the worth and expertise of the individual while ensuring the employee that they are not being unfairly paid for their time and labour.

Manitoba is a great province, and it is the people who make it so. From the Manitobans who came before us to fight for their basic rights, to the ones who uphold them today. Our province is truly one that we can all be proud of. Having the right to assert our safety at work and in society is a part of what

makes our province and our country truly remarkable.

Deputy Speaker, Manitobans celebrate Canada's birthday every July 1st. Celebrations embrace freedoms and accomplishments of everyone who has contributed to our great country. Canada is viewed as a fair and free country where anyone has a chance to make their dream a reality. It is this ideology that makes Canada the country it is today, and it is the people who turned ideology into action that we have to thank for this great nation. People like those who first took it upon themselves to make a statement against the injustices they faced at work. Their courageness to stand up for what is right will forever be enshrined in Canada's history.

Another great celebration we look forward to is Canada 150. Canada 150 celebrates the accomplishments of all of its citizens. Canada is a diverse country with many different geographic backgrounds. Regions which are unable to support most types of vegetations to areas in Canada that become part of the grain belt which not only feeds many Canadians, but a lot of populations around the world.

The changes that Canada has undergone have shaped our landscape of populations, investment and growth have evolved. The boldness of the people who came before us and their dreams supported the many evolving and changing periods throughout history.

Deputy Speaker, I am proud to be a Canadian. The many benefits I enjoy today are a direct outcome of the challenges that were met and faced by individuals who made a stand and stood up for themselves and their fellow workers. This sentiment is one that all Manitobans and Canadians should honour with pride. We honour the descendants of the strikers and those who have benefited from safe working conditions that laid the groundwork for Canada.

Canada's birth is a celebration that marks such accomplishments and brings this great country together to honour past and to look forward to the future. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): While I rise in support of this particular resolution, I believe that the member from Burrows really has just begun her educational journey on what unions mean and what the general strike of 1919 meant.

When she says that, well, it will be really cool to have a statue of a tipped streetcar. You know what I think would be really cool, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we had a statue of Mike Sokolowski, if we had a statue of Mike Scherbercawon [*phonetic*]-and, I'm sorry for my butchering of their names, but, Mr. Sherbrebanowswicz [*phonetic*]-two workers, that's all they were. Nothing any more special than anybody else. Going to work every day, feeding their families. But they were two workers who participated in the general strike of 1919. They were two workers who got killed during the general strike of 1919 standing up for not just their rights, but the rights of future Canadians that governments like this Pallister government continue to attack and try to drive backwards every day that they're in government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we stand up to honour the memory of those strikers, it shouldn't be with just words that some hack in the backroom has handed us to read. It should be with passion, with understanding, and with true belief in what workers' rights really are in this province and this country.

When the member from Burrows talks about they're having an event to honour, I don't know what, but when she goes home and talks to her father, who was part of the Liberal government that doesn't believe in workers' rights, that doesn't believe in the constitutionally protected right to strike, she should learn exactly what that right is. She should learn exactly what it means to be a worker forced to stand up against a corporation to protect your rights. And I hope that she will undertake to learn more about what it means to be a worker, to be a union person, to understand the history of unions.

And I listen to the member from Emerson ramble on about he's the only one that's ever been a card-carrying union member for 40 years. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that I was, in fact, a card-carrying member of a union for 40 years. But I did more than just pay dues and whine and complain about paying dues. I learned about what it was to be a union member, and actively took part in standing up for workers and their rights, and I continue to do that today.

So this year, 2019, is the hundredth anniversary of one of the dark chapters of Manitoba, of Winnipeg, of Canada. Internationally too, yes. Bloody Saturday when governments of the day decided that workers didn't have rights-gunned them down in the streets. The unions who were taking part

in peaceful demonstrations; whose very mandate was that those demonstrations remain peaceful; who recognized that other individuals would be impacted, set about trying to ensure that milk could be delivered; that the news could get out; that those kind of things they agreed were important and needed to be maintained during the strike.

Unfortunately, some of the companies involved didn't believe that. They wanted to make the strike as hard as possible for citizens, so they didn't necessarily let the milk wagons go out because that played into their ideology.

* (11:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I listen to members of this PC government stand up and talk about the importance of unions, when they stand up and talk about the importance of people standing up for their rights, quite frankly, it makes me sick because everything this government, everything this Premier Pallister has done since coming to power has been to take away workers' rights, has been to take us back to the dark days of 1919. And heaven forbid, they should stay in power long enough, because I hate to see how far back we would go with their trampling on rights for working people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what those workers did in 1919 did, in fact, lay the groundwork for a lot of things that came after: workers' rights, eight-hour shifts, health and safety laws. And I can tell you that those health and safety laws didn't come about just because some government thought it was a good idea. Those health and safety laws came about because workers died. *[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Order.

