

**Third 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>
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	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	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	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	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 27, 2021

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Doyle Pivniuk):** 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 in which is in accordance with Thy will, that we seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated. Good morning, everyone.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Will you call for first reading—second reading debate this morning, Bill 232, The Emancipation Day Act.

#### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 232—The Emancipation Day Act

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We are now on to private members' business, on to Bill 232, the 'emancipation' day act, in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) that Bill 232, The Emancipation Day Act; Loi sur le Jour de l'émancipation, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Moses:** Emancipation Day is about freedom. It celebrates the abolition of slavery. The freedom that you and I take for granted every day was a dream of the enslaved Black people of Canada. We know that these types of battles for freedoms, for social justice, for equality—they take time. They take determination. They take perseverance.

Let me explain a little bit about that journey for those abolitionists. Those who fought for freedom had their—one of their first victories right here in Upper Canada. Upper Canada was the first British colony to have an anti-slavery legislation.

It was John Simcoe, lieutenant-governor at the time, that passed an act against slavery in 1793. And we know with these sort of things, they don't happen right away and, unfortunately, this legislation didn't actually free a single slave.

So the abolitionists persisted, and in 19—sorry, in 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in the British Empire and this meant that slavery would be abolished. Of course, with some exceptions, this slavery abolish act happened and took effect on August 1st, 1834, the day that we celebrate as Emancipation Day. However, it's not as cut and dry as it seems.

This act that took place in 1834 only freed slaves that were below the age of six. People over six were re-designated as apprentices and they were required to work 40 hours per week without pay as compensation to their former owners.

Those fighting for freedom carried on until full emancipation was finally achieved on August 1st, 1838. And finally the dreams of those former enslaved Black people in Canada became a reality.

Now, Black people in Canada have a long history, specifically right here in Manitoba—longer than many might think. That history of Black people doesn't happen without Emancipation Day. Those stories don't exist if we're not all free. We know that there were Black people working right here in Manitoba during the fur trade.

Pierre Bonga and his sons, Stephen and George, are examples. They were fur traders in the 1800s. They, as free people, worked and built the foundation of our communities—the communities we enjoy today. Pierre's wife, in fact, was Ojibway and their son, Stephen, learned to speak Anishinabe. He often acted as a translator.

Black people have been on the prairies for over a hundred years—for hundreds of years, and we know that as early—back in the early 1900s, there were Manitobans—there were people moving to

Manitoba from the States. I'll mention specifically, William S.A. Beal, a.k.a. Billy Beal, was one of the first people to move to the Swan River region and he moved there in 1906 from Minneapolis.

He worked as a steam engineer at a saw mill, but he's known for his involvement and in the formation of the big woolly school district in 1912. That school district was, in part, founded by a Black Manitoban, and he served on that board for 37 years.

Black people have played key roles in our labour movement. John Arthur Robinson, who moved to Winnipeg in 1909, worked as a sleeping car porter. As Black people were excluded at that time from the railway union, Mr. Robinson started his own union, the Order of the Sleeping Car Porters, in 1917. And, of course, they played a key role during the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919.

Another story is Bailey-Edward Bailey, who moved to Winnipeg in 1942 and worked as a porter, and he tells stories of discrimination that he experienced as a porter: being fed scraps, sleeping on the railway line as-in below-freezing temperature, but he shares his story knowing that, at the end of his 40-year career working on the railway, he worked up to being a service manager, a position that he wasn't even allowed to have at the start of his career.

These are just a few stories of Black people, to give you a sense of the impact that they've had in our province and none of that would have happened without Emancipation Day. Even my story as a Black man, a youngest son of four children, to two immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago, who moved to Winnipeg to become one of the first three Black MLAs in Manitoba history. My story doesn't happen without Emancipation Day.

And so I want to share these stories with you as evidence to show that Emancipation Day has modern relevance, and recognizing it is important to today's society. My work in consulting with this bill, I'm having this idea about Emancipation Day in Manitoba.

\*(10:10)

I spoke with many community members and they were very supportive of this idea, including members from Black History Manitoba, members from the Congress of Black Women of Manitoba and African Communities in Manitoba, ACOMI. They all supported Emancipation Day.

I also spoke with a key advocate for Emancipation Day, Rosemary Sadlier. Rosemary, who is a member of the Order of Ontario, began her work advocating for Emancipation Day in 1995. Her advocacy work on this issue came to fruition in Ontario in 2008, when her-when they passed legislation, bill 111, celebrating Emancipation Day.

Then, after over another decade of Rosemary's work, a motion was passed this year by the federal government to recognize August 1st as Emancipation Day in Canada. And so I thank Rosemary Sadlier and-for her work and dedication to make this a reality in our country.

Now, Emancipation Day is about learning Canada's collective history: not rewriting history, but telling a more complete history that includes the history of slavery and the history of freedom. Recognizing Emancipation Day is a step forward in recognizing Black and African history as part of Canada's story and teaching the next generation about the forgotten parts, perhaps the shameful parts of our past that we must learn not to repeat.

Emancipation is not just about honouring the past, but it's clear that it continues to affect the lives of African and Black Canadians today. And Emancipation Day is a day to celebrate freedom, but freedom is not equality. Emancipation Day could mark, I would say, the beginning of our journey to achieve equality in Canada. We know that there is so much more to do.

It's time for us to recognize the role that Black enslaved people played in the building of Manitoba, as well as their descendants, who continue to make great contributions to our community and make our communities better. These contributions of Black immigrants, from those who have recently arrived to those who have called Manitoba home for generations, show the strength and the resilience of Black community that make Manitoba what it is today.

Celebrating Emancipation Day is an important part of learning our history and educating all Manitobans so that we can reflect on our current actions, on our current moment and build a more better and more inclusive future.

We look at the actions of the past year: the Black Lives Matter rallies and the movement towards a more equal society. That movement is based and built on the fact that we are all free, and that doesn't happen without Emancipation Day. That is why it is so critical

and important that we recognize the freedom for all in Emancipation Day.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Emancipation Day is about celebrating freedom. Emancipation Day is about learning and understanding the history of slavery in Canada, reflecting on the present-day struggle for equality and preparing for a better future for all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions by follow a rotation between parties; and each independent member may ask one question; and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley):** I thank the member for bringing this important bill forward and thank you for educating us because we're always learning from each other. I genuinely say that.

The federal government recently designated August 1st as Emancipation Day. For the record, could you explain to Manitobans why this legislation is impactful at this time? And again, thank you for bringing the bill forward.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I thank the member for Waverley for the question.

It's really important and I glad that he mentioned that it was—the motion was passed in Ottawa. It was passed unanimously in Ottawa and I think that speaks volumes about the impact that Emancipation Day has across our country.

It's recognizing the abolition of slavery, the freedom of people in our country, and that is a lesson that we need to often relearn. It's not a story that's told in our schools frequently, and we need to understand that there are continued lessons about the impacts of slavery and how we can move our society to a more equal place. And I think that's rooted in discussing Emancipation Day.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I really want to thank my colleague for—the member for St. Vital for bringing forward this really important bill.

I'd like to ask the member if he could share a bit more with us about what it would mean to him personally for this bill to be passed.

**Mr. Moses:** I thank my colleague from Wolseley for the question.

It is so impactful. I shared about my story as the son of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago to come to this country, and knowing that at a time in this country, people who looked like me were enslaved.

I think it's important to recognize the breaking of that barrier, the breaking of that chain of slavery in—so that we could have freedom, so that all people could at least go about their way in this country as free people.

We still have a lot more work to do in terms of building an equal society for all, but that work wouldn't even begin if we didn't have Emancipation Day and the abolition of slavery.

Thank you very much for the question.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, thank—I thank the member for St. Vital for bringing this forward. I think this is well done.

I expect you've given some thought as to what sort of activities might be planned for August the 1st each year to celebrate Emancipation Day and remember it?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for River Heights for that question.

You know, it's a great question because I know there are celebrations that happen right across the country. Specifically, I know there are celebrations that happen in Ontario. I hope the river—the member for River Heights is looking forward to a party that we can maybe attend to.

You know, given the current COVID restrictions, we'll obviously want to play it safe with whatever happens this year, but I look forward today—when this passes and we can have a large celebration in regards to Emancipation Day in—every August 1st moving forward.

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too, would like to thank the member for bringing this important bill forward.

My question is: Since there is a federal emancipation act already, why did the member put this forward as a bill and not a resolution?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, thank you very much for the question.

I think it's important for all of us to recognize the importance of freedom of slavery and to talk about the lessons that we can learn from that, and I think that's

best suited in a concrete step that this Legislature can make by ensuring that all Manitobans know the history, learn from the history and don't repeat those mistakes again so we can build a better, more equal society for all people.

