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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 10, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills? Seeing no bills, we'll move on to petitions. Are there any introduction of petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to table the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Annual Review for 2012.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none, ministerial statements?

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no ministerial statements, I have no guests to introduce, then we'll proceed to oral questions.

Immigration Minister's Actions Chronology of Events

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): A decade spent together in the NDP Cabinet, no doubt a close-knit group, bonded together by principles of faithfulness and dependability and loyalty and truth. Based on the assumption that the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) possessed these qualities, the Premier saw fit to appoint her to two of his Cabinets in important roles.

And then one day he learned that he had been misled. And on that day, no doubt, he felt extremely

disappointed, disheartened. In fact, he would have felt shock to learn the truth.

A day like that you just don't forget, Mr. Speaker; that is a memorable day. What day was that day?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Let's recall, then, the spring of 2012. The federal government decided to make changes in how immigrant settlement services were offered in the province of Manitoba, and we resolved to take action on that in the form of a resolution presented in front of the Legislature. And that resolution was supported by activity by Cabinet, caucus and senior staff to invite people down to hear this important debate.

Prior to the debate, the former minister did instruct her staff to invite members of the public down to hear this matter, and she has been clear from the outset that this was a decision she took with senior—with her staff and her department. The former minister later put misleading information on the record and has subsequently corrected the record, fully co-operated with the Ombudsman and made an apology to the public and to the House.

That's the history of this event. And as I've said earlier in previous questions, I learned about this in the summer of 2012.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Mr. Speaker, we did—the Premier, not being forthcoming but being evasive, did mention summer last week as well. But it continues to be here a cover-up of a cover-up.

On December 19th in an interview with CBC, December 19th of 2013, the Premier was commenting on this issue and said: When the Ombudsman's review came up, I became aware that there might be some information she needs to disclose. And the question was asked of him on December 19th: Can you give a time or date on that? And he replied: That would be in the spring of 2012.

Now, I would ask the Premier to stop seeking shelter in chicanery and simply say: What was the date that he became aware that he and his colleagues have been using civil servants in Manitoba as body armour?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2012 the Ombudsman's office received complaints and

decided to conduct an investigation into this matter. During the course of that investigation it came to my attention that the minister—the former minister had played a role in directing civil servants to invite members of the public down. I made my expectation clear that the former minister should fully co-operate with the Ombudsman's investigation, which the former minister did.

That occurred, as I said, my first comments, relatively early on, spring, summer of 2012. I'm being generous here. I'm saying the summer of 2012. But certainly after the Ombudsman's investigation commenced it came to my attention, and I made my expectation clear that we should—that the member should fully co-operate, which the member did.

Mr. Pallister: I love Manitoba's changing seasons, Mr. Speaker, but I don't like the changing seasons in these answers.

And, you know, the Premier was asked on what day—I've asked him repeatedly—on what day did you learn that the Immigration minister's information was incorrect, and he responds not with a day but with a season. And on December 19th, he responded with the season spring; on March 6th, with the season summer.

I'll ask him again: What was the date that he became aware that he and his colleagues were hiding behind Manitoba civil servants?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, as I've said earlier, the federal government brought a resolution forward to change the way immigrant settlement services were offered. We debated that resolution in this House. The Ombudsman undertook to conduct an investigation, and during the course of that investigation it came to my attention that the former minister had played a role in directing staff to invite members of the public to come down to hear the debate of that resolution in this Legislature.

I've said it was relatively early on. I've identified that as being in the summer of 2012. I put that on the record on more than one occasion. And it's also on the record now that the former member—minister has taken responsibility for directing staff to invite members of the public down here and has put an apology and a correction on the record.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Premier should've answered the question; he would have then 364 other options

which he could choose to change his story. He's limiting his options here somewhat by using seasons. He's down to four now, four options.

And last week he said summer, and in December he said spring. But in an interview with The Canadian Press on February 2nd of this year he used another season; he said he was first informed in the fall. Now, in—so in 10 weeks we have had the Premier answer this same question with three different responses, three seasons, three different seasons, all seasons.