I'd just like remind the member that we do not reference members by their names, their last names, but by their constituencies or ministerial title.

Minister for Flin Flon—or member for Flin Flon, sorry.

Mr. Lindsey: I certainly—Flin Flon's got its own ministry. I apologize for using the Premier's name and I shan't speak his name again.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's all well and good, and we should honour those who came before us, but we should do more than that. The member from Burrows talks about—she took a bus tour and educated herself and if that's the best we can hope for, then I encourage every member opposite to take a bus tour and begin to educate themselves on what it

means to be a hard-working Manitoban—what it means to work in industries that don't always think your life is of value. I encourage every member opposite to sit down with unions and listen to what they say—to really understand how come workers in 1919 stood up and stood together to defend themselves and us.

Because somewhere along the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that message has been lost, certainly to members of the PC caucus. We stand up and read prepared statements about working people and rights and how wages bring dignity, at the same time that they froze minimum wage and refused to raise it to a decent level so that working people in this province can have dignity. Shame on them for saying it and then not doing it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister of cuts now wants to get in on the act and start talking about things. Let's talk about education and how working people and how teachers, who formed unions to stand up not just for themselves, but for kids in this province—and who continue to stand up while the minister of cuts is shutting things down that—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Order. Order.

I've already reminded the member once that we refer to other members in this Chamber by their ministerial title or by their constituency. I believe the member, while speaking, used a different title for a member of this House.

Mr. Lindsey: I apologize for calling the Minister of Education the minister of cuts.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I rise in support of this resolution, because we should honour the 1919 strike, we should honour the memory of those workers who stood up for all future Manitobans and, in fact, across Canada. There were strikes going on constantly because workers were tired at that point of being subjugated. I support this resolution but this is just one step that we need to do to recognize where we came from and where we need to go as a province to make sure that working people earn—get the respect that they've earned and the respect that they deserve, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to this resolution. I just want to make sure that my microphone is actually working, so I don't have to yell like the member from Flin Flon was doing.

Madam Speaker, I do want to thank the contributions for labour into this province. I want to thank the hard-working men and women for their contributions, and not only for their tireless work but for, in fact, building this province. I think that's—we can all stand in this House and say that if it wasn't for the men and women in various positions, whether at the front line in labour, front line in government or front line in any other service or maybe construction industry, we wouldn't live in the province that we do today.

So I want to—I do thank them, of course, and we'd be remiss if we didn't thank the men and women who work in the police services, of course, emergency services, and our very brave men and women who serve on the front lines in our Canadian Armed Forces who promote Canadian values and defend Canadian values, not only at home but around the world as well.

I know we—every single member in this House was elected by Manitobans, and we know that, and, of course, we are elected to represent them and their interests, of course.

We do represent men and women who work hard and provide for themselves and their families, Madam Speaker, and I think it's important that we remember that it's an important role that we play as legislators and it is the very reason why I am very proud that our Progressive Conservative government has taken the important action of reducing the tax burden on these very men and women who work hard, and many of them are in unions themselves, that they have seen a tax reduction and will see further tax reductions from this government.

We've seen the increase in the basic personal exemption, and I know that that's very helpful for, especially, low-income Manitobans, and to see to that they are paying less of their income on taxes with the PST reduction coming on July 1st. We know that will be a percentage point—a one full percentage point reduction in their retail sales tax, which helps families when they're purchasing everything from groceries to a new vehicle or whatever it is that they're going to be purchasing. They will see real savings, and that money will stay in their pocket rather than going to the government coffers as happened under the previous NDP administration.

We know that the previous administration had promised, and they ran on a platform, of not raising the PST. I believe it was the premier, Greg Selinger,

at the time, who said that the idea of raising the PST was ridiculous. He said everyone knows we're not going to raise the PST.

And then, not too long after, they raised that PST. Not only did they raise the PST by one percentage point, they increased the scope of it. Of course, more and more services and goods became taxable under the provincial sales tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we do find it interesting that members opposite get up in the House and speak about working Manitobans when they have no problem taking money off their kitchen table just for their own political benefit, so we've—like to point that out—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Order. I'd just like to remind the member that if he could bring his remarks back to the topic under consideration this morning. That would be helpful and probably necessary.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your interjection in this but I am talking about working Manitobans, but I do respect your comments on this very issue.