That's why I think it's important that we recognize and pass this bill unanimously in the Legislature in Manitoba.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I also wanted to thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing this forward. And he knows, in my family, my wife's grandfather, Columbus Jones, leaving the Jim Crow south to come work on the railroad here in Winnipeg. He was an avid political watcher. He's probably watching us right now. I just wanted to say how proud I'm sure he is of the work that you're doing to bring this forward.

And maybe if the member could just talk about some of the consultation that he's done with some of the communities that represent the Black community here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Moses:** Well, I thank the member for Concordia very much for his comments. I know that this bill will be impactful to many Manitobans, both, you know, whether you're a part of a—you know, you're a part of the Black community yourself or otherwise, I think this is a day that many people can celebrate because they recognize the importance of it.

You know, I did consult with 'mery' many people in our province when it comes to this issue: spoke with members from the Black History of Manitoba, who have been supportive of idea at the federal level; people from ACOMI, the African communities of Manitoba, who, you know, don't necessarily have the history of slavery. Most of the African communities came over as immigrants, free people in Manitoba. They recognize the importance of recognizing—

\* (10:20)

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

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** Yes, I, too, want to thank the member from St. Vital for bringing forward this bill. I know we all have a role to play in addressing racism, while strengthening our collective networks and relationships to advance the benefits of diversity in cohesive working together.

So I would like to ask the member: Can he elaborate on any current existing Emancipation Day celebrations in Manitoba?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, thank you very much for your comments, the member from Dauphin, and I'm glad to see that you too are, you know, working to eliminate racism in its forms that we can see it here in Manitoba. I'm very happy to see that and hear that.

In Manitoba, August 1st, as you know, often falls during Folklorama and so I know there are many cultural communities, as part of their Folklorama pavilion and experience celebrate Emancipation Day during that time. I know that pavilions, as part of the African and Caribbean pavilions celebrate this as part of that.

As well as, I note there are days such as Jamaican Independence Day that comes up at around that time. And so there are many celebrations and I hope that Emancipation Day can amplify those celebrations and add to them.

**Ms. Naylor:** I feel like my colleague has done such a thorough job of answering questions specific to this bill but it also leads me to want to ask him to speak to the meaning of the fact that Black MLAs have been finally elected to this Legislature, and if he could make some further comments on that.

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, thank you so much for that question. And I think I want to address that, you know, by looking back to what I said in my comments earlier about how Emancipation Day on August 1st, 1834 took place but yet didn't free all the slaves and allowed slavery to continue for another four years.

Now, imagine if there were Black people in that legislature making those decisions. Would they have allowed slavery to continue for another four years? No. Right? And so that's what 'representation' in this House, what makes it so impactful, that now we have people who understand these sort of issues, have lived through these sort of issues and can speak to them in a meaningful way. And that's why it's so important that we have this type of representation in the Legislature in Manitoba.

Thanks for the question.

**Mr. Reyes:** I love the enthusiasm from the member from St. Vital, for bringing forward this bill.

You know, me being a person of colour myself, you know, regardless of your political stripe, I was very proud when we had Dr. Conrad Santos, the first Filipino MLA and Dr. Rey Pagtakhan as the first Filipino MP.

So I just want to ask you, who do you genuinely look up to within your community? I'm just curious

because I know there's a lot of people, but I had my mentors and people who I looked up to, but who did the member from St. Vital look up to?

**Mr. Moses:** I'll just speak from a personal level, you know: my parents. My parents. I'm not going to take up political, you know, example as a mentor or who I looked up to but I looked at the example that my parents brought, the work that they put into building a society, building a network of friends and neighbours, building a life for themselves and their children—me—and allowing us all to be successful.

That's what I want to do, not just for my family, but now, for my community in this role, and helping everyone to be successful is one of the key markers that I will judge myself, in this role as MLA, and that's what I look to in terms of my mentorship and who I look to.

Thanks for the question.

**Ms. Naylor:** I guess one final question would be, what will you personally do on August 1st, 2021, especially if we're allowed to gather with others to celebrate?

**Mr. Moses:** I—thank you for the question, and I hope to be having a large celebration and a large party. Certainly, it could be in conjunction, as I mentioned, with Folklorama events and engagements and pavilions there. And I hope that many of my colleagues who I can see virtually on screens and in the Legislature will join me in celebrating these events on August 1st.

Thank you.

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

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The debate is open.

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery):** I would like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing forward this important bill, The Emancipation Day Act. It is important to have these discussions as a way of recognizing our history and understanding, as well, how far we have come as a society.

One of the things I heard the member say is that emancipation is about freedom, and it is. It's about talking about the many freedoms that we have as Black Canadians and Black Manitobans. Some of those freedoms are part of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrined in our constitution. And it's also important for us to talk about and learn, as the member

said, about our history and the history of Black individuals.

It's also a time to remember that no one deserves to be treated as less than because of the colour of their skin, their creed or their ethnicity. It is important that we're willing to listen to the experiences of those from various backgrounds—not just Black communities—and acknowledge the wrongs done in the past.

You know, I talk a lot about Black history. Some individuals have seen that I've even profiled the stamps that are put out every Black History Month by Canada Post, and those stamps commemorate something significant about Black history.

And I want to say that Black history is Canadian history, and it is an essential piece of the Canadian story. As Canadians work to build a better society, a stronger Manitoba, knowing and appreciate Black—appreciating Black history is very important.

The member for St. Vital has talked about his personal story and who he admires in terms of his parents and some of his struggles and challenges growing up in Manitoba. As a Black Manitoban myself, I have my story, and each Black Manitoban has their own story.

My story began in Manitoba when I was five years old. My parents had the choice, actually, of either going to the UK or coming here to Winnipeg, and I'm so happy that they chose Manitoba. And I can remember, even though I was very young and having come from a country of Jamaica, where the majority of the people were Black, very soon feeling different and not really knowing what this difference was. But I was soon led to understand that the difference was because of the colour of my skin.

And so it's very important that we talk about the freedoms around emancipation and the freedoms in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms that allows us freedom of movement and association and the opportunity to run for public office. And I was very proud to become the first Black MLA to be sworn in as a member of this Legislative Assembly, and then just in January to become the first Black Cabinet minister in Manitoba's history.

I'm hopeful that my election, along with the election of the member from St. Vital and the member from Union Station will help to inspire others—other young, Black Manitobans to get involved in politics, as they will see people who look like them in these positions, where their voices can make a difference to

the public-policy decisions made here at the Manitoba Legislative Building.

And I want to talk, as well, not just about the history and about emancipation and slavery, but how far we've come, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government is advancing Manitoba. Addressing issues of inclusion is key to making our province a better and more prosperous place.

So I want to point out that, on June 25th, 2020, Premier Pallister endorsed the first minister's statement on anti-racism. The statement condemns all forms of racism, discrimination, intolerance—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

I just want to remind the member—the minister that—to actually say the person's title or their constituency name, but not the person directly.

**Ms. Gordon:** The statement condemns all forms of racism, discrimination, intolerance and bigotry and commits federal and provincial jurisdictions to work towards enhancing information sharing, particularly desegregated race-based and socio-economic data to facilitate evidence-based decision making.

\* (10:30)

The statement also expresses the need to focus on removing social and economic barriers and providing economic opportunities and leadership roles in communities across Canada.

And I want to talk a little bit about some of the programs that we have in government. For example, the Ministry of Sport, Culture and Heritage takes action to advance anti-racism approaches, including supporting anti-racism activities as a focus of the Ethnocultural Community Support Program and participation in working groups through other levels of government.

The Ethnocultural Community Support Program supports community programs, activities and/or projects that offer educational components in the areas of anti-racism and multiculturalism values, interfaith inclusion and youth-led engagement.

So funds from this particular grant program have supported partners such as the Black History Manitoba Celebration Committee that leads so many initiatives every year to highlight the history and the incredible achievements of our Black community.

And I'm thinking back to just this year's theme of remembering the past, things like emancipation and our freedoms and shaping the future. And it was

beautifully intertwined into the events that the committee planned: so their opening ceremony, their history lesson, the panel discussion featuring Black and Indigenous leaders in the community and the youth debates.

And I want to thank the many volunteers with the Black History Manitoba Celebration Committee—because they do this every year, and it was our 40th anniversary this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker—for their tireless work and contributions to the community.

There's always more work to be done, but what we can say is that every day we're working to be better. That is fundamental to the principles of hope: hope that we can all work together to lift each other up and realize a better tomorrow. We must never forget our history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Emancipation Day is an opportunity to talk about our history.

The member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) has talked about having a celebration. We want to have discussions as well. We want to raise awareness. We want our young people and our children to understand how this great country of Canada was forged, how Black individuals helped to build Canada and Manitoba. So it's important that we continue to celebrate but continue to learn.

