

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

*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.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

## House Business

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Government House Leader):** On House business.

**Madam Speaker:** On House business.

**Mr. Cullen:** I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet today, May 17th, 2022 at 12 noon to consider the following: Bill 17, The Family Law Act, The Family Support Enforcement Act and The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet today, May 17th, 2022 at 12 noon to consider the following: Bill 17, The Family Law Act, The Family Support Enforcement Act and the Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Deputy Premier—or the honourable Minister for Mental Health and Community Wellness.

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** Will you please call for third reading this morning from 10 o'clock to 10:30 or earlier if the debate is finished, Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, and from 10:30 to 11 o'clock, Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence and third reading of bills 223 and 225, with the Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, going from 10 to 10:30 or sooner if it's finished, and concurrence and third reading of Bill 205, the Filipino heritage act month, from 10:30 to 11.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS—  
PUBLIC BILLS

## Bill 223—The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act

**Madam Speaker:** So I will therefore call concurrence and third reading of Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye):** I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Cox), that Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now—be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Smook:** I would like to start by thanking all members of this Legislature for supporting Bill 223 and getting it to third reading. I also look forward to seeing it pass third reading in about 20 minutes or so. It is an honour to be in this Chamber today speaking at third reading of Bill 223. This bill proclaims the month of September as Ukrainian heritage month.

Madam Speaker, the first official Ukrainian immigrants, Vasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw, arrived in Canada on September 7th, 1891. Soon after, many more Ukrainians made their way to Canada and to Manitoba. Since 1891, there have been a number of waves of Ukrainians immigrating to Canada and

Manitoba. Today, Manitoba is home to more than 180,000 people of Ukrainian descent.

Madam Speaker, when the first Ukrainian settlers arrived in Manitoba, times were not easy, but their determination and work ethic allowed them to survive and become an important part of Manitoba's history. Manitoba's a province with rich culture from many countries. And Manitobans of Ukrainian descent have left and continue to leave a historic mark on our province, and their contributions span communities across Manitoba and are reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life. Their food, song and dance are a great part of Manitoba.

On February 24th, Vladimir Putin and his forces invaded Ukraine. Putin has not only targeted—not only military targets but has bombed hospitals, residential areas and apartment blocks, orphanages, malls and schools. He has no value for human life, bombing and killing anyone or anything that gets in his way, including women, children and the elderly. This war has caused many Ukrainians to flee their home country and seek refuge in other parts of Europe. Millions have left Ukraine.

Since the war in Ukraine started, Manitoba and Manitobans have stepped up with humanitarian aid to help the Ukrainian refugees that had been fleeing their homeland. There have been fundraisers all across this great province, not only for humanitarian aid, but to support the many families that we know are wanting to come to Manitoba.

Manitoba is preparing for the arrival of a large number of Ukrainian citizens seeking haven in Manitoba. We will need a full range of support services: housing, health care, education, child care, English language services and social assistance, employment assistance and more.

Manitoba is ready to welcome and help support Ukrainians wanting to come to Manitoba. The first federal—the federal government has announced that the first planeload of about 300 Ukrainians is soon to be landing in Manitoba. Ukrainians have been an important part of—sorry—the war in the Ukraine has been an unprovoked—an act of aggression of Putin. There is—this one thing—the one thing that this war has done is bring other countries to help Ukraine with humanitarian and military aid. With this aid, we can hope Ukraine can send Putin home and stop this senseless war.

Ukrainians have been an important part of Manitoba since arriving in 1891. It is time we help them in their time of need.

\* (10:10)

Thank you. Slava Ukraini. [*Glory to Ukraine.*]

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Burrows.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** It was not me for this bill, actually.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, that's fine, then.

The honourable member—was there any member from opposition wishing to speak?

If not, I will go to—oh, the honourable member for St. Johns.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** We are pleased to support the member's bill for Ukrainian heritage month. I think that everybody in this Chamber has been paying attention and understands the gravity of what's happening right now in Ukraine.

I think the world is really paying attention to what's happening in Ukraine, and it is, you know, every day when you get up in the morning and you go to read the newspaper and you read online the things that are going on right now in Ukraine, under Putin's attack, illegal attack, unwarranted attack, archaic attack. I mean, really, who in 2022 still attacks another sovereign country? And yet, that's where we are today.

And, you know, as the weeks have gone on, here we are, we see more and more atrocities that, I think, for many of us our minds can't even understand the atrocities that are going on in Ukraine: outright slaughters of innocent people, the rape of women and children, the torture of women and children.

It is quite something to behold, what is happening to our global relatives, and I know that everybody in the Chamber here has either family or friends or community members here in Manitoba that are our Ukrainian relatives, and that we feel very close and feel an affinity for, particularly in this moment in time.

And, you know, once again, our NDP caucus stands with Ukraine and hopes that this is going to end. I hope that this is going to end today, because it is quite disheartening, quite discouraging to see these things still occurring in 2022.

And so, on behalf of our NDP caucus, we do say miigwech to the member for bringing forward this

really important bill. I think that the timing for this bill is certainly needed. It's certainly poetic for us to have this bill and to acknowledge all of our Ukrainian relatives here in Manitoba and certainly across the seas.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East):** First of all, I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for La Vérendrye, for introducing this bill. And as a proud Canadian of Ukrainian descent, I am honoured to rise in the House today in support of the establishment of the Ukrainian heritage month.

And it is fitting that September is designated as Ukrainian heritage month, as it is the month, as my colleague said earlier, that, back in 1891, the very first Ukrainian immigrants first arrived here in Canada. Ukrainian immigrants like my baba and gigi, Marie and Nicholas Sawula, and my grandparents Peter and Helen Swistun, arrived in our province with nothing more than a hope and a dream for a better future.

They worked hard to provide their families, like many other immigrants, new immigrants. They toiled in the rock-filled fields in Komarno, or some in the railyards, and even some new Ukrainian immigrants were forced to work in the mines. There were no handouts and life was difficult, but their strong work ethic helped shape and influence our beautiful province.

Ukrainian heritage runs deep in our province, and church played an important role in the lives of Ukrainian immigrants. They were often the heart of their communities, serving as not only a place to worship but also a safe haven to gather, to celebrate life's most happy and often sad events, Madam Speaker.

It's no surprise that Manitoba's landscape is dotted with churches bearing the mushroom-shaped domes unique to the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches. Two iconic Winnipeg churches, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral and Sts. Vladimir and Olga church, also include beautiful stained-glass windows and mosaics that I can say were proudly created by the famous Ukrainian Manitoba artist Leo Mol.

Manitoba is the home of hope, and as Manitoba prepares for the arrival of over 300 Ukrainian refugees, I would like to personally thank all of the Manitobans who have opened their hearts, their homes and their wallets to ensure those families that

were forced to flee their war-torn homeland have a safe and comforting home here in our province.

I'd like to extend my heartfelt thank you to the Ukrainian Canadian council of Manitoba for their efforts and dedication as Manitoba prepares for the imminent arrival of Ukrainian refugees. And a special *duzhe dyakuyu [thank you very much]* to my friend Joanne Lewandowski for her dedicated efforts and leadership during these past few months. Joanne's passion for serving our Ukrainian community and ensuring Ukrainians arriving to our province have a warm and safe place to call home have been her priority. And *dyakuyu [thank you]* as well to Ostap Skrypnyk, Nick Krawetz, Ben Wasylyshen, Maryka Chabluk and all of the volunteers who have worked tirelessly to welcome and assist with the settlement of new refugees to Manitoba.

And there's also countless churches and organizations and charities that have pinched hundreds of thousands of perogies and sold kielbasa and everything else that they possibly could think of to ensure that they have funds that they're able to donate to the Ukrainian congress to help with the immigration of Canadian refugees here.