You know, I've held a number of jobs throughout my life, and, of course, at university I've worked in different jobs where I was part of a union, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, you know, I have complete respect for my colleagues at the time, and I know that they work incredibly hard and they've had a lot of difficulties, especially in physical labour. I've worked in warehouses before, and I know the effects of having to work 10-, 12-, sometimes 14-hour days in—doing back-breaking physical labour. It is hard, and there is no question that we have considerable respect for the men and women who do this type of work.

I think, though, that we should expand and extend our support, not only to just unionized workers, but non-unionized workers as well. Let's face it: Not everyone's in a union in this province. There are a lot of people who work for small companies that aren't unionized, a lot of people who own small businesses, and that may include many, many hours of work, maybe not necessarily physical labour, but there's certainly a lot of work involved, and these people are often the bedrock of our economy.

So I would suggest to all members here that we do recognize these folks as well. It's not just

unionized labour. It's also non-unionized folks who work very, very hard and diligently to make this province the province it is today.

* (11:40)

So, again, I do extend a considerable thank you to—especially the small business owners, who not only employ themselves, but employ their—people in the community, who rely on them for sustenance for their families.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's it's incumbent upon all members to recognize that dedication from workers of all—from both unionized and non-unionized work—work environments, rather.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that I was referring to a few things that our government has done for Manitobans in general. But I do want to specify that the issues that—or the tax [*inaudible*] that we have introduced does help our unionized and non-unionized workers in the province. So it is good to see that low-income Manitobans saving more of their hard-earned income, and it is incumbent upon all legislators to make sure that Manitobans receive good services in the province of Manitoba, but also that they get the value for their money. And I think that's something that hasn't happened, in this province, for quite some time. And there's other levels of government that we could reference, but I won't do that right now.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do say that Manitobans, who are working Manitobans, do understand the value for money, and they understand that they want value for money; and that's why we were elected in 2016, to deliver on that principle and that promise.

I thank to—again, I want to talk about the service that members have—or sorry—members—but workers have provided to the Province. I would be remiss, not talking about the 'cained' forces. I know that a lot of members of the 'cainyin' forces have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and I know that they serve overseas, and in many times in conditions that are less than favourable and probably much more dangerous than anybody in this province, typically outside of the military, has experienced.

So, I think that we would be remiss in not recognizing the good work that the 'cainyin' force have done here, at home, especially during flood seasons and during times of natural disaster. But, oh course, overseas, and Afghanistan is our most recent major conflict that our troops were involved in. And

I know that they pursued policy for Canada, and for our country to make sure that our 'cainyin' values were recognized around the world and, of course, recognized in countries where it's desperate needed to help rebuild democracy and help, especially, places like Afghanistan, where young girls were not necessarily given the same rights that everyone else was in their society. And I'm very proud to be part of a country that's done that, and I know a lot of Manitobans served. We, in fact, have two members on this side of the House who've served in the military, and I thank them for their service to our country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I again thank the member from Burrows for bringing this resolution forward. I know that she said that she's consulted with a number of unions on this. I'd also—and I didn't get a chance—so I apologize—to ask this question; but if she had a chance to also discuss with some of the workers, not necessarily the union heads and union leaders but, of course, the people actually doing the work themselves—and see if they've—what their take on this is.

And, if she had a chance to discuss with non-unionized workers, I know that may not happen in the public service, but certainly in the private sector where there's a lot of non-unionized workers—if she had a chance to discuss this resolution with them, and if any of them will be involved in this event that's going on with her and her father.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution. I know that everyone in this House here has the considerable respect—and I can say that with certainty—considerable respect for the workers of this province. And I know that, on both sides of the House, we may have our differences on opinion and how that's achieved. But at the end of the day, I do know that every person in this House has at 'spome' point, spent time doing some kind of physical labour, or some kind of job that would be considered either unionized, non-unionized, front-line work.

And I know that we can all relate to how hard that can be sometimes and how challenging that can be, to be on the low-income end of the spectrum and have, you know, have bills to pay, families to raise and still have to make do with the working conditions that we have.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that this side of the House is very respectful and understanding of the front line, and really appreciate the member from

Burrows taking the time to bring this resolution forward.

I look forward to further debate on this from all sides of the House, and all sides of the—on both sides of the aisle.

And I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): There's a very famous folk song that actually started as a protest song that was written about a terrible coal-mining strike in Kentucky. Pete Seeger actually made it very famous, and the name of the song is Which Side Are You On. And, actually, if you're a folkie, and if you're at the right events that my friends and I tend to attend at, you'll hear this song sung once in a while. And it makes it very clear, there are some times when you've got to declare which side you are on.