I—there is so many Black pioneers. The member for St. Vital has done a good job of highlighting some of the Black pioneers and the work that they have done, and I want to point to some of the individuals here in Manitoba: Norma Walker; Mavis McLaren; Dr. June Marion James, who became the first Black woman admitted to the University of Manitoba's faculty of medicine. So many individuals that have worked hard—the former Wade Kojo Williams, who led our Black History Month celebrations for many years and has now passed away, a strong cornerstone in our community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our diversity is a national asset and provincially, ethnocultural, ethno-faith and multilingual diversity is the driving force of development, not only with respect to innovation and economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional and spiritual life.

Manitoban's culture is underpinned by layers of multiculturalism: days, weeks and months of recognition help to commemorate and affirm our multicultural community. The Black community in



Manitoba now is increasingly diverse and composed of families and individuals with many origins and backgrounds, ranging from early settlers to more recent immigrants.

Emancipation Day is an opportunity, as I said earlier, to celebrate the successes of settlers and immigrants who came before myself—and my family arrived in the early '70s—and to talk about the freedoms and the opportunities we have to engage in Canadian and Manitoba society.

And so I thank again the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing forward this bill, and I certainly look forward to seeing the development of the bill unfold.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member's time is up.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I again want to thank my colleague, the honourable member from St. Vital, for bringing this bill forward and the preparation he has done.

I am so pleased to rise today and speak in support of Bill 232, The Emancipation Day Act, and I certainly hope that Bill 232 will receive the unanimous support of this Assembly. This bill would recognize August 1st every year as Emancipation Day in Manitoba. Bill 232 will help recognize the heritage of Manitobans, people of African descent and the contributions that the Black community have made and continue to make to Manitoba.

Emancipation Day is when the government declared slavery illegal. In many countries, the holiday marks the end of slavery for people who were taken from Africa to places that were part of the British Empire. In the United States, the celebration marks President Abraham Lincoln's announcement of the end of slavery and the end of the Civil War.

The 1793 act limits slavery in Upper Canada—set up the precursor of Ontario as the first of the British Empire's jurisdictions to abolish slavery. The act didn't free all enslaved people, but it did outlaw importing people for slavery and it set up a timeline phasing out of slaveholding. Four decades later, the Slavery Abolition Act of 1834, which the act commemorates, freed the remaining enslaved people in Upper Canada.

Ontario has been the only province to have marked Emancipation Day, but now it's also officially a federal day in Canada after members of Parliament

in the House of Commons voted unanimously to designate it nationwide for August 1st, denoting the day in 1834 that the act came into effect.

Thirteen years ago, Ontario designated August 1st Emancipation Day, and while that may not have been widely known across all of Ontario, it was certainly well known in southern Ontario, near the US border. I grew up on a farm situated about 25-minute drive from 'Amsburg', Ontario, and a 45-minute drive from Windsor, both of which were key entry points for the underground railway—road—brought American slaves seeking freedom into this country.

Both communities have held Emancipation Day ceremonies. Amherstburg did so first, actually, back in the late 1800s. Windsor began hosting annual Emancipation Day celebrations in 1932. And for more than 30 years, it was known as the greatest freedom show on earth.

The population of Windsor would double, as people from as far south as Alabama and Mississippi would flock up to the city for what had grown into a four-day festival, a festival that had music, marching bands, barbecues, a midway and the first-ever beauty pageant featuring Black women.

Some of the people who attended Windsor celebrations over the years included Martin Luther King Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, Benjamin Mays, Fred Shuttleworth [*phonetic*], Adam Clayton Powell and the United States First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Performers included Diana Ross, the Temptations, Stevie Wonder and the Supremes. This was all before my time, in case you're wondering, back in the '30s, the '40s and '50s and early '60s.

But then, in the early '60s, vandals burned down the grandstand, and in 1967, organizers were denied a permit to gather based—blamed on the riots in nearby Detroit, and the festival floundered for a period of years after this.

In 2017, I was in Windsor and attended the opening night of the Emancipation festival on their 85th year since the first festival that I mentioned. Internationally recognized actress and 'playwright'—wright Leslie McCurdy had toured across Canada and the United States for 20 years performing her critically acclaimed play, *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*.

McCurdy produced her first public performance of *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman* in Windsor on August 5th, 1997, and I was in attendance 20 years later on August 1st, 2017, when she performed it

again. It was one of the most profound theatre experiences I have ever had, and although I have studied Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, I still have things to learn that I learned from that theatre piece.

\* (10:40)

It was also my first time attending a play about the history of slavery and freedom from slavery. As one of the very few white attendees, it was humbling to be in that space and share the experience of that story with people whose direct descendants had themselves crossed into Canada via the Underground Railroad.

I wanted to share this story because although I grew up fairly nearby, I wasn't aware of Emancipation Day until Ontario made it annually recognized through legislation. Friends started to talk about it on social media. I saw things in the news and the history of the celebrations started to be told.

Windsor's Emancipation Day festival began to thrive again and that is what led to my attendance four years ago on a visit back home to see my family. And that's a key reason that this bill is so important. We must make sure that Manitobans know the history of this country. Not many Canadians are aware that this day commemorates the actual day that slavery was outlawed in the British Empire in 1834 and that's an awareness we need to encourage.

When the abolition of slavery act came into force, roughly 800,000 people were slaves of African descendants all across British controlled territories, were freed. And as we know, Canadians have their own history of enslaving and segregating Black community members.

When New France was conquered by the British in 1759, records revealed that approximately 3,600 enslaved people had lived in the settlements since its beginning. The vast majority of them were Indigenous but Black enslaved people were also present because of the transatlantic slave trade.

The transatlantic slave trade shaped the presence and role of slavery in Canadian history. Here in Canada, we stripped both Indigenous and Black people of their basic human rights through slavery and exploitation. These human beings were also frequently subjected to violence and sexual violence.

Initiating these conversations about the lived experiences of Black community members in this

country and in this province opens a window for education for current and future generations.

When Canadians talk about slavery, we often point with pride to the role our country played in the mid-1800s as a safe haven for Americans escaping captivity via the Underground Railroad, but this glazes over a significant and shameful part of our own history.

It's important for young Canadians to know that enslaved people often resisted the institution of slavery. They fought back in many different ways: by asserting their humanity in the face of a system that wished to deny it to them; by running away; or by running away and then assisting hundreds of other runaways, as Harriet Tubman did.

On March 25th, 1807, the slave trade was abolished throughout the British Empire, of which British North America was a part, making it finally illegal to buy or sell human beings and ending much of the transatlantic trade. Slavery itself was abolished everywhere in the British Empire in 1834.

Bill 232 will acknowledge this traumatic past and the intergenerational impacts it has had on Black communities here in Manitoba. It will also lead to important conversations and education.

I hope that all members of this House will recognize that here in the same year that we so proudly celebrate the importance of finally welcoming elected Black MLAs into this House, that we need to pass this bill in the Legislature in order to enshrine this aspect of Canadian history into our culture, our Manitoban culture, our Manitoban education system and our Manitoban collective knowledge.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley):** I'd like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for putting this bill forward once again. I know this bill means a great deal for many people in Manitoba, in particular, of those individuals of African descent.

I'd also like to thank my colleague, the honourable member for Southdale, the Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery (Ms. Gordon), who spoke on this bill before me. I think we all learned a thing or two on their experience and how Bill 232 will positively impact them. I'm excited to take some time today and speak on this bill, as well.

We know Manitoba is a great province to live in. It is, after all, friendly Manitoba. We have many different cultures. We are truly a province of

multiculturalism. In fact, in 2018, 15,000—over 15,000 permanent residents chose Manitoba as their immigrant destination. That is an extra 15,000 different people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds that have a positive impact on our province.

Manitoba has many different days, weeks and months of recognition that help to commemorate and affirm our multicultural communities. Most recently, I brought a—forward a bill for the Filipino Heritage Month Act. This bill will, in the future, commemorate the Philippine community here in Manitoba.

We have different recognitions to celebrate—Ukrainians, First Nations, Métis and many other cultures, cultures that we, as Manitobans, are very proud of. Throughout Manitoba's multiculturalism roots, there are inclusions that are intertwined throughout the experiences of African descendants in Manitoba. Countries from these communities are responsible for the development and prosperity of all sectors. Many business owners are people of African descent. As someone who was a small-business owner myself, I know how stressful owning a business can be and thank these business owners for all the work they do every single day.

People of African descent are in other sectors of the workforce as well. To name a few, there are teachers, nurses, professional athletes, doctors, lawyers and, of course, my colleagues here in the Manitoba Legislature.

Bill 232, the emancipation act, is a step forward in acknowledging the multi-generational harm caused by slavery. Slavery is terrible, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a period of time that I wish—that none of us wish didn't exist, but it did, and that is why this bill is a step forward for the province of Manitoba.

By supporting this bill, we are looking to remember the past and shape the future. We want to do so in a way that is consciously more inclusive. We must never forget our history. Moreover, it is important that we constantly educate ourselves and take the time to celebrate the achievements, cultures and traditions of the Black communities in Manitoba and Canada.