And, Madam Speaker, as well, from the bottom of my heart, I would like to say thank you to the people of Poland and the neighbouring countries for opening their hearts to all of the Ukrainian refugees who were forced to flee their country.

Our government will continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine, and we will continue to welcome Manitoba-Ukrainians to our province, now and into the future.

I ask all members to observe a moment of silence to pray for a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine, remember those lives so needlessly lost at the hands of Putin.

Slava Ukraini. [*Glory to Ukraine.*]

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave for a moment of silence at this point, or would you prefer that we had all speakers speak first and then we will have a moment of silence prior to calling the bill?

Is there leave for a moment of silence at the end?  
[*Agreed*]

At the end.

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** First of all, I think I want to acknowledge the member from La Vérendrye for shepherding this bill through the

House. It's not easy to pass things in this Legislature, whether you're an opposition member or a backbench MLA. And any time a colleague is able to do so, I think it should be recognized and celebrated as a professional achievement. So, I certainly want to recognize the member of La Vérendrye and ensure that he gets properly recognized.

It's a—certainly been an honour serving with him for these past few years. He certainly is a member that conducts himself with grace and honour. And I think he can actually be a role model for this House, somebody who sort of rises above sort of petty daily partisanship.

That being said, we're not just MLAs in this House. And when we enter this building, we tend to be symbols for the communities we come with. And it's an expectation, I think, for MLAs that we are voices for those many communities that we're connected to, and it's, in fact, probably a solemn duty for us.

\* (10:20)

So, in my position as the MLA for Fort Garry, which has absolutely been an honour, but I also come to this building as a member of the Ukrainian Manitoba community, member of a cultural and religious minority, and a minority which has been discriminated against in Manitoba, in Canada, and has been a victim of laws that have been put in place that have actually targeted my community.

So, when we talk today about Ukrainian heritage, we can't always just talk about the good stuff, the perogies and the music and the Folklorama and the socials, we also have to talk about the not-so-good stuff, because that's also part of our collective history.

As many members of this House know, we are on the grounds of what was once a concentration camp where Ukrainian Manitobans were held at gunpoint for the simple crime of being Ukrainian, and that simple crime let their loyalty to this country be suspect.

They had Ukrainian schools before the 1916 election, and Ukrainian was taught in our public schools for decades, and in 1916, this Legislature banned the teaching of Ukrainian in our public schools and didn't allow it until almost the 1960s where it was a crime to teach Ukrainian in our public schools. Ukrainian children would get assaulted by their teachers for having the temerity of speaking Ukrainian in a public school.

We had Ukrainian citizens who'd been citizens for 20 years stripped of their citizenship, denied the right to vote and deported because they were Ukrainian. On these very grounds of the Legislature, there were book burnings of Ukrainian children's school books, because that was a threat to the larger society. And, of course, Ukrainians in the labour market were always the last hired and the first fired.

We have a statue on these Legislative grounds honouring a white supremacist, somebody who went on to be an elected official in the Alberta legislature as an MLA and brought in a eugenics-based law that saw, for decades, the forced sterilization of the Ukrainian and Indigenous women. So I think it would be a great dishonour to the sacrifices of our ancestors not only to celebrate the good stuff but also to sort of brush aside some of the struggles that minority communities have had in Manitoba.

And I have a hard time understanding how members of this government, including some of those who share heritage with me, who can support some of the initiatives of this government, and I'm just going to give a few examples.

This government brought in a tax on immigrants to the professional nominee program. And this is targeting vulnerable newcomers, people who are economic refugees, and this creates a significant barrier from many people from the poorest of countries who come to immigrate here for a better life, like our predecessors had done before them. They did not have a head tax when they came to Canada.

So how many Ukrainians who are settled here now would have been barred from coming here if such a tax was in place? We cannot enjoy the benefits of living in Manitoba by slamming the door on others who were to come after us.

We have to look only at the Pallister-Stefanson governments' approach to health insurance for international students. It's a main source of our immigration into this country. We're the only other province in Canada that actually does this, that creates another barrier. What kind of message does it send about Manitoba's priorities? Do we value newcomers?

And then, of course, we've seen some legislation in my time here which has entrenched systemic racism, and the one that just easily comes to mind is the Sunday retail closure law. This government entrenched into the law that you have the right to refuse work only on a Sunday—well, why Sunday? For most Manitobans, that's not a holy day for them. In

fact, I think I saw one statistic, it was only about 5 per cent of Manitobans who regularly attend church. There's many Manitobans that have a holy day as a Friday, on Saturday, but yet we have entrenched in law one day that affects one specific group of Manitobans. The government was aware of this and still proceeded. What message does that send to all those Manitobans that don't fit into that box?

So, sadly, what we're seeing here with this bill is performative politics from this government. This government wants to be seen to be doing something without actually doing anything. Real progress is often difficult; it's often messy. It takes time and energy and, most importantly, it takes money. And that's something this government does not want to do; it doesn't want to invest in Manitobans.

And right now is a good example, because the Ukrainian community actually has needs. We are facing an existential crisis where our ancestral homeland is under attack, where there is a colonizing government that is denying the legitimate existence of the Ukrainian people. That reaches deep into the Ukrainian Canadian psyche, and it is a struggle that we're very much engaged in.

And we just have to look at the Ukrainian community's request to be part of the solution here in Manitoba. This is a government that refused to provide a meeting between the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and myself. They're prepared to wrap themselves in the Ukrainian flag, but they are not prepared to give meaningful supports to refugees.

So, I'm hoping that when we pass this, that we actually give some meaningful life to this act and not just celebrate it with perogies, but with real action, with real needs of our community.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, Manitoba Liberals, we support this bill, and we look forward to September being a time to recognize, to celebrate and to honour Ukraine and the contribution of people who have come from Ukraine.

And there are many—I think about 180,000 in Manitoba. And people from Ukraine are living and working all over Manitoba; they are living and working in all variety of occupations, public and private. They are making an incredible contribution to our province. Ukraine is a part of who we are in Manitoba, and we want to celebrate that and recognize it.

At the same time, we want to recognize the difficulties that Ukraine has been through—the incredible struggles at the time of the Holodomor, the incredible struggles that are happening right now with the war between Ukraine and Russia. It is a tumultuous time at the moment. We are doing everything that we can as individuals, as a Province, as a country, to support Ukraine and Ukrainian people.

We look forward to receiving many Ukrainians shortly coming, and we welcome them as new refugees and hope they will decide to stay in Manitoba. But we—it hurts, because we don't want to be, you know, taking people who would make a contribution in Ukraine. We want to make sure that the fundamental continuance of Ukraine as a country is there, and we are supporting that all the way, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

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

Please stand now for a moment of silence.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

\* (10:30)

### **Bill 205—The Filipino Heritage Month Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain, that Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Isleifson:** I won't take long this morning, but I do want to thank, as in the previous bill, when we talk about third readings coming to this House, it's because of the collaboration and the work of everybody in this House. And I want to thank all members of this House for supporting this bill to come to third reading.

We had an interesting time when we reached out and had our public input on the bill during—after second reading—or during second reading, and it became quite obvious that all members of this House are really proud of the fact that Manitoba is built on immigration. And when we look at that, and I really have to give a shout-out to the—to my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Mr. Reyes), for originally bringing this bill forward. And as the process moved on, obviously, with his movement into a role—ministerial role, the bill was passed along to the member who is now the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Smith).

And so I guess when you say, third luck's the charm, to me, third luck is not luck; it's an honour to stand in the House and recognize the culture of Manitoba, which is immigration. If we look at the number of immigrants coming into Canada, that's what Canada's all about.