And in 1919, of course, the city of Winnipeg was split in the Winnipeg General Strike. It was split between workers, and I'll talk about exactly who those workers were, and those who oppressed the workers in 1919. And Manitobans make their own choices, and frankly still, 100 years later, you can still trace back a lot of the institutions in this city and in this province to where people stood in 1919.

And, of course, the resolution is a sound one, and as my friend, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) put forward, we are certainly in support of the resolution that's brought forward, but I think it's really important as part of that to recognize what the 1919 general strike means.

And, as the resolution says, yes, unions have improved working conditions, benefits and wages for Manitoba workers ensuring fairness in the voice the workers were heard. A hundred years later, we're still fighting those same battles. And, as we see, a Conservative government in this province that's been rolling back privileges for workers, that's been taking away the right of a worker to indicate their attention to join a union by signing a union card, without an employer having the chance to try to coerce them or scare them into changing their decision; that's an example.

When we have a Conservative government that decides they are going to take away the rights of civil servants and those working in a wide range of sectors to collective bargaining and to negotiate an increase in wages, well, that's something that was one of the basic tenets of the strike in 1919. Workers back then were demanding a right to collective bargaining; they

were demanding a living wage; they were demanding an eight-hour workday, and they were demanding improved working conditions. And it seems that even though it's 100 years ago, we're still fighting for that every day in this House. The people that we know, the people that we speak to, the people that depend upon us, are still talking about those issues.

Now what is interesting—and I was really interested to hear the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) wanting to talk about people that have served in the Armed Forces. I'm not sure the member for Southdale, I'm not sure the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) know that actually a lot of the people that took part in the Winnipeg General Strike were Winnipeggers who'd gone and fought in the First World War. And, of course, at that time, you could be conscripted. There was conscription in the First World War. Your body could be conscripted to go and fight in Europe and die, but if you had wealth, that wealth wasn't being conscripted; that wealth was actually being used and multiplied to make money from the war effort.

And when those soldiers came back—some of them with physical injuries, some with injuries that nobody knew about at the time, psychological damage, other issues—they came back and they expected that they were going to see a new day in Canada. And what happened? Well, they saw their own wages decreased. They saw the jobs that they'd had when they went away to war weren't necessarily there. They came back and they were very angry and they were frustrated. They'd spent one, two, some of them four years, fighting for their country and their country was turning its back on them.

So thousands and thousands of true-blue Canadians, if you would call them, whether they were born in Canada or whether they had immigrated to Canada a year before, a decade before, 20 years before, they were actually the ones who played a huge role in the strike.

And what's so scary is we look 100 years later, is when we look at the governments of the time and the things that were said at the time about the strikers. It was very inconvenient for the powers that be at that time to recognize that the strikers in 1919 were white Anglo-Saxons, English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish tradespeople. English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh Canadians who had gone to fight in the First World War and come back who were the ones on the front lines who were calling for things to get better.

* (11:50)

Who got blamed? Well, of course, it was the people who looked different, the people who sounded different. It was very easy to pick them out as the scapegoats, to say there's a Bolshevik revolution coming; we don't want what happened in Russia coming here. And so the powers that be at that time—right, the lawyers whose names are still on some of the law firms in town, the accounting firms in town, well they got people scared that it was all the immigrants' fault. And not the immigrants from Scotland or England, it was the immigrants from eastern Europe.

And, in fact, it was then-Premier Norris, the Liberal premier of the province—but what did he do? Well he—you know, like many Liberals—I think he felt bad about the strike and wanted everything to work out well, but didn't actually do anything about it. He established a—he established what was called the Alien Investigation Board. Right? So that if you didn't look and sound like the powers that be, you could then be investigated. And then the federal government—the Union government, but—because of the war—but it was really a Conservative government—they loved that, because then they quickly passed new legislation that allowed for the immediate deportation of any immigrant determined by Manitoba's Alien Investigation Board to be disloyal or seditious.

So if what I'm saying has its echoes of what is still being said in this country, what's being said in the country to the south of us or what's being said in countries in Europe, that should not come as a surprise. In the 1919 strike, the powers that be decided they were going to try to shift peoples' attention away from the true social issues that they were fighting for, and decided to try to blame people who looked and sound different—blame immigrants. And, unfortunately, to some extent it worked. And, unfortunately, that seems to be a formula that is still working today.

We know that the Anglo-Saxon individuals who were arrested were treated differently. They were arrested; some were released, some actually had to go to trial. The ones who didn't look and sound like everybody else, if they could be, were deported or they were languishing in jail.

It actually started the careers of a number of politicians, including J.S. Woodsworth and A.A. Heaps, who were involved in the strike. J.S. Woodsworth was actually elected to Parliament in a seat called Winnipeg Centre back in 1921.