We must do the same for Indigenous communities, as well. Both communities have helped shape our province.

Today, racism is still seen, and that is a problem. No one deserves to be treated as less than because of the colour of their skin, their creed or their ethnicity. It is important that we are willing to listen to the

experiences of those from various backgrounds and acknowledge the wrongs done in the past.

As an individual of Filipino descent, I have witnessed this with my own two eyes. I have been the target of racism. Probably every single person of colour in this building has. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this—that—this—that is a problem. It is a problem that can be fixed, though. I recognize that, by accepting this bill into legislation, that we are taking a step—a giant step that is amongst the first of many in advancing awareness and combatting racism.

There is no spot for racism in society, yet we still see it. We need to combat it. That is why I will, again, reiterate, I am support of this bill.

I know that Emancipation Day has been recognized in different parts of Canada, including at a national level. On March 24th, the MPs in the House of Commons unanimously voted to designate August 1st as Emancipation Day across Canada. The bill was introduced by the Liberal MP for Richmond Hill, Majid Jowhari, and was seconded by Alex Ruff, the Conservative MP for Owen Sound.

It is great to see members from different parties come together to bring a bill into power that will positively affect so many people. Ontario was actually the first province to recognize August 1st as Emancipation Day, doing so in 2008. I think it is important to talk about the history of this date as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a bit of a history lesson, but some of the people listening may not actually know about Canada's deep involvement with slavery as well. In its early days, Canada was no stranger to slavery. Both Black and Indigenous peoples were enslaved. Owning slaves became widespread in colonial Canada and involved in all levels of society.

\* (10:50)

It wasn't until the governor of Upper Canada, which is now Ontario, passed law that banned the information of 'unslaved' Africans into Upper Canada. It guaranteed freedom for the children of enslaved Africans once they reached the age of 25. It did not completely abolish slavery but it was the first law of its kind in the British Empire. This occurred in March 1793.

To put it simply, the act did not free all slaves. It did, however, outlaw the importation and introduced a timeline for the phasing out of slaveholding. Was this right? No. It sure was not. That was why on

August 1st, 1834, 41 years after the initial act, the British parliament finally abolished slavery. It freed many enslaved people of African descent throughout the British colonies, including Upper and Lower Canada.

That is why August 1st is known as Emancipation Day across Canada. Canada and Manitoba continued to fight slavery by providing safe havens for thousands of people that were still enslaved in the United States. This brought the Underground Railroad to Canada, which I'm sure everyone has heard about. This helped increase the population of African descendants here in Manitoba. Manitoba became their safe place and their home.

I am glad thousands of African descent were able to find a place in Manitoba. I'm sorry that so many people faced slavery. African descendants have played a positive role in our province—in Manitoba. One man that the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) has mentioned is William Sylvester Alpheus Beal, or Billy. The MLA for Swan River will know more about this than I do.

Billy grew up in Minneapolis but moved to Swan River, Manitoba, in 1906. Mr. Beal devoted his life to building and improving Swan River. He came to Swan River to become a steam engineer but left as a well-known, well-liked community member. He was involved in the formation of the Big Woody School District in 1912 and was elected as the first secretary-treasurer, holding the position for 37 years. He was said to be instrumental in the establishing of a circulating library within the school system. He formed a literary society and debating teams; he directed plays and organized poetry readings and musical concerts.

Like many African descendants, Billy made his town, province and country better and stronger. And I know we are all personally touched by stories just like his.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear that Bill 232, The Emancipation Day Act, is very important for all Manitobans. It celebrates a day that is overdue for people of African descent here in Manitoba. It is a day to celebrate people of African descent, to always feel free and safe in this province. That is why I will be supporting this bill.

In addition, I have always wondered myself, being of Filipino descent, if Filipinos were ever part of the state of—treated as slaves. So I thought you should know this: when Spaniards conquered the

archipelago, known as the Philippines, they had the law. The Law of the Indies served as compilation of royal decrees for the Spanish colonies, including the Philippines. This included a law stating that Spaniards were forbidden to hold Filipinos as slaves, since they were under the subjection of King Philip II, observing the widespread practice of slavery among native tribes.

The law was sometimes ignored by soldiers, some acting on their own and seizing natives in various parts of the country. Governor-General Legazpi, upon discovering this, freed the slaves and punished those who took them under the jurisdiction of the monarchy.

Again, I would like to thank the member for St. Vital for putting this bill forward. We continue to educate ourselves on many issues. You can never stop learning and learning from one another.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for St. Vital for putting forward this bill.

It is an important bill and it should be passed. Our Manitoba Liberals' caucus supports it. As the member has suggested it, I will have a party in River Heights, when appropriate to the COVID situation at that time, and I will invite the MLA for St. Vital and the MLAs for Southdale and Union Station.

I was fortunate. My father grew up in Africa, in what is now Zambia. In his early life, all his friends were Black. He had a great admiration for Black people. He used, for example, to tell the story of the chief of a village located not far from Kanchindu in the valley of the Zambezi River.

During the influenza epidemic of 1918-19, this chief, Chief Syatiminda, saved his village while other nearby villages were ravaged by disease and many deaths. He did this by mandating that everyone in the village had to leave their homes at sunrise and not return until sunset. For some reason, he knew or suspected what we know today, that it's safer outdoors than indoors, for the virus spreads poorly outdoors. He also used a traditional medicine from the sap of a baobab tree. Perhaps this sap should be studied this time, too.

My father also spoke highly of Nelson Mandela in the 1950s and '60s, long before it became popular to do so.

When I was growing up, one of my heroes was John Ware, a Black cowboy who had an amazing

skill with horses and became a very respected and successful rancher in Alberta. I always thought he was symbolic of the Canadian spirit of succeeding against long odds.

Many times, I've spoken to audiences about another Black Canadian, Elijah McCoy, a mechanical engineer and inventor who contributed immensely to the development of lubricants for engines. I like to think, as has been suggested, that the phrase the real McCoy came from people demanding that they get the real Elijah McCoy lubricant, because it worked so much better than anything else.

As well as being proud of the contributions of Black Canadians, which are enormous, we need to remember that we, as humans, evolved from early humans in Africa. In this context, we should all know the story of Marina Elliott, a Canadian biological anthropologist who became an underground astronaut, going into a small cave through a narrow opening.

She was not Black herself, but she was an important part of a team that explored the cave and found extensive remains of a new early hominid, Homo naledi, which lived 250 to 450 thousand years ago in South Africa, not far from Johannesburg. We owe much to people who came from Africa, including our own species, and to those like Marina who had contributed to this understanding.

In Manitoba, we recognize many extraordinary Black Manitobans. Gerry Atwell, an amazing musician and mentor to many, is being celebrated each year in mid August at the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre. Last year, out of the celebration came a poster, messages of hope for a world without racism, with each MLA receiving a copy, and it was widely distributed, also, in Manitoba schools.

In Manitoba, we're also making progress with back-Black politicians being elected, the most recent being Sunday Frangi in the city council in Brandon.

We do need this bill. We need it to remind us of our own heritage and of the incredible contributions Black Canadians have made.

It is true that there has existed, and still exists, much racism in Manitoba, and we need to acknowledge this. I hope, working together, we can change this and improve the lives of those who are Black in Manitoba, for in so doing we also improve our own lives and the life and culture of our city, our province and our country.

As the MLA from Tyndall Park says, reconciliation and understanding one's own privilege is a part of this, and it's everyone's work.

Emancipation Day, August 1st, 1934 was an important day in our history, and we need to recognize its significance.

Thank you, the MLA for St. Vital.

Thank you all. Merci. Miigwech.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** I would like to speak on this.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** I would once again like to thank the member from St. Vital for bringing Bill 232, The Emancipation Day Act, to the floor of the House for discussion.

On March 24th, 2021, MPs in the House of Commons unanimously voted to designate August 1st as Emancipation Day across Canada. This allows Canadians to reflect upon their commitment to eliminate discrimination in all forms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the passing of the Manitoba day act in 1870 continuing through to today, it has always been important for all Manitobans to reflect on and stand up against the effects of racism in their daily lives. Passage of this legislation will signal Manitoba's belief in the importance of recognizing the full history of the people of African descent in our province. It will help all Manitobans understand the full story—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

When this matter is before the House, the honourable member for Selkirk will have nine minutes remaining.

\* (11:00)

## DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 23—Inclusion of a Land Acknowledgement in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Now that the hour is 11 o'clock, we're concluding private members' bill and we're going on to the private members' resolution, which is the private resolution 23, the inclusion of land acknowledgement of Manitoba's Legislative Assembly, and it's standing in the name of

the honourable member for Borderland, who has five minutes remaining.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, for the opportunity to speak to the inclusion of the land acknowledgement in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly resolution put forward by the MLA for Keewatinook.