My great-grandfather came over 132 years ago, and when we look at the Philippine community, we can look at—back—starting back in, I believe it was 1950, in the '50s anyways, when the Philippine community started making Canada their home. And I know in this House, when we look at even the representation in our House, where we have members on both official parties with Filipino heritage, even the previous Marcelinos that were in the House before, to bring that culture into the House is certainly something that we can all celebrate.

I know I was very pleased to have members of the Brandon Filipino community in my office during our break week. And we were able to have lunch and talk about their contributions to the community. And it was really incredible when I sit and think about Brandon East, and that's where my thought process was going at the time, as being a member of the Facebook group of the Filipino community in Brandon.

I will admit, at first, when I thought of what was happening in my local community, it was selfish of me. Because I'm thinking about what a great opportunity we have in Brandon with the Filipino influence. In our discussions with the Filipino community, with Roland—I'll mention, Madam Speaker—Roland Liwanag, Jemie Liwanag and Edith Strange of the Brandon Filipino community in my office for that lunch. And not only did we talk about their contributions to Brandon, which is incredible, but we talked about the contributions of their community in the

province, in Neepawa, in areas south of Brandon, throughout the entire province.

It's—I've found it unbelievable that they actually have that many Filipinos in Manitoba. That is something we should all be proud of. When we look, Madam Speaker, in all of Canada, 837,130 Filipinos have immigrated to Canada from the Philippines. Again, starting in the '50s, and that number is only as of 2016. That's the latest census that Canada has. As a Manitoba community, we should be proud that over 12 per cent, so 79,820 Filipinos call Manitoba home. That is something that we should all celebrate. And when we look again, because of the work that is done throughout Manitoba, throughout Canada, if it wasn't for immigration, none of us would be here calling Canada home. None of us would be here calling Manitoba home.

It is really an opportunity to work together, which we have really done, and saying that I really want to thank the member from Notre Dame, to come forward and help with this bill. She held her own consultations as well, provided some great feedback when we met and, you know, even helped adjust the bill a little bit, as we made an amendment to the bill based on the input that she had gathered from the Filipino community in—during her meetings.

So it shows that there is an opportunity to work in a non-partisan way for the betterment of all of us here in Manitoba and all those that were in this House to serve.

So, Madam Speaker, with the passing of this bill, we can join our Filipino friends, and we're all Manitobans, so let's call them all family. I do believe that they already have a celebration planned on June 12th for another heritage event within the Filipino community, so it is only fitting that we pass this bill and recognize June as the Philippine heritage month act.

It is something that I look forward to, celebrating with all my friends in the Filipino community, and not just in Brandon, not just in Brandon East, but throughout the entire province, and I welcome all of my colleagues in the House to reach out to their Filipino organizations and celebrate with them and even, you know, put it out there so that we're all aware of it, so that we can all get together and celebrate.

And I thank you very much for this opportunity, and I look forward to celebrating Filipino heritage month at the end of this debate.

Thank you.



**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

It's an important day today, when we get this opportunity to discuss about our friends who have their roots in Filipino heritage.

As it has been recently said in the Chamber that almost 80,000 Manitobans call themselves proudly of Filipino origin, it's very important for us to recognize their culture, their contribution to—not just to Manitoba but also to our great country, Canada.

So, this bill, Bill 205, proclaims the month of June of each year as Filipino heritage month. And it's May now, and we look forward to this bill to be passed and become the law before June, I think. And there are already celebrations going on; people are planning to celebrate. There are so many events listed on social media, where we all would get a chance to get together and know more about Filipino culture, network with members of the Filipino community.

Filipino community members are here since years. It was in the 1950s when they started coming, and they have been supporting various fields in Manitoba, to be specific, and to be general, in Canada.

They have been working in the field of health. They have been working as nurses, health-care aides, doctors, lawyers, teachers, factory workers, even in the food industry, not just in this city but also in Brandon, Neepawa. I see so many people in Steinbach who are of Filipino origin.

When I was working in Manitoba Agriculture, we had a front-line-workers team of 11, and I had two colleagues of Filipino origin, and I got a chance to work with them, to eat with them, to talk to them about their culture. They love their language. They are proud of their heritage—all of us are—and they have, and they continue to support, build Manitoba in various ways.

\*(10:40)

But the thing that we need to understand is that, during the pandemic, Filipino community members have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to various reasons. We've been asking this government to release race-based data related to COVID. They got late but, ultimately, they did release the data, and the data tells us that this community has been working so hard but disproportionately impacted. And if we look at the data within Filipino community, women are impacted even more disproportionately.

The Filipino community started coming to Winnipeg from the Philippines directly and also from down south, and they have established themselves in this big city of Winnipeg and other suburbs in Manitoba. And when I see how they build Manitoba, is that the people of Filipino origin, as per my experience, they love people of all ethnicities. I got a chance to campaign with so many people of Filipino heritage during my election campaign, and they simply love people. They were so much welcoming and supportive to each other and everybody around.

This bill does create an opportunity for us to discuss the issues this community is facing. This bill does recognize Filipino heritage, this bill does recognize their contributions, but there is a lot more that we can do for this community in addition to passing this bill.

I was just thinking, just imagine—just imagine—this Chamber without people of Filipino origin. Just imagine our health-care system without people of Filipino origin. Similarly, you go to a school, you go to a university in Manitoba, you go for a walk, you go to a park, you see Filipinos. Just close your eyes and imagine Manitoba without Filipino population; it won't be this beautiful. So I really respect this community, I'm really thankful to each and every immigrant who comes from Philippines for their contributions to our political field, to our economy, to our sport culture and to add to our diversity.

When we talk about politics, we know that Conrad Santos was elected to Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 1981, long back. And after that, we saw two more senior NDP leaders elected to Manitoba Legislature. I would name them: Ted Marcelino and Flor Marcelino. And it's an honour when we say that Flor Marcelino was the first Filipina and woman of colour to be elected in Manitoba Legislature in 2007, and she also worked as interim leader of the NDP here in Manitoba, so that's an honour.

There are so many migrant workers who have their roots in Philippines, and they build Manitoba. They deserve better, they deserve better health care, they deserve better immigration system and they deserve support and initiatives that help them settle here in Manitoba.

Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program is a program which accounts for more than 70 per cent of total immigration to Manitoba, and the Filipino community is a big, big part of it. So, when we talk about the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, we talk about the \$500 fee that's applied; people call it a head

tax to the applicants under this category. So that's a barrier for so many people, because when you convert the currency, people who apply from outside of Canada, \$500 is a huge amount for many families who can't afford, and they have to make hard choices to apply for immigration and during this immigration process.

The money collected by this fee amounts to be \$5 million and it was committed by this government that only—this money would only be used for the benefit of the people, immigrant people. But the data tells us that only \$3.1 million was earmarked for newcomers. It's unfortunate because that money comes from immigrant communities, and it should be used for those purposes.

We, as the official opposition, we stand together with members in this Chamber—all members in this Chamber—and we support this bill, fully, and we want to stand together to recognize the contribution of Filipino Manitobans to our economy and the way they build Manitoba.

Once again, I thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to this bill. Looking forward to its passage.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** I just got back from Booth college, but want to come here, put a few records—a few words on the records for Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

I just want to say, I'm pleased to rise today to put a few words on it, and I want to thank my colleague, the member from Brandon East, for taking the lead on this key bill that, as all of you know, is near and dear to my heart. So, let me begin by saying that very happy that we've come to agreement, now that we're in third reading, so that bill will finally recognize and give Manitobans the option to celebrate the valuable contributions of Filipino people in the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of Manitoba.