A.A. Heaps was also elected in Winnipeg as a Labour representative as well, and it was only a few years later that a very important moment in Canadian history happened: Mackenzie King, the Liberal Prime Minister, found himself short of a majority after the 1925 election. And it's very famous; in fact, you can find it in the Canadian 'historica' minutes—Mackenzie King actually called in J.S. Woodsworth and A.A. Heaps into his office and he said, look, I'm short of majority. I need help or my government could fall. Tell you what I'll do, I'll bring you into Cabinet. Look at that, you're a bunch of Labour guys from Winnipeg; you could sit in the federal Cabinet.

And they said, well, we're not going to do that, but what we will do is we'll support your government if you bring in old-age pensions. And Mackenzie King had no choice but to listen to these Labour MPs who, not six years before, had been in jail because of their role in the Winnipeg General Strike, and he said, all right. And the Liberal government brought in old-age pensions, which is the only way sometimes, it seems, that things ever got done in this country, is when a Liberal government, which always signals left and turns right, needs help from Labour, CCF or NDP. That's how we got unemployment insurance in this country. That's how we got Medicare in this country, from sea to sea to sea. And who knows, after the next election, what will happen?

So I am fascinated that it was the Liberals who brought this forward because the Liberal government of the day did not 'exactly' distinguish itself. When asked about the arrest of several leading strikers who were involved in the strike, well, Premier Norris responded, and I quote, just leave us out of this. End quote. And that has been, unfortunately, the history of the Liberal Party when it comes to workers' rights. They say all the right things when they think it's safe but when the chips are down and you have to decide which side you're on, the Liberals have stood in this country year after year, decade after decade, with the Conservatives against the rights of workers, against the progress that we think we can make in this wealthy country to keep making things better.

So it is going to be a great spring as we learn more about the 1919 general strike. I encourage all members of this House to participate. I certainly will be. I probably won't go to the event that the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) and her dad will be hosting, but I'm sure we'll see each other at some other events. Every day, we should learn something.

There are many, many lessons to be learned from this important chapter in Winnipeg's history.

Thank you.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I want to thank the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) for bringing this forward, bringing this attention to the House, today. And it's—obviously the strike of 1919 was a significant event of our history in the province of Manitoba, and across the country, for that matter. Our Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister has been doing an amazing job of—with—through her funding and through her department, of making sure events like this don't forget—get forgotten and lost in time.

I want to reflect first, I guess, on a few comments made by the minister from Emerson. I did the math after he asked the question, so if I understand it correctly, he did not get his union card during this strike, it was a little bit later in time. So I guess we can answer that here, today. But he's proud to have a union card for 46 years, and I think he's challenged some of the people in this House that he's had the card longer than some of us have been alive.

Well, I'm nip and tuck on that, but I would challenge him to the number of unions that he's belonged to over the years. I was fortunate to have a career, as I was young, in pipeline and underground mining and as I moved around, between job site to job site all around Canada and the world, for that matter, that every time I moved I had to join another union.

So I first started off in Thompson back in 1991. Was underground mining back then, and I've moved through all the mines in Thompson as a, you know, as a contractor, working in a unionized environment, and I moved on to Flin Flon. Multiple mines there—some of them are closed now. Trout Lake mine has closed; 777 is now on its way to being closed. The company's hands were tied in the past of exploring and opening up new mineral deposits by the keep-it-in-the-ground government that sits opposite to us.

So—but throughout the provinces, I've had many opportunities to meet many, many great workers and in the unionized environment I've—I guess I'll start from the west coast: I've worked on Vancouver Island, right near Campbell River—beautiful, beautiful place to work and spent some short times there—as far north as north of the southern tip of Alaska in northern BC. It's different mines there, and each time I became a member of, quite often, a different union. It was mandated that we become a member of the union.

So I would challenge—in my short time that I have left here, I won't be able to get through all the places that I've worked—but I would challenge that I might even have had more union cards than the NDP caucus collectively, across the way there, through my career.

I also worked in a pipeline in the early '90s and the union 901—has now switched to 987. We made a, you know, very, very good wage. I would even argue that it ultimately ended up being too high of a wage, because they ended up not giving the work to that union anymore. So, when that union didn't get the work there was other unions that came in at a cheaper rate of pay and I was out of a job because of that, because maybe they asked just for that little, little bit too much.

I've also worked in the uranium mines in Saskatchewan as I worked my way across Canada, and that's interesting. That's high-grade uranium that is used around the world for—they transfer it into, well, yellowcake and they make pellets out of it. So the fuel for all the nuclear reactors around the world is—comes from—

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have five minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 21, 2019

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