And let me just say as well that I appreciated very much listening to the debate in the previous hour, as we talk about the contributions of Black Canadians to our country and their history, and rectify some of the wrongs and try to move that forward.

And as I reflect on this resolution, again, we're talking about the land acknowledgement and we're talking about the facts of the existence of Métis and Indigenous peoples before my ancestors came here. And we're talking again about their history and their contributions to this rich heritage that belongs to us as Canadians and as Manitobans.

*Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

And so it's—I think it's important and exciting, in a sense, that we are able to talk about this history, to learn more, to share different perspectives from different cultures and to have this open dialogue between cultures and perspectives and to try to advance reconciliation—the spirit of reconciliation in our province, in our country today.

And so I'm happy to continue my remarks on this important resolution. And I do think it's important that we have a fulsome debate on these matters, seeing as these are sensitive topics and we need everyone's voices to be heard. And so I think that's critically important.

So as I reflected when I last had the opportunity to speak to this resolution, I—the treaty land acknowledgement is something that I have appreciated the opportunity to be able to include in my remarks at local events in my constituency.

And there has really been—I'm happy to report—an openness and a receptiveness. I think, generally among people, there is a willingness to learn about our history and what—who was here and what was life like here before we came here and—or, I say we, speaking as a Mennonite whose ancestors came here in 1874. So, again, as a student of history myself and someone who finds the subject incredibly fascinating and who studied it in university, I'm—I think this debate is important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to share a little bit more about what our government is doing to advance reconciliation in our province. We've made great strides. There's a tremendous amount of work still to do but we're proud of the work that we have been able to accomplish and the partnerships that we've been able to establish, and the fact that we have been able to advance a reconciliation in this province. And win—one of the ways we've done that is the treaty land entitlements, which are a priority for our government and also a constitutional obligation.

Currently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are nine treaty land entitlement agreements in Manitoba, covering 29 entitlement First Nations for a total of approximately 1.423 million hectare–acres of land, of Crown and acquisition land. Continued progress on treaty land entitlements is just one way, though, in which we are pursuing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as of January 29th, 2021, Manitoba has transferred 695,557 acres to Canada under all TLE agreements in Manitoba. Canada has set apart 673,640 acres as reserve land, and since May 2016, when our government took office, Manitoba has transferred 97,502 acres of land to Canada. Manitoba has also transferred 11,717 acres to Canada since September 2019.

So some progress made there, and something we can be proud of. On the—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The member's time has expired.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we are on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territories of the Anishinabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene people and the homeland of the Métis nation. I'd also like every other member of this Assembly to do the same basic good of acknowledging and validating their own Indigenous constituents with a land acknowledgement before every day's sitting.

I know that my own caucus is fiercely committed to anti-racism, to inclusion and social justice, and to working to fix the mistakes of the past. And I know that they are behind this resolution one hundred per cent.

I know that there are also members on the other side of the House and in other parties who are willing to do this. And it is my sincere hope that we can all work together—that we can work together so that this resolution is passed and that we do the right thing so

that we allow this resolution to go forward, and we acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territories.

To quote what my predecessor, Kevin Chief, and—the previous MLA for Point Douglas said about land acknowledgement, quote: Done—when done with sincerity, it's the first sign of respect of the history and unique relationship with Indigenous peoples. I couldn't agree more, and I'm sure every person in this House could agree with that statement.

The history of Canada and Manitoba is complicated, but there is no avoiding the fact that genocide was committed against Indigenous people in this country. There is no avoiding the fact that atrocities like the '60s scoop and residential schools continued up until very recently. There's no avoiding the fact that Indigenous people are still treated poorly in this country, with many Indigenous communities still lacking the access to even have clean water in their communities.

The Manitoba Legislature is a symbol of the government of Manitoba, and in many ways, it's a symbol of our province. When it was constructed, it was also a symbol of oppression of Indigenous peoples. We must remember a major cause for the formation of Manitoba was to suppress the Indigenous people who had lived here for thousands of years. Our province was founded a year after the Red River Rebellion, led by Louis Riel, a founding father of Manitoba.

Unfortunately, many of Manitoba's other founding fathers were part of the effort to put down the rebellion and ensure that the Métis nation remained suppressed. This is an unfortunate legacy, Deputy Speaker—or, assistant Deputy Speaker. It's also why I'm proud to sit in the Legislature today along with many Indigenous colleagues.

This is an era of reconciliation, and though we aren't anywhere close to being done, we can be proud of the fact that we're slowly moving in the right direction. And passing that—this resolution today would be a step in that direction.

I want to talk about the city of—council of Winnipeg, and how they voted to have the land acknowledgement in 2016—five years ago. Five years they have been acknowledging that they are gathered on the traditional lands, and here we are, still debating this and having conversations.

We could do this today. We could pass it, and it can become law and we can acknowledge every day

before sitting that we are gathered on traditional lands like the City of Winnipeg and many other community organizations, businesses, grassroots community groups and unions. They've all made the right decision and choice to acknowledge the importance of the Indigenous peoples here in Manitoba, and that the treaties are an integral part of Manitoba.

\* (11:10)

Assistant Deputy Speaker, even the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Winnipeg Jets—and I know a lot of my colleagues watch sports, and they hear that at the beginning of every game. Can you see the smiles on the faces of our Indigenous children as they are watching those games, as they hear themselves being acknowledged? What great pride that brings to them.

And we want that same pride brought to our Manitoba Legislature, so our kids, our elders, our Indigenous people can be proud and they can see themselves reflected in a place that wasn't supposed to be where we were welcomed into.

Madam Speaker—or Deputy Speaker, I said earlier that Canadians and Manitobans have something to be proud of in our collective decision to repair the relationship with Indigenous governments, honour Indigenous heritage and traditional lands and work towards reconciliation. This government doesn't deserve that pride unless they are willing to do the right thing here today and continue to do what's right moving forward.

In fact, Assistant Deputy Speaker, the fact that the Legislature still doesn't start each day with a land acknowledgement probably puts us in the minority compared to other organizations in Manitoba. This is a step, a good gesture that this government could take to acknowledge Indigenous people and let them know that they're welcome in this space and that they belong in the Manitoba Legislature, as much as anyone else.

That reassurance is needed now. In light of recent events, like recent attacks against the Mi'kmaq fishers, Indigenous people are often made to feel like they don't belong, that they aren't welcome in spaces like our Manitoba Legislature. Well, who can blame them when we have a Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province who calls Indigenous hunters, and I quote: young Indigenous men with criminal records, and fights even against using the term systemic racism to condemn discrimination.

Well, I take those comments seriously but some might dismiss them as poor choices of words or poor choices of language. Maybe that's true but they are

planned, they are deliberate decisions made by the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that tells us a lot more.

The Premier made a huge event out of Manitoba's 150 anniversary of entering Confederation. In fact, wanting to avoid disturbing the celebration of Manitoba's 150th year of Confederation was one of the reasons why the Premier called and justified calling an early election. With this in mind, you would expect that our Premier, the leader of Manitoba, would give the respect due to Louis Riel, one of the founding fathers of Manitoba.

Instead, what did this Premier do? He made no mention of Louis Riel or the Manitoba Métis Federation and all of the important contributions that they have made in this province, in the speech that he gave on the 150th anniversary of Manitoba joining Confederation.

There have been nine Métis members of this Manitoba Legislature. This is not something that the Premier can ignore. Indigenous people have contributed to the development of this province and this country and they deserve recognition.

There are some serious concerns over the psychological effects of being left out of the conversation. We only have to look to Shamattawa. Indigenous youth all over in our First Nation communities have some of the highest rates of suicides of any population in all of our country. They are disenfranchised. We must make efforts to be inclusive here and now.

Manitoba is a mosaic of different cultures, religions and belief systems. We are at our strongest when we draw from experiences and wisdoms from everyone who is in Manitoba. Indigenous people are doing the important work now of re-establishing the important cultural practices that were outlawed by the government in the past. It's hard work but it's important to teach Indigenous youth that they do have value and their culture is something to be proud of.

I'm a proud member of the Manitoba Legislature, Assistant Deputy Speaker. I am proud to represent all of my constituents of Point Douglas and I always take great pride in celebrating, and engaging in, and encouraging the traditional practices of all of my cultural communities in my constituency.

Today, I'm asking the government to do the same with the oldest cultural group in Manitoba; a land acknowledgement before every day's sitting would mean a lot to the Indigenous people of our province.

Assistant Deputy Speaker, as the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, it is our responsibility to represent all peoples of Manitoba. Anishinabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuit and Métis people have been living here dating back to—over thousands of years. Indigenous people were extremely valuable to the development of this country, and I implore my colleagues to vote in favour of this. And let's do the right thing moving forward and pass this resolution today.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière):** It's truly an honour to speak to this resolution this morning, and I want to thank the member again for bringing it forward.