As many have said, many of my colleagues here have many constituents from the Filipino community and I'm proud to say that, you know, my dad—many of you know the story of my parents. My dad came here in 1968. He's been here for over 50 years now, and one of the reasons why he came here was to give a better opportunity for his family, for myself. I was born 1972. Next week, I'll turn 50. And I know my—I always mention this story of my sister who was born in 1970, and her birth certificate still

says St. Boniface, Manitoba, because at the time, St. Boniface was not part of Winnipeg, at the time.

Like I said, very proud that this bill will be coming to fruition and be an official bill to recognize the Filipino community in Manitoba that I'm very, very proud of—very proud of.

I recently attended the forum for the Manitoba Filipino teachers' association this past Saturday with colleagues from Tyndall Park, Notre Dame and the member from Transcona. One thing I did mention was that one of the teachers there, who I call tita—auntie in Filipina—told me a few years ago, the way a community has influence is through three things: education, business and politics.

When it comes to education, we know that there are many Filipinos in the education field, many teachers, many who are now vice-principals and principals. But as the member from St. Johns has said, we need more elected officials from certain communities, and in this case, school trustees and people in this House and people in the House of Commons, which I'm very proud to add to the fact that, you know, the first Filipino Member of Parliament came from the province of Manitoba, Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, who to me is a great mentor for me. I look up to him.

\* (10:50)

The other one was business she had mentioned. Tita Gemma mentioned business, and as the founder and president of the Manitoba Filipino Business Council, you know, I came here—I mean, I was born in Winnipeg and I know my parents were labourers. I, after high school, I actually joined the military first; I served for 10 years, and after serving my country, I decided to go back into university and take my business degree at Royal Roads University. Moving back to Manitoba in 2001 because, you know, my wife—both of us, our parents were here, my daughter who's now going to be 21 years old. We wanted to come back here because of family, because Manitoba, as I've said time and time again, is the home of hope and it's achieved a lot of positive results for my family and I.

And one thing that I can say is I'm very proud that, you know, many—our community has a lot of—our Filipino community has influenced the greater Manitoba community in a sense where many businesses from the Philippines have actually built a foundation here. We have these big brands such as Jollibee, Seafood City, and not only servicing

our Filipino community but our non-Filipino communities.

I mean, you go across this province, like I did last week when I went to the Parkland region, Neepawa and Brandon, you know, you see the large influx of Filipino immigrants in these communities. The Catholic churches do not survive if there is a huge influx of immigrants going to Neepawa. I met many of them at the HyLife plant where they gainfully employ many people because of our successful Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, a program that the PC government created back in 1998 that has welcomed many, many Filipinos.

When it comes to politics, you know, we've heard it already before. The first MLA in Canada was from Manitoba, the late Dr. Conrad Santos who used to be the MLA for Burrows. I mentioned the first Filipino Member of Parliament, Dr. Rey Pagtakhan. It's good to see that we have Filipino representation in the House of Commons now. The—well—the MP from Ontario. She is serving her community well, and I'm very proud that we have representation from a federal standpoint.

But many had questioned why should we have a provincial bill because there's already a federal bill. Well, I'll tell you why, because what I've just said and what some of my members have said: there has been some great accomplishments by our Filipino community in—in politics. As a member, my good friend from Burrows, has said, we—the former member for Logan, Ms. Flor Marcelino, was the former leader—former interim leader for the official opposition and an MLA for many years.

So as a Canadian, we are very proud of that, regardless of your political stripe. I was very proud prior to going into politics that we had that representation. So we have been an envy, Manitoba has, compared to the other provinces, because of the representation we've had at the higher levels when it comes to politics. And I am very proud, obviously, being in the roles that I've had as the minister of Economic Development and Jobs and now as the Minister for Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration. We know that immigration is a crucial enabler, especially now with the labour shortage across our province and across the country and globally.

We're going to be—we're going to have to challenge the jurisdictions in terms of getting labour here, and one of the benefits of the Filipino community is a strong labour force from that community in different sectors. So—very, very, very proud of that.

And I know that my good friend in Waverley, Jose Tomas, was very proud to see that the third reading was going to actually happen today, and you know, we've—I know that the—this bill has been talked multiple times, you know; the opposition has talked it out many times, politicizing this bill, but there should be no politicizing of this bill whatsoever because, you know, we actually had a member from their side actually second this bill, and the thing is, you know, it's very good that finally they've come around to recognize the contributions of our Filipino community.

We're very proud of that, very proud that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) has actually, you know, taken over this bill from the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Smith), which I initially patched—passed it on to him. And you know what, we continue to be the home of hope, and very proud, again, as a Filipino Canadian representing this government, that this bill will finally come into fruition—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Reyes:** —and finally, that the NDP has come around in approving this bill.

Thank you, Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, it is a joyful and exciting day that we will recognize the Philippine community in Manitoba and dedicate the month of June as Philippine heritage month.

Over the last six decades, tens of thousands of people have come from the Philippines to Manitoba, and that has made a big difference and a big benefit to our province.

I've had the chance to work and spend time with many people in the Philippine community, including with Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, where we worked together at the Children's Hospital and later in Ottawa as members of Parliament. He and many others have provided extraordinary contributions for our province.

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Philippines and to have an opportunity with Kevin Lamoureux and with the MLA for Tyndall Park to meet many people in the Philippines and to see the interest that they had in Manitoba and Canada and in the potential of coming here to live and to work.

People in the Philippine community have made an extraordinary contribution to health care, to agriculture, to education and to many other areas in Manitoba.

I have participated in many celebrations of Philippine independence. I've attended gatherings—the Philippine business community, Philippine nurses, Philippine communities from different parts of the Philippines—in different parks in Winnipeg and have enjoyed learning about people like Jose Rizal, who made an incredible contribution early on to the independence of the Philippines.

I thank the MLA for Brandon for his initiative. It is an important one, and one that can bring us all together to celebrate together the Philippines, and the Philippine people who have come to Manitoba have made a big difference. In diversity is our strength. In developing relationships, personally and individually, we have built a strength here. We are improving trade. We are improving Manitoba. And we're contributing to a better and more congenial and co-operative planet.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I look forward to this being passed and moving forward.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

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

The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

**An Honourable Member:** I'm just Education.

**Madam Speaker:** Oh. Sorry, the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Acting Government House Leader):** Can we canvass the House and see if it's the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock?

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 15—Calling on the Federal Government to Extend Time Frame for Indian Day School Survivors

**Madam Speaker:** The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Calling on the Federal Government to Extend Time Frame for Indian Day School Survivors, brought forward by the honourable member for Rossmere.

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** I move, seconded by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook),

*WHEREAS approximately 200,000 children attended Day Schools run by the Federal Government; and*

*WHEREAS there were almost 700 Day Schools operating in Canada with 115 Day Schools covered by the settlement operating within Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS the survivors of these Day Schools were subjected to horrific abuse while they were attending these facilities; and*

*WHEREAS many survivors have lost their connection to their traditional languages, beliefs, heritage, and traditions as a result of these Day Schools; and*

*WHEREAS in August 2019 a settlement agreement was reached, although no settlement could ever adequately address the pain, trauma, and suffering caused by these Day Schools; and*

*WHEREAS survivors of these Day Schools currently have until July 13th, 2022 to file their legal documents in order to be part of the settlement; and*

*WHEREAS delays and difficulty accessing legal advice have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which has made many survivors concerned that they will not be able to adequately prepare their documents or have their truth properly told.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to consult and listen to impacted First Nation peoples in order to extend the time survivors and their families have to file a claim to be eligible for the Indian day school settlement.

**Motion presented.**

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Micklefield:** It is an honour to rise to bring this resolution forward this morning, calling on the federal

government to extend the deadline to apply for the federal Indian day school class action lawsuit brought forward by the late Garry McLean, himself a day school survivor, but one man who represented—and in one sense, still does—an estimated 200,000 Indigenous people who attended Indian day schools.

I just want to take a moment at the start of this time to honour the memory of Garry. I met him several times. I was always impressed by his demeanour, his cheerfulness, his advocacy. He was a classy man, and I have nothing but respect for him. I didn't know that he was involved—I didn't make the connection until afterwards that he was the person behind the initiative this morning, but I remember him fondly, as do many on all sides of this Chamber. So, I certainly want to honour him today.

I also want to honour his relatives, some who are with us today in the gallery, as well as the grandmothers who are here. And I want to note, for the record, they refer to themselves not as survivors but as thrivers.

That is the attitude of some who have gone through the horrendous experiences that we are talking about this morning, and I think that is an inspiring example for all of us, that they would call themselves thrivers and not embrace the label of survivors; though, that's not to condemn those who might, and I'll talk about that in just a few moments.

*Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

I want to honour them, I want to honour my friends Robert and Bev McLean, also Peter and Sheila Yellowquill—Sheila's unable to join us this morning. I'm grateful for those people who I've spoken with. Some of them are true friends, and we've eaten together, we've spoken together and we talk from time to time as well.

So, we're here discussing, really, inadequate remedies for things that should never have happened. I'm sorry that we even have to talk about these things, and that should serve as a cautionary tale for us, Mr. Deputy—Assistant Deputy Speaker. Because future generations will look on what we have done and they will inherit our actions. That should give us pause as we reflect on the things that we do that will impact those who go after us.

I want to advance, Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, the interests of reconciliation. I want to make right what others have done wrong, I want to do what I can. It's a massive topic, it's a topic that's being talked about all around this country, and it's easy to be

overwhelmed. And my response to those feelings of being overwhelmed is this: we can all do something. And, I guess, this morning, this is my something, and I hope that we can all agree to move this forward together.

So, let me get into some background for what it is we're talking about. This wasn't my idea; the substance of this resolution comes from Indigenous groups who are asking for an extension. There are several reasons for the request for an extension to apply to qualify for this lawsuit, this settlement.

The most obvious reason is COVID. COVID has delayed many processes and many things, and it has delayed this process as well. It's made it more difficult for people to make appointments. It's made it more difficult for people to come into Winnipeg. And all of us have been affected by that, all of us have experienced that in one way or another—whether it's a dentist appointment or some other appointment—a lot of things have been slowed down because, well, people were sick, people were staying home, there's fewer people answering phones, processing files and so on. So that's one obvious reason.

But there's another reason that this extension is warranted, and it's this second reason that I want to draw attention to. The things we're talking about are not emotionally neutral. I spoke with a friend last night and he told me that he is eligible, and that was a shock to me, because I thought that the residential schools and the Indian day schools were something that mostly affected the generations above me. I'm 44 and I assumed that the people who were influenced by this education system were mostly older people than me. And my friend is slightly older than me, but not very much.

And he said, no, I attended. He attended an Indian day school, and he said that the memories of those experiences were so traumatic for him that the whole application process, where you have to retell some of those things, and you have to go back there in your mind and it opens up those old wounds. There is trauma here for 200,000 people. That's a lot of people. And so that's another reason for the request for an extension.

There are five levels of compensation ranging from \$10,000 to \$200,000, depending on the experiences of those affected. And, obviously, if your level of compensation is a higher level, then there is more paperwork required. Some people are just opting for the lowest level because it's sort of the easiest at an emotional level, and where that is not the right thing,

I hope they can find the strength and the courage to apply for the appropriate level. Money does not solve these things, but it is a statement. It is a step forward.

So, what were Indian day schools? Well, many of us know about residential schools. They were overnight, we might say, boarding schools, where children left their families and went many times to a totally different place, stayed over night. And residential schools have been in the national conversation at some length.

Now, the Indian day schools were places that people went to, and then they would come back to their families at the end of the day. It was the same ideology. There were similar abuses. There were similar wrongs. There were many, many similar things. Sometimes, similar staff and the same staff in these day schools, and this is the nature—this is the focus of this particular request that we discussed this morning.

About a—200,000 people attended these day schools between the 1860s and 1990. There were about 700 of these schools in Canada and 115 of them in Manitoba. The impetus for this resolution comes from the Assembly of First Nations who passed a resolution on this issue in December of last year. The AFN represents over 900,000 in 600 First Nation communities. It's guided and supported by chiefs from each member First Nation, along with other Indigenous representative groups. And in December of last year, the chiefs in Assembly passed resolution regarding the McLean federal Indian day schools settlement, and calling for funding for assistance and an extension until July of 2023. The current deadline is July of this year, so they're requesting a one-year deadline.

Children who attended these schools, as I've mentioned, faced cultural, verbal, physical and sexual abuse. And Indigenous communities were not given any say in the operation and curriculum of the schools. And the accumulative effect of the abuse and assimilation perpetrated by Indian day schools has greatly contributed to intergenerational trauma and to cultural and linguistic erasure.

In 2009, Garry McLean, a survivor himself, began a class action lawsuit to achieve justice and compensation for Indigenous people who were forced to attend these schools. He was successful. And there was a settlement, as I've mentioned, with various levels of compensation and a \$200-million legacy fund to support some commemoration projects.

I hope that we can add our voices to those chiefs, to those Indigenous people who are asking for a one-year extension, that they could have access to the resources that were eroded because of COVID and they can have access to the supports and to each other as they band together to apply for what has been deemed by the courts rightly theirs.

It's not everything; it is something. I hope this House will join me in advocating for this small piece of reconciliation this morning.

\* (11:10)

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### Questions

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. And questions will 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.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Can the member tell us, what is the current process to apply for Indian day school funding settlement?

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** Thank the member for that question.

Yes, there is a website. If you google Indian day school settlement, you will find a website. The process is outlined on that website. The various forms and processes are explained there, and on the surface, it looks fairly straightforward.

Gathering the required documentation is not always as simple. And, certainly, at an emotional level, it's much more complicated than that, especially when we consider what we are—what people are remembering, what they're talking about and what they are reliving as they fill in those documents.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** I thank the member for bringing in the resolution today.

And I'm wondering if member for Rossmere could share with the House and all legislators the importance of this resolution that we're debating at this time?

**Mr. Micklefield:** I thank the member for that question.

I think this is an important resolution because it's something we can do. It's something that's accessible

to us, this morning. It's a step on the journey towards reconciliation. We often say things like, reconciliation is not a photo-op. It's not a one-time thing where we say, there, we've done it. It's a series, it's an attitude. It's a posture towards building relationships and sending messages consistently and over a long time.

I hope we can send that message this morning. That's certainly my heart in this, and I think it reflects the hearts of many in this Chamber as well.

**Mr. Bushie:** Can the member share with the House what kind of collaborative efforts his government has made with the federal government on this matter?

**Mr. Micklefield:** Yes, I want to thank the member for that question.

Certainly, there's ongoing conversations with the federal government on this and numerous other matters. Obviously, the minister—the former minister worked 'collaboratively'—collaboratively with the federal government, discussing this. This has been brought to our attention. It's also been brought to the attention of the federal government, and the minister responsible was only too happy to support this resolution. And if we're successful this morning, that will give us another strong message to send to the federal government.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes, just wondering, has the Manitoba government done anything to compensate Indian day school survivors, or survivors or thrivers, from provincially run residential schools?

**Mr. Micklefield:** I want to thank the member for that question.

It's a very good question, and I'd be certainly open to being corrected, if my information is inaccurate. It is my understanding that, although the Province did run some of the schools, it was a federally funded and a federally—a federal initiative, and so the legal actions have been taken up with the federal government and that is where they are being sorted through. If that is inaccurate, then I certainly would like to know more about that.