Land acknowledgements have become a fairly common practice in Manitoba, and [*inaudible*] begin their official programs with a traditional land acknowledgement. We all know it's important to remember and acknowledge the wrongs of the past, and Manitobans should realize that whether they've recently arrived in Canada or their family's been here for multiple generations, are technically—and we being myself included—are newcomers and should recognize not only the contributions of Indigenous people now but the historical 'proportance' of Indigenous peoples to our province and Canada at large.

My colleague, the member from Selkirk, last week spoke about the history of land acknowledgements, so I won't repeat what has already been said, but I can speak a little bit to some of the wording or differences in wording when it comes to land acknowledgements.

The wording depends on whether the territory is First Nations, Métis or Inuit land. It is also important to know whether or not a modern territorial agreement or treaty exists. Among Métis, when you're on Métis nation territory you simply refer to the territory and not to traditional territory. Among Inuit, the tradition of acknowledging territory does not exist; however, Inuit Nunangat is not a large homogenous bloc, but comprises of four separate regions: Nunavik in Quebec, Nunatsiavut in Labrador and Inuvialuit in Northwest Territories in Yukon.

Among First Nations, there are hundreds of First Nations in Canada, so it's always important to check what traditional territory you find yourself in. It's important to consider whether or not a modern treaty or territorial agreement is in place. The wording of a territorial acknowledgement changes depending on



whether there exists a modern territorial agreement or a treaty—in that case, a traditional territory or not an unceded traditional territory between the nation and Canada.

There is some overlap, and we see some of that in Winnipeg and some of the traditional—or, the traditional acknowledgement that we find in Winnipeg. Several Indigenous nations may occupy the same territory, in which case you must name them all. So, in—most of my colleagues from Winnipeg are accustomed to hearing the following: I wish to acknowledge that we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishabe [*phonetic*], Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene peoples and the homeland of the Métis nation. Now, this is certainly not unique to Winnipeg, as other parts of the country do have similar overlaps. And in some, there is no actual standard wording that applies to all territories and there is no one fits all.

With the variety acknowledgements, it's important to know which territory you're in before making the acknowledgement, and sometimes it can be helpful to seek wise counsel from an elder from that area for assistance.

I know that many events—prior to COVID were a lot more events, but many of the virtual events that do continue through COVID, land acknowledgements have become a—commonplace. And, again, thank the member for bringing this forward.

I believe that this request, although, should go to the rules committee as well, as that's the best avenue for this initiative. I know when this was debated in the Chamber—last week, I believe it was—members from both the Liberal caucus and our side of the House have talked about the importance of the initiative, but also recommended that this be brought to the rules committee.

Reconciliation is important to everyone in this Chamber in every party and every MLA, and our government remains committed to advancing reconciliation through concrete and tangible initiatives that build on meaningful engagement with Indigenous nations and peoples.

\* (11:20)

Through a combination of new and ongoing initiatives we continue to address the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation in Manitoba. Our work is guided by the calls to action outlined by the 2015 report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and

we'll continue to implement and support initiatives that further reconciliation outside of these calls.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class action settlement in Canadian history, and began to be implemented in the year 2007. This was to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians.

The TRC heard from more than 6,500 witnesses and spent six years travelling to all parts of the country. Additionally, the TRC also hosted seven national events across Canada to engage the Canadian public, educate people about the history and legacy of residential school systems and share and honour the the experience of former students and their families.

The TRC created a historical record of the residential school system. As part of this process, the Government of Canada provided over 5 million records to the TRC. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba now houses all the documents collected by the TRC.

In 2015—or June of 2015, the TRC held its closing event in Ottawa and presented the executive summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 calls to action or recommendations to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

As I said earlier, our government work is guided by calls—the calls to action. One example of our efforts includes the provision of financial support to circles of—for reconciliation, a group that aims to create trusting and meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Through the initiative, the group facilitates circles for public- and private-sector organizations and groups on various themes, such as the meaning of land for Indigenous people, residential schools, intergenerational trauma, the Pass System and the '60s scoop.

Several innovative reconciliatory economic development initiatives and Indigenous partnerships came to fruition in 2020: Shoal Lake 40 Freedom Road; Nacotay [*phonetic*], a first-of-its-kind forestry development agreement; First Nations partnership and investment in the cannabis industry; four new urban economic development zones and a signing of an MOU with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, which could result in a transfer of ownership

of northern airports to First Nations and the establishment of new First Nations-led northern airport authority.

The department publicly reports on government's progress towards advancing reconciliation each year through the Path to Reconciliation annual report. The government of Manitoba has committed to established—or to establishing a renewed framework for respectful and productive Crown-Indigenous consultations, and as of February 2021, the new framework has been nearly completed.

A key outcome from the renewed framework will include improved understanding of the Crown-Indigenous consultation process for all parties, as well as more timely consultation approaches that support the aspirations and objectives of the parties, reinforced by early and respectful engagement with Indigenous communities across our province.

Our government will continue to implement and support initiatives that further reconciliation outside of these calls.

Now, there are a significant number of communities—remote communities—that are First Nations and non-First Nations alike, who are underserved by high-speed, competitive, reliable telecommunications, and I believe—I know our government believes—that improving telecommunications to communities, primarily First Nations remote communities, is an important step in reconciliation in bringing these communities up to speed with respect to Internet and connectivity.

As we know, Manitoba posted a request for proposal on July 16th, 2020, indicating that Manitoba intends to work with one or more existing short-listed proponents of the request for qualifications that will best improve broadband connectivity in Manitoba. And following a competitive tendering process, the Manitoba government has signed a memorandum of understanding with Xplornet Communications to connect more than 125,000 underserved—or unserved Manitobans to reliable highspeed Internet services.

The agreement between the Province and Xplornet Communications will provide broadband services to nearly 30 First Nations and approximately 270 rural and northern communities. Additionally, this agreement will also serve 350 communities with cellphone access.

With respect to treaty land entitlements, this is a priority for the government of Manitoba; as well, there's a constitutional obligation. There are nine

TLE, or treaty land entitlements, in Manitoba, covering 29—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I'll be brief.

This is actually an extremely important motion and an extremely important acknowledgement that we need to make because treaties are the absolute foundation upon which our government and our country and our province are established.

Going back to the royal proclamation, there was a fundamental commitment on the part of the Crown to have a relationship with First Nations that was fundamental. And when we talk about the treaties, we do need to talk about all the treaties on the land on which Manitoba is located. It's more than just Treaty 1. There's Treaty 1, Treaty 2, all of the numbered treaties.

And this is only the first of all the numbered treaties, but this fundamental relationship is something I will say that Louis Riel asked for. It was one of the things that Louis Riel and his provisional government said, that among the things they asked of the Government of Canada was what they were, actually, peace treaties, that these treaties were actually to ensure that there'd be peace and that there were commitments.

And I know this government has talked a fair bit about treaty land entitlement. The fact that we have treaty land entitlement at all is actually a symbol of the failure of Canada and Manitoba's relationship with the treaties because the land to which First Nations are entitled was sometimes promised 150 years ago.

So we're talking about the treaties that were signed: like Treaty 1, which was signed after 1870; and Treaty 2, we—the—that the Government of Canada, the Crown, committed to giving land, returning land in exchange for the sharing that was taking place. And more than 150 years later, First Nations are still waiting for that land back—and the Crown land exists.

We have provincial Crown land. We have federal Crown land, but it has been like pulling teeth at every step of the way in order for our First Nations to get the Crown to honour its obligation. And this is one of the reasons when I've talked to First Nations leaders, they've said there is no honour in the Crown.

So part of supporting treaty land acknowledgements and supporting the treaties is restoring honour to the Crown. It is about our obligation as

legislators to follow the rules and to commit and fulfill the promises which we have said we would do. And that's where we've—and that's where we have often fallen short because there were often grandiose promises that were made about rights and about other commitments that were never fulfilled or were immediately reneged on for First Nations, and they are still being reneged on today.

So I think that is one of the things that it's incredibly important to recognize in addition to the treaty—to treaty acknowledgements, that when First Nations and other Indigenous people object to what government is doing when they are ignoring or enforcing their authority, illegitimately, when a provincial government steps into a jurisdiction that it's not—where it's not supposed to be or is ignoring fundamental rights, like hunting rights or it's intruding where it's not supposed to go or it's failing to actually commit to proper consultation on property that people own, that First Nations have—that when First Nations and others go to the streets and say, well, this is the problem, they are often painted as being people who are standing up against the system and that they're a problem—in exactly the same way that Louis Riel was 150 years ago—when, in fact, what they're doing is asking us to live up to our obligations and live up to our own principles, because we haven't.