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Can the member explain further, why is this settlement referred to as the McLean Indian day school settlement?

**Mr. Micklefield:** I thank the member for that question.

It's referred to as the McLean day school—Indian day school settlement because it's named after Garry

McLean. Garry was a gentleman many of us knew. He was a day school survivor from Lake Manitoba First Nation. The McLean Day Schools Settlement Corporation is named after him, and the fund will use \$200 million from the settlement to help the descendants of those who attended and those who attended Indian day schools across Canada.

Garry was the original plaintiff who filed the class action lawsuit on behalf of over 200,000 survivors, and again, I do want to say it is very unfortunate that he cannot be with us here today—

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Bushie:** While the resolution calls for the extension of the deadline—of the timeline—is fast approaching, what other concerns has the member heard in regards to the application process from Indigenous people?

**Mr. Micklefield:** Thank the member for that good question.

I've heard a variety of concerns. As I've mentioned in my speech, certainly COVID was obviously a concern, but there are many concerns that are multiplied by that as well. This is not an emotionally straightforward process for many people who were affected. Some of the documents are not always straightforward to access. Someone described this to me as like writing a university essay in order to qualify for this compensation. And that's not a straightforward thing. This concern is shared by the Indigenous groups, which I mentioned, and so I do so to echo the concerns that they have raised and brought forward themselves.

**Mr. Lagassé:** Can the member talk a little bit more about why he brought forward this resolution?

**Mr. Micklefield:** Thank you to the honourable member from Dawson Trail.

I'm bringing this forward because I want to do something that is a step on the path to reconciliation. I don't just want to pay lip service to it. I want to do something. And this is a something that I can do. This is a something that we can do. It's not going to solve all the problems or answer all the questions, but it is a statement we can make this morning that is in solidarity and that echoes concerns and statements that have been made by Indigenous groups across country, and also by those here in our own province.

**Mr. Bushie:** As I'm sure the member's aware—hopefully he's aware that there's been a lot of challenges along the application process, and one of them is the fact the survivors being able to quote, unquote provide proper identification. So some of that is about almost proving who you are.

So there is a significant backlog in vital stats here, in Manitoba, so I'm just wondering, if I can ask the member, what is his government doing to help alleviate that backlog to ensure this identification process is expedited?

**Mr. Micklefield:** Now that's a great question because in an unrelated matter, I've been dealing with some of these vital stats challenges, and I have seen firsthand that the backlog created—that accumulated during COVID has been speeding up and I'm dealing with other vital stats things, as many in this Chamber probably are. And it is my understanding that those wait times are shrinking and moving along nicely, and so, I trust that problem, if it's not solved, is well on its way to being solved.

Obviously, COVID has created headaches on a number of fronts, and that office was one of them that was affected. I believe that that has been addressed, and if it's not completely resolved—

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The member's time is expired.

**Mr. Lagassé:** Can the member talk a little bit more about when these schools were operated in Canada?

**Mr. Micklefield:** Thank you, honourable member from Dawson Trail. These schools operated starting around 1820 and I was surprised to learn that they actually continued to operate until 1990. That is when I was at school. People my age attended these schools; people younger than me attended these schools. This is not something that we have to reach back only generations ago, but people—many people alive today attended these places. This happened in my lifetime; this happened in our lifetimes, so—they happened across the country, I think over 700 and about 110 if I'm looking at my notes—

\* (11:20)

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Bushie:** Further to my question about vital statistics, I was wondering if the member can commit—or, on behalf of this government, commit to an expedited process in terms of Vital Stats for the survivors of Indian day schools to ensure that, if this

timeline is not extended, that they do have their proper identification and their Vital Stats issues resolved quickly?

**Mr. Micklefield:** I thank the member for that question.

Obviously, I'm not going to speak for the minister, but I think in a spirit of good faith and spirit of reconciliation, certainly those kinds of conversations would not be dismissed out of hand; they would not be pushed off the table by any means.

So, look, my heart would be that we could sit down and have common sense conversations together, figure out how we can do things that contribute to reconciliation and move forward together. So, I—I'm not in a position to commit on the path of the government, but I'm certainly open to talking with the member and taking concerns forward to the minister, who I know is interested on—in these matters.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Time for questions has expired.

### Debate

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Debate is now open.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I would like to thank the member for bringing this resolution forward.

And before I begin my comments, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Garry McLean and his family that are here—that are able to join us here today. His family being able to join us here today is a true testament to just his true will and his true want to survive.

I personally knew Garry; we crossed many boardrooms, many ceremonies, many different instances in—not only in Winnipeg, but in the communities, including my own community, in Hollow Water, where he was able to attend, he was around a number of different functions in First Nations territory, in First Nations ceremonies. He was very passionate, and he was a very passionate advocate for his people. He had a very infectious smile. He was very proud of his smile, his language and his culture; everything that the day school and the residential school system meant to eliminate. So he was very proud of who he was, and he drove that and mentioned that every single opportunity he could.

For myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, language wasn't something that was spoken well in my own home, so having a person like Garry show the importance and talk about the importance of what that meant to his



family, what that meant to his community, was a great inspiration, and it's a great inspiration to us all. And I stand here and I say, thank you, miigwech, to his family for sharing Garry with us for all that time. And if he was able to join us here today, he would be very passionate, again, about everything that he stood for.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is imperative that we also carry forth and carry forward that work that Garry stood for, that work that Garry had spent and committed his whole life to, and those sacrifices he made to his people, to his culture, to his community, to his family. So, when we bring forth this resolution, it really takes more than just one person, it takes more than just one community; it takes society in general.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also a little disheartening that this resolution is meant to call on somebody else to do something. Manitoba also has a responsibility; Manitoba also has this responsibility to Indigenous people, not only in Manitoba, but across Canada to do their part, not just to simply point the finger and say, Canada, you're dragging your feet; Canada, you could do more. As Manitoba and as the Manitoba government, we could also do more.

In one of my questions earlier, I just simply asked a question about Vital Statistics, because I believe that is very important. A lot of survivors do not have that identification, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a number, it's a description given to them by government; that's something that, as Indigenous people, we're not always accustomed to. So now you have to go out and prove who you are—not only do you have to prove, through this process, prove the abuses that you suffered, prove the sacrifices that you had to make, but now you had to actually prove who you are. So the government of Manitoba can assist in that way, by addressing that backlog.

Hopefully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there ends up being no deadline for this application process, and there shouldn't be a deadline to this application process. But, by the standard that's there today, if this deadline still exists and this deadline is something that's concrete, that's very unfortunate, for one, but at the same time, Manitoba should be doing everything they can to, in fact, help survivors do this process and complete this process in a timely way.

It's—and it's very difficult, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not simple, where a survivor can come in, and oh, come to my office, let's have an appointment and let's fill out this application—that's something that's done over a one-hour meeting or a half-hour meeting. This is a life-lived experience, and you're now being asked

to even hear that experience. You want more money? You tell us this. You want more money? You tell us that. That's retraumatizing the victims, retraumatizing Indigenous people, having to relive that experience that Indigenous people will—do not want to forget, do not want to put that behind, they do not want to sweep that under the rug. Because that's something that's carried forth: the attempted assimilation and extermination of a culture and of people. That's something that needs time.

So this process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a process not designed by Indigenous people, it's not designed by community people. And that's where that needs to go, so this government can also assist in that way.

When I spoke a couple weeks ago in a motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke of my uncle—my Uncle Alec—who was a survivor, and to this day, even though he had passed on for a couple years, his family is still going through that trauma, his family is still going through this application process. And the comments that I hear consistently and the comments that I hear regularly from community members, my own family members, is that government is waiting for me to die. Government is waiting so there is nobody left to raise this issue, so there is nobody left to speak on my behalf, so there is nobody left to raise this issue so—to truly deal with the intergenerational impacts that come about. And that's unfortunate, because this is part of Canada, this is part of Manitoba and this cannot be forgotten.

So there can't be deadlines in place, there can't be obstacles and barriers put in place to make it more difficult. This needs to be made easier, and the government of Manitoba can make that easier. There is numerous steps, but they have to have that will—they have to have that will and that desire to do what's right, to 'dro' something in the true spirit of reconciliation for Indigenous people here in Manitoba.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I—when I spoke a couple weeks ago—used—a lot of the phrases that are out there is stories: we need survivors to tell their stories. They're not stories; they're lived experiences. And it's not something being made up, it's not something that somebody's just saying for the sake of saying it; it's a lived experience that survivors have gone through, that their families have gone through and now their children and their grandchildren are going through. And we need to give that voice a bigger place in society, a bigger place in Manitoba, a bigger place in Canada.

\* (11:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my own dad is also a survivor in this way, and he went through this application process. And my sister, who's three years younger than me, she helped him with this process, and it was very difficult. And I know, he knows, she knows that he only told her a portion of what he went through because he wanted to protect her from that experience. He wanted to protect her from having to live and having to carry that.

And it was very difficult to get him to share some of that information—and I know, I know for a fact he didn't share it all. But it's something that we need to discuss, we need to talk about. And the inter-generational impacts are felt in our family every day.

And I know he wouldn't disagree with sharing his story. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when my dad—and he's 83 and he's still—and I'm honoured to still have him with me today—when he went to school, there was an electric fence around the school. There was an electric fence around the teacher's home.

We didn't even have power in the community, but that was there to protect that school, to protect that teacher, but not there for the community. He was responsible to cut the teacher's hair, he was responsible to cook their food and was disciplined if he got it wrong, disciplined if the hair was cut wrong, disciplined if the food didn't taste right. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was 10 years old.

So this process, we need to do more, we need to do more than just our part, we need to do more than just the bare minimum, and I call on this government to do more and just ask for the extension of the deadline. We need to advocate a lot more than just a one-hour resolution.

Miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** It is indeed my honour to rise and put a few brief words in support of my colleague's resolution.

I also wanted to say through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), thank you very much for rising today, for sharing your story, the story of your family. It is through that interaction that we identify each other not as political adversaries, but indeed, as human beings who are all on this journey together.

And I agree with much of what the member for Keewatinook said. The member noted that the process for application needs to be either—needs to be made

easier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that's something that we can all agree.

As elected officials, we've all helped constituents go through government forms, whether as helping them go through or maybe in a previous life, before we were elected, going through government forms. They can be difficult at the best of times, so we can well imagine the situation that we have, where, in literally less than eight weeks, a significant number of Indigenous peoples here in Canada and in Manitoba face a deadline of which, if they fail to meet this deadline, they will no longer have access to the funding that is rightly theirs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's incumbent—and I do appreciate my colleague's comments noting that this is not his goal this morning, with this resolution, is not to suggest that in any way we have fulfilled our commitment to reconciliation. I don't believe that is a commitment that will ever be fulfilled. It is indeed something that will be with us for a long time, and it should be with us for a long time.

Again, the member for Keewatinook talked about language, and the lack of language in his own home, which I think is a bedrock of any thriving culture, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's interesting how a number of colleagues here this morning have made reference to Garry McLean, and it's kind of amusing in a sense that, you know, Garry really touched a lot of people's lives here in this Chamber.

We saw him out and about at events and at a—community events, and he was always a very cheerful individual who was willing to share a smile and share a story. But, more importantly, Garry had the courage to lead this request for Indian day school compensation. And I think it is an honour to the guests in the House, the survivors—or sorry, the terminology—the thrivers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is indeed referenced and that Garry and his name and legacy continues to be referenced.

We need to show, in that spirit of solidarity of this Chamber, a united voice with this resolution, and it is not just the member opposite's resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what we should all be doing in this House, bringing the voice of Manitobans, of Canadians, forward to this Chamber.

So, I mean, we just referenced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that just in—sorry, in December of 2021, the Special Chiefs Assembly, the SCA passed a resolution calling for an extension to the deadline for the day

school survivors to July 2023. And again, it is not my role and it's not my place to suggest what an appropriate extension would be, so I will defer to the judgment of the Special Chiefs Assembly, who are making that ask of the federal government and, by extension, this Chamber. Hopefully, before we rise today at noon, we'll also add our voice to that.

I think also the timeliness of the member's resolution is quite good. We recently had First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders travelling to Rome to meet with the Pope, who personally apologized for the residential schools, of which the day school survivors are a component of our legacy and our horrible legacy of treatment of First Nations in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we know, and I know, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) actually got up the other day on a matter of privilege about the Pope's lack of visit here to our own province of Manitoba. I believe it's Edmonton, Nunavut and Quebec, if memory serves me correct.

But that is not—but, although the Pope may not be visiting us at this time, and visiting Indigenous leadership here in Manitoba at this time, we shouldn't give up, obviously, on the idea of reconciliation. Obviously, the Pope's visit would be a huge step in terms of reconciliation, but that's not to diminish the smaller steps that we can collectively do moving forward.

The member for Keewatinook also made mention, and it was about Vital Statistics, the lack of identification for some of these individuals, and I saw that first-hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I recently travelled to the Ukraine, and there at the border, the lineup of individuals on the Ukrainian side travelling into Poland was—I mean, it had to be at least eight-plus hours in line, and what—in large part, the delay in coming through and actually ultimately having the safety, the sanctuary of safety in Poland for these Ukrainian women and children was that lack of ID.

In many instances, these individuals had no intentions of travelling outside their own country of Ukraine, and suddenly they find themselves in a situation thrust where they're have to enter another country, and they have no ID, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I was able to see that first-hand, to speak to the refugees in Ukraine about this situation.

And, fortunately, the Polish government has been doing a tremendous amount of work to help facilitate the movement of Ukrainian refugees into their

country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it does echo what the member was suggesting, that the identification, the need for identification is simply a requirement of governments all day, of today. The goal, obviously, is not for individuals to relive the trauma. I hear the member's own story about his father and I bless him that his father, I believe, 83 years of age, is still with us.

I remember my own grandfather and—who served with the Canadian military in North Africa and in Italy before being wounded, and getting him—or trying to get him to share his stories and his perspective of the war was obviously very difficult, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of that trauma, and it is just another level of trauma, trauma not unlike what the day school and what the residential school survivors have experienced.

\* (11:40)

So, I do believe, you know, in the spirit of what we've seen this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen a unanimous passage of the two bills this morning. I do believe that in the spirit of reconciliation that, as noted by my colleague, that this is not intended to be the be-all and end-all, this is simply a recognition that Indigenous peoples, that the Indian day school survivors are asking for this. They're asking the federal government of whom is the ultimate authority, in this particular resolution, to provide that extension. But again, it is not, myself, as the member from McPhillips asking it, but it's through me that the, you know, the Special Chiefs Assembly is making this request of us, as legislators.

So with those brief comments, I encourage members to support the day school—Indian day school survivors or thrivers that we send that message, that united message to the federal government that an extension is warranted and is necessary. And I look forward to that passage of—unanimous passage of this resolution this morning.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the thrivers that have joined us today to share their story and their support. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I really appreciate the opportunity to speak on this resolution calling on the federal government to extend the time survivors and their families have to file a claim to be eligible for the Indian day schools settlement. Manitoba NDP caucus recognizes that the legacy of colonizer day schools in Canada and in this province has had a lasting impact on survivors and their descendants.