\* (11:30)

So I do want to thank the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) very much. This is absolutely critical, and the one other thing that I will say about what we think about treaties—because we often talk—because there's no denying the grim history of what Canada and Manitoba—how people's rights have been denied, and how First Nations and Indigenous people have been treated as second-class or third-class individuals—that it's absolutely critical, as a gesture, that we say this—but also to acknowledge that—our gratitude.

The only reason I have a place to live and that my family have a place to live and we've been able to prosper as a society is because of the treaties. And there are people—there are thousands of people today from Selkirk settlers to Icelandic—people of Icelandic descent who were saved by the interventions of First Nations people, whether it Peguis or whether it was John and Betsey Ramsay.

They helped them live through the winter. There are people who are—thousands of descendants of those people who are only alive today thanks to the generosity and hospitality of the First Nations people.

And that's part of what is—also needs to be recognized, is that treaty land acknowledgement should also be an act of gratitude on our part. That we are grateful for the treaties because it has allowed us—and we actually have an obligation to return that gratitude and that hospitality, because we have often failed to do so.

So, thank you very much. Thank you again to the member for Point Douglas and I—this is an issue that needs to be dealt with at the rules committee, which I hope we will, but—and—but it's also something that I think we should support unanimously as a House. Thank you very much.

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** I am Canadian. Now, my parents immigrated here from the Netherlands soon after the Second World War and my dad learned English as quickly as he could and he taught his six children—I'm the youngest—that we were Canadians.

We are Canadians first, and we shouldn't let anyone pretend that we were anything less of a Canadian than anyone else. In his mind, it did not matter if we were poor, and we were; it did not matter that, you know, my parents had Dutch accents, and they did; it did not matter that we'd only lived here for a few years at that time, just one generation we had.

My dad taught me to say that I am Canadian. He taught me to say that years before Molson Brewery. Never thought it would make a great slogan for their beer. But that is the beauty of Canada, I think. There's a commitment to treat everyone equally and to treat everyone with respect.

Respect for others is so important, and I think that's also important this morning when we're talking about the inclusion of a treaty land acknowledgement at the beginning of every session—every day's session of this Legislature.

I think we need to continue to pursue the goal of respect; the goal of treating everybody fairly and 'equidly', and we cannot pretend that we have already attained it. We cannot pretend that we've already arrived.

You know, as happy as I am that the Winnipeg Jets defeated the Edmonton Oilers in the first round of the playoffs this year, I am disappointed. I am upset that Oiler defenceman Ethan Bear is receiving derogatory and racist commentary on social media. Totally inappropriate.

This is a man who's risen up. He's broken barriers. He's showed what equality can and should look like.

He is respected by his coaches. He is respected by his teammates. He's respected by most of his fans and by many Canadians and by my—by me as well. He deserves to be respected. He does not deserve the racist treatment that he's been getting on social media. That's disrespectful, and it has no place in our country.

Speaking about respect, I think this proposal by the honourable member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) is also about respect as well. I think about the words that were shared already by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) from our former colleague in this House, Mr. Kevin Chief.

You know, Kevin Chief served as an MLA in this House. He was here when I arrived in 2016. I think he had already served a term at that point and he'd even been a Cabinet minister for some time. And I think it's fair to say that he continues to be a leading light in the city of Winnipeg. Certainly, I have a great deal of respect for him, for his opinions, for his actions, for the way he carries himself and the leadership that he shows within our community here in Winnipeg.

And I'm going to repeat the words that he said that were already put on the record by the member for Point Douglas. He said about the treaty land acknowledgement at the start of each—start of session each day: Done with sincerity, it is a first sign of respect of the history and unique relationship with Indigenous peoples.

He further commented that if he had gotten to hear that message at the beginning of every day while he was a legislator here, while he served as a Cabinet minister in the Selinger government, that he believes it would have led to important conversations—more important conversations among all elected representatives about reconciliation, about the relationship with Indigenous peoples.

So I can assure the current member for Point Douglas—since Mr. Chief, of course, is the previous member for Point Douglas—I can assure her that I, indeed, agree with Mr. Chief, as she expected that I would.

I do want to redirect a little—there's a little bit of indignation, I think, coming out of the member for Point Douglas. It's maybe not uncommon but, certainly, you know, on this resolution I think we are trying to, as all parties, trying to adopt a very appropriate tone.

I think that this is a matter that should not be dividing us and that we should agree on, and I'm happy to hear those indications, I think, already, from

my colleagues on this side of the House. I'm hearing those indications from the members of the Liberal caucus as well, that they, you know, support this resolution, that they believe that this is something that should be given consideration.

And I believe, obviously, the—certainly, the sponsor of the bill, the member for Keewatinook, and now the member for Point Douglas today—they've put words on the record that suggest that that treaty land acknowledgement at the beginning of each session day should be a priority for this Legislature.

It's not something that belongs, frankly, to one caucus or another or to the government. It belongs to the Legislature, and that's why it's important that it be dealt with in the appropriate way. I believe the appropriate venue, it's been mentioned before, is the House rules committee, and my understanding is it's actually been several months since that committee has met.

You know, that committee is the one that has the authority to make the change that's proposed under this resolution. This resolution doesn't have that authority. If this resolution passes and the House rules committee continues not to meet, nothing will change. So it's important that they meet.

Now, I've asked around. The Progressive Conservative House leader, my colleague, certainly, he's actually been asking to meet. He more than wants to meet. He's making himself available, I think, even while he's simultaneously covering for the Minister of Health.

The Liberal House leader is apparently also more than willing to meet. They have a number of matters to discuss and they would be happy to include this proposal in that list, whether or not this resolution comes to a vote.

But one member is not willing to meet and one member has refused to discuss this. One member who's failing to discharge her duties as House leader and to fill—fulfill her obligation to her fellow caucus members, including—

### **Point of Order**

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** On a point of order, the Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** I'm just going to say this to the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma): (1) don't police what the member for Point Douglas says; and secondly, do not speak on my behalf in this Chamber.

You do not know if I want to meet with the committee. I've actually given no indication that I don't want to meet with the committee. And we are actually, right now, in the process of organizing and scheduling those meetings.

So do not utter one word about me in this Chamber.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** I'd like to thank the member for her words, but this is not a point of order; it is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

\* (11:40)

**Mr. Teitsma:** I guess I touched a nerve. Certainly, I encourage the member to meet. I encourage the member to get together with the House rules committee and to put forward this proposal. I can't pretend to have heard the first part of her comments because my speaker was down, but I promise I will read them later.

Now I think we need to be sober-minded when we're thinking about changing—about the changing relationships with Indigenous peoples in Canada over the past decades, and, in fact, centuries. I thank the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) for calling this to remembrance.

I think it's important—it is important to condemn the horrors of the abuse that happened in residential schools. It's important to condemn the failure to afford equal rights to Indigenous people for decades after Confederation. And sometimes, I fear that condemning this, while important, is sometimes glibly done if it's not done without sober judgment about where we are today.

We're not where we need to be. We have a disproportionate number, thousands, in fact, of Indigenous children in the care of the Child and Family Services system. We condemn residential schools, but aren't we almost kidding ourselves if we ignore that CFS impacts Indigenous children in many of the same ways as residential schools did?

So what does reconciliation with Indigenous peoples look like? What's our long-term objective? It's important to agree about that. It's important to do that. Our government has obligations, but I think all the people of Manitoba, all the people of Canada, have obligations to bring reconciliation.

Our goal needs to be equality. Our goal needs to be respect. Our goal needs to be a future where the

opportunities afforded to each and every child in our province are the same. Our goal should be the same goal that Nelson Mandela had for South Africa, and I thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for bringing that to remembrance earlier this morning. Our goal should be the same as that of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who had a dream for his people and for African Americans, you know, in the United States and for African American children. *[interjection]* Oh.

I think I'll end today by sharing a few quotes from Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., that I think are appropriate for our discussion today, in fact not just for this hour, but also for the hour about Emancipation Day So he said: We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. The time is always right to do what is right, and life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?

And with that I conclude my remarks.

Thank you very much—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Well, good morning, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and thank you very much for the opportunity to put a few words on the record here this morning. I know my colleagues that have spoken before me are certainly, you know, supportive of the resolution here from the—our honourable friend, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie).

Recognition of land acknowledgement is very important—there's no question about that—but so is continued progress on Treaty land entitlement. That's one way our government has been pursuing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in our province.

Our government remains committed to advancing reconciliation through concrete and tangible initiatives that build on meaningful engagement with Indigenous nations and peoples. Our work is guided by the calls to action, outlined by the 2015 report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and we will continue to implement and support initiatives that further—to support further reconciliation outside of these calls.

Our government remains certainly committed to meaningful engagement with Indigenous nations and

people on all sorts of issues. Through a combination of new and ongoing initiatives, we continue address the 'illegacy' of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation in Manitoba.