The history of day schools in part—is part of this legacy of ignorance, disenfranchisement, abuse, racism, assimilation and genocide, which has systematically stolen languages, cultures, traditions and faiths from Indigenous people.

Canada's long history of abuse and neglect occurred in these institutions in what was ultimately a policy of forced assimilation and cultural genocide of Canada's Indigenous people. The pandemic has played a role in delays for survivors to get what they need to apply for the settlement, and many survivors have difficulty accessing legal advice and, thus, not having documents prepared for submission, to have their truths properly told.

However, another source of delay are the long wait-list for personal identification documents through Vital Statistics, as my colleague has indicated today. In my constituency office, we've been helping people address barriers for other situations, such as applying for the '60s scoop application. We've had a number of constituents, and some of those barriers include things like a lack of access to a computer and, certainly, access to ID, which Vital Statistics needs to step up and clear their wait-list.

We've long raised the issue of long wait-lists for Manitobans to get the documents they need, and the PC government needs to be doing much more to reduce the delay. Many survivors face long delays just to get the documents they need as part of the application. And I agree with the remarks made by my colleague that we would really love to see Vital Statistics expedite this process for folks applying for the funds for the day school program.

We must truly and fully adopt survivor-centred approaches and any and all forms of redress aimed at correcting past wrongs, and we want to honour the survivors of residential and day schools and recognize the intergenerational trauma still felt by their descendants today.

As stated, approximately 200,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend federally operated day schools—Indian day schools in every province and territory from the mid-1800s until 2000—as part of a really intentional, deeply racist assimilation plan. As an often overlooked part of Indigenous history and Canadian history, Indian day schools resulted in the severing of cultural connections, including Indigenous languages, cultural practices and ways of being, for hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children and family.

Day schools, like residential schools, were places where students experienced physical, verbal and sexual abuse. In these institutions of assimilation, they were forbidden to wear traditional clothing or participate in ceremony. The vast majority of children were not allowed to speak their own languages at school, and abuse was common. Children were beaten or locked in small spaces by teachers or staff for misbehaving and numerous students reported being sexually abused.

A large percentage did not receive enough food to eat. Students at some residential schools in the '40s and '50s were subjected to nutritional experiments without their consent or the consent of their parents. These unethical studies were approved by various federal government departments and conducted by leading nutrition experts. They included restricting some students access to essential nutrients and dental care in order to assess the effects of improvements made to the diet of other students.

Poor living conditions and malnutrition meant many became sick with preventable diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza, and thousands of children died from malnutrition, abuse, disease or neglect in these schools, in both day schools and residential schools.

Day schools were the government's first attempt at assimilating Indigenous children into colonial society, but not the last. And as reported by the TRC in 2016, officials expanded day schools into a boarding school system to reach more children.

I also want to acknowledge the family of Garry McLean, who are present in the gallery. Garry McLean died before the class action settlement was finalized, but we have honoured him here today.

After July 13th, 2022, survivors of Indian day schools will no longer be allowed to resubmit or modify the level of compensation they're seeking under the legal settlement for harm suffered while attending the federally operated schools.

The national class action is the first of its kind and seeks compensation for the damages and abuse suffered by all day school students who were forced to attend and were excluded from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. First Nation chiefs have initiated the demand for this extension for Indian day school settlement applications so survivors can get support during the process, which has become even more difficult during the pandemic.

The revealing of the graves of thousands of Indigenous children on the grounds of the former residential schools, beginning with the 215 children of the Kamloops residential school, has had a profound impact on most people living in this country. Prior to the revelation at the Kamloops residential school, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation had previously stated that Indigenous children had died at residential schools. In fact, we shouldn't have been nearly surprised—as surprised as most people were in this country because the stories had already been told.

Ground-penetrating radar showed all Canadians of the deaths that purposely went unrecorded and validates the claims that Indigenous people have been making, the stories they have been telling, for decades. The ongoing finding of these graves serves as a stark and painful reminder of the history of this country and the ways in which violent colonial policies have impacted Indigenous people.

Entire generations of people were extinguished through residential schools. Thousands of children who died in this abusive system never got to grow up, fall in love, form partnerships, have children of their own. The revelation of unmarked graves was a seminal moment in our collective history which demands that more needs to be done from all levels of government in Canada.

Our NDP caucus feels strongly that Manitoba must follow all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly here in Manitoba where Indigenous people make up the highest percentage of the provincial population in Canada. We must sincerely approach the important work of understanding the intergenerational and systemic impacts of residential schools.

Sadly, this PC government talked out Bill 200, my colleague's Orange Shirt Day statutory holiday act, which recognized Orange Shirt Day, September 30th, as a provincial statutory holiday for the purposes of the Employment Standards Code and The Interpretation Act.

This act aimed to honour the survivors of residential schools and recognized the intergenerational trauma still felt by their descendants today. It aims to educate Manitobans on the long history of abuse and neglect that occurred in these institutions and what was ultimately a policy of forced assimilation and cultural genocide of Canada's Indigenous people.

Although we're not able to change the injustices of the past, we must all work together, in this House

and in this province, to heal our relations with Indigenous people. And part of this includes combatting ignorance and racism through education and fostering tolerance through respectful dialogue in hopes that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

\* (11:50)

We know that the Auditor General released a report last month talking about the Province's failure to develop a strategy for reconciliation efforts, despite being required to do so. So, at the very least, this government has to move forward and address those gaps, those very important issues. The Auditor General surveyed Indigenous leadership, and 94 per cent said the Province had not been respectful in their interaction with Indigenous people. This must change.

When Premier Heather Stefanson was sworn in last November, she said one of her top priorities would be to repair the Province's relationship with Indigenous people and communities. So, the NDP calls on the government to carry forward with that commitment instead of continuing to move backwards. Manitobans want to reconcile and build relationships with Indigenous people that are just inequitable.

I will support this resolution, as the colleagues on this side of the House will, because it is a small first step towards healing the harms of the past. But in order for this resolution to have meaning, the government must also address the backlog in Vital Statistics.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** This really is about Garry McLean's legacy. He was a giant in so many ways, both physically—he had a huge heart. I knew him, so it's always a delight, and it's an opportunity for my express—me to, on behalf of the Manitoba Liberal MLAs, to express my condolences to you, because I can only imagine what a hole his loss has left in your lives.

We have been in touch with the federal government and the minister to see whether this can happen. There are challenges, because the council, apparently, who have—the independent council is the individual who's set this deadline, but we will work to urge the government to make that change.

And to just build on the—some of the comments of the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), I think it is important that we recognize that it is not just for the

federal government but it is for the Manitoba government as well to address these issues, in part because, you know, federally funded—the residential schools and day schools were funded by the federal government, but they were run not just by churches, but also by the provincial government, and that has not been—that has never really been acknowledged or addressed.

But it's essential, because we're looking—talking about the legacy both of residential schools, the '60s scoop, day schools and CFS over the last many decades. These are all causes of intergenerational trauma and pain, and making it right is all part of what we need to do in terms of reconciliation.

So, we will be supporting this resolution. We hope this will pass, and we hope that we will succeed in ensuring that Garry's legacy is continued and respected and that day school survivors and thrivers have the opportunity to get the compensation they deserve.

Thank you so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? *[Agreed]*

I declare the resolution carried.

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask leave to see if this could be recorded as unanimous.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is there leave of this House to recognize this vote as unanimous? *[Agreed]*

The honourable member for Rossmere.

**Mr. Micklefield:** *[interjection]* Oh, okay. Yes, he can ask. That's fine.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Government House Leader):** Is there will of the House to see the clock as 12—call it 12 o'clock?

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

This hour being 12 o'clock, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022**

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