On top of the continued progress on Treaty land entitlements in this province, to pursue reconciliation, there are other ways our government is pursuing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples here in the province: safe drinking water, home nutrition and learning programs, Operation Return Home, Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, northern COVID-19 response, creation of the duty-to-consult framework, forestry management and licences, trade, First Nations airport authority and the completion of the Shoal Lake 40 Freedom Road. These are concrete actions. They're not just words, they're actions: very, very important.

And our government will also continue to support the establishment of Indigenous-led partnerships and ventures that will increase Indigenous participation and economic benefits to Indigenous communities and to Manitoba's economy as a whole.

Our government looks forward to the successes of future developments in industry and working with First Nations on their growth.

Now, back to the land acknowledgement. You know, personally, when I hosted a banquet in my constituency after being elected for my first term—and in fact it's the only banquet I've hosted. It was a retirement banquet for a former colleague of many of our current members, Leanne Rowat, and we hosted that in Shoal Lake. And we certainly wanted participation of the First Nations. You know, they were an integral part of the constituency and we wanted participation.

We reached out to Waywayseecappo First Nation, and their drum group was happy to come down and perform at the start of the banquet. I think many of you on this screen today will remember that banquet they performed. And we also did the land acknowledgement there, as well, and I think that everybody certainly respected that announcement. And I know the drum group and the chief reached out to me after and thanked me and thanked our colleagues for doing that.

I certainly feel a sense of pride every time I watch a Jets game and listen to the booming announcement of the land acknowledgement. I think that it's something that needs to be done.

Now, I do think—like my colleagues have said—we need to leave this up to the rules committee to decide, you know, when it's done, how often it's done. They make the rules. And I look forward—as the House leader for the official opposition has just said, you know, they're working to schedule a meeting and I think that the meeting of the three House leaders will come to a resolve on this. So I don't think—it's certainly something that all parties need to discuss through their House leaders and I'm sure that will happen.

So I'm going to leave it at that. I know I have a few other colleagues here who want to put in a few words and I'm going to cede my time over to them. And again, I want to thank the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) and all the speakers on this resolution this morning.

Thank you.

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** It certainly is—and I know we all say it's a pleasure to rise and put words on the record, but today is—it is really a privilege to speak to this resolution. And I, too, want to thank the member from Keewatinook for bringing this and putting it on our agenda for this morning so that we can talk about the importance of this.

This bill just touches on the need for us all to work together and band together to eliminate—not reduce, but eliminate racism in this country and in this province and in the world. I know it will be a tough battle to look globally or about racism in general, but I think we as legislatures have a responsibility to look at it and start moving things forward.

And I know I've heard a few times this morning already and even in the previous debate about the Treaty 1 lands that we sit on here in Winnipeg, but I do want to recognize that my home constituency of Brandon East and the Brandon area does sit on the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Anishinabe, Oji-Cree, Dene and the Métis peoples.

I have used—personally used that acknowledgement on numerous occasions, and I believe it's important to do so. When I look at the area of Brandon and the development of Brandon as a city—and I know I did mention this in my opening remarks back in 2016 when I was first elected that Brandon never was a town. It never was a village.

It became a city over—almost overnight and even before the people from eastern Canada came to the area, it was primarily used by the Sioux people, and I know that it is a pleasure to recognize and acknowledge the fact that we—there may be land

acknowledgements and lots of it, and the land acknowledgement is that First Nations people are gracious enough to share their lands with the rest of us.

\* (11:50)

And so, I appreciate the desire to have an opening every morning or every afternoon when session here at the Legislature begins, and I'm happy to hear the member from St. Boniface and the Opposition House Leader and practically everybody saying that yes, it is time to go to the rules committee and have them look at this and see what we can do to bring it forward.

Even on that, I'm impressed in the fact that Canada has two official languages. And we hear every day—we hear thank you, we hear merci in the House. And since my time in 2016, I hear quite frequently the addition of the word *miigwech*, which, to me, is fantastic. It gives the ability and shows the passion that people have, not just for their destiny or for where they want to go but from where we've come.

And I know I've said it just a couple times in the Legislature as well when I say, *takk fyrir*, which is Icelandic for basically a thousand thanks. And I'm proud to say that, just as I'm proud and privileged to sit back and listen to people speak when they say *miigwech* or *merci* or even thank you, because it is a place in this House where we can show respect and come together and be proud of our heritage, be proud of what's going on.

I say that because I just look back at even some of my ancestors, you know? When we look at—I believe his nickname was Leif the Lucky. I know the member from St. Boniface was talking about folks from Iceland, and Leif Ericsson—his father Eric the Red actually left Iceland and immigrated or moved—or, kicked out of Iceland and landed up in Greenland.

And it is thought that Leif the Lucky or Leif Ericsson had been the first European to set foot on the continental North America almost half of a millennium before Christopher Columbus. Now, I'm not saying that he was the first here, because we have our first people—our First Nations; our Indigenous friends.

And so, again, where I could sit back—and I don't want to—I know a lot of my colleagues from both sides of the House have talked about, you know, things that have happened in the past that have come to fruition because of the combination of people living in this province, I want to bring it a little bit closer to home

and to talk about the great experiences that we have working together.

I know I've got myself into trouble on a number of occasions. I do enjoy and am honoured to attend various functions through the Brandon Friendship Centre, but why I get myself is—in trouble is one of my weaknesses is bannock. And my uncle married an Indigenous woman and my aunt Gerrie [*phonetic*]—I love her to death, amazing woman, but I always tell folks that she made the world's greatest bannock.

And I think there was almost a challenge out now that when I—when we do—are able to meet in person, that every event I go to I'm enticed with bannock to change my mind. And again, I look at just the opportunity to come together with various groups to eliminate racism.

And I know this—my conversation right now is going beyond coming in the House every day and opening it up with traditional—the traditional lands acknowledgement, but I think it's important that when we look at reconciliation, we look at eliminating racism—that we need to look at all areas of what we do and how we speak and how we treat other people.

I think it's very important, and it's important for us too. I mean, I look at myself; I'm—I'm going to say middle-aged—middle-aged Caucasian male. And I have said many times that I am opening up my mind; I am trying to learn more and with that, I thank Elder Frank Tacan from Brandon, from Sioux Valley, who has taught me so much; who has educated me and opened my eyes on Indigenous people and their ways.

Because of Elder Tacan, I have been able to attend my first smudge. I have done a few of them since, but he introduced me to my first smudge, also to my first sharing circle. And it was definitely something that not just opened my eyes, but it really embodied me to really want to learn and understand and work together and create better relationships.

And I think it's important that everyone in this House have an understanding that, yes, there are partisan conversations. Some days there are even, unfortunately, yelling and screaming matches in the Chamber. But I think we have to take the opportunity when bills like this come forward, that it really shows that, yes, we're all human, we all can do better, we all need to work harder and there is just so much more we can do.

Again, just prior to the pandemic hitting, we were trying to arrange a sweat lodge visit for myself. And, again, I look at those opportunities to really grow and,

again, gain that understanding. I know I have attended a number of powwows. I've been involved in a number of grand entries during the powwows. And, again, to me, it's just—it's not an opportunity to get out there and just be there. It's about an opportunity to get out there, meet people, get a better understanding, open my mind, open my body, open my soul and really understand what is happening in our communities, how we can all work together.

Again, Sioux Valley, the previous chief and I were good friends, and, you know, it's—it, again, created that opportunity to really work together and understand what we need to do.

I know a number of members have talked about 'accosments' of government. I want to talk, just very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I'm trying to try to keep my eye on the time, and, oh, I've only got like 20 seconds left.

So let's say, everybody—I want to talk about economic development. Everybody is important in this province to work together, to engage respectful dialogue, to come together and look at the future. We're all one, and we need to do so.

And I thank you for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The member for McPhillips.

Could the member from McPhillips unmute?

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** Apologies with that delay. Thank you very much. I always appreciate the opportunity to participate in the democratic process this morning. And it's resolutions like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that allow us to really get an

understanding and learn more about our MLA colleagues, and I think it is through this learning and this understanding that I think, collectively, we can become better legislators.

I have read all the comments about and referring to the need for territorial and land acknowledgement, and I agree wholeheartedly that this is something that is overdue here in the province of Manitoba. And while I was thinking about it, I was thinking about an old friend of mine, Derek Chalmers, who I grew up with in the Shilo area. Derek's claim—he was a terrific athlete, but his sister, Angela, was actually even a better athlete who was actually—brought home an Olympic gold—or sorry, an Olympic bronze medal. But from—originally from Sioux Valley.

And we talk about, you know, the need for land acknowledgement, not just here as a protocol at the Manitoba Legislature, but then I wonder about the impact, you know, on my friend, Derek, as a member of the Sioux Nation, here in school, where every morning we stood up and we did O Canada and we did God Save the Queen every single day, five days a week, you know, 10 months a year, and—but we never did any kind of land acknowledgement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I wonder, psychologically, what kind of impact that has had on individuals—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Order.

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

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, May 27, 2021**

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