Can we at least have him verify today that he's not a man for all seasons and that this didn't happen in the winter?

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

After the Ombudsman conducted—commenced his investigation, it came to my attention that the former minister had played a role in directing the civil servants to invite members of the public down to the Legislature. When that came to my attention, I made my expectation clear that the former minister should fully co-operate with the Ombudsman. The former minister did fully co-operate and disclosed her role in this matter.

And subsequently, the Ombudsman brought out a report with a recommendation. And that recommendation is to put guidelines in place so that when events like this occur where there could be the perception of political partisanship, there's guidelines that will guide us on how to handle those matters no matter who's in government, no matter who the elected officials are nor who the civil servants are. That is in the hands of the Civil Service Commissioner, and we look forward to her recommendations on the guidelines as recommended by the Ombudsman.

* (13:40)

Mr. Pallister: The Premier claims that he urged the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) to come clean and be forthcoming, and he is doing neither of those things. Is this his final answer, or does he want to call a communicator? I mean, they seem to be calling the shots over there.

And we all understand—we, all of us, understand, including MLAs over on that side—why the Premier might not like to put more bad news out; he's had lots of it. The spring of 2012 was Jets tickets. The summer was a by-election in Fort Whyte. He doesn't

want to make announcements, then copy the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald). In the fall, new tax hikes are starting to irritate Manitobans and the polls reflect that. All 2013 it's an agenda of higher taxes for Manitobans and taking away the right to vote.

So I get that they don't want to pile on bad news on bad news, but that's a cover-up, Mr. Speaker, a cover-up of a cover-up, and Manitobans deserve better. And then they wait 'til Christmas to release the information.

Will the Premier stop the cover-up and tell us the day that he learned the truth?

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, after the Ombudsman commenced the investigation into the affairs related to the resolution and the role the former minister played in that, it came to my attention that the former minister had played a role in directing civil servants to invite members of the public down to the Legislature to hear this matter. When that came to my attention, I made it clear that the former minister should co-operate with the Ombudsman, which the former minister did.

And subsequently, the Ombudsman brought out a report with a recommendation into it with respect to guidelines. The former minister has corrected the record and made her apology, and we are going to follow and take seriously the recommendation of the Ombudsman for guidelines.

So, as I've said, it would be approximately in the summer of 2012 that this came to my attention, and we have fully co-operated with the Ombudsman's investigation as it has proceeded and he dealt with this matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the member for Riel's (Ms. Melnick) forthcoming to the Ombudsman is to be commended, but the Premier's lack of being forthcoming is not commendable.

Now, this Premier and this government have made their inability to be forthcoming and to keep their word an issue. They have broken promises on seniors' tax cuts. They have broken promises on the PST. They've broken promises on balancing the books of this Province. And the Premier's stubborn refusal to answer my repeated question simply reinforces this distrust; he is becoming his own worst enemy.

And again I give him the opportunity to be straightforward. I give him the opportunity to come clean and be forthright.

On what date did he first learn he had misled this House?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, once the Ombudsman commenced his investigation, relatively early on, it came to my attention—and I've now said that that would likely be the summer of 2012—it came to my attention that the former minister had, in fact, played a role in directing civil servants to come down—to invite the public down to the Legislature to hear this resolution that we are—we debated in the Legislature. And I encouraged and made my expectation clear that the former minister co-operate with the Ombudsman, which the former minister did.

The Ombudsman concluded his investigation. He made a recommendation as to how this matter should be dealt with in the future with guidelines to be put in place. We have followed up on that recommendation and are awaiting the guidelines and the proposals from the Civil Service Commissioner, which we will then put in place to prevent these kinds of activities occurring in the future where there is the possible perception of partisanship when a resolution comes before this House.

This, after all, Mr. Speaker, was a matter that we all believed was very important to the future of Manitoba. Immigration and settlement services are fundamental to our ability to attract and retain a growing population in Manitoba—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

Elimination of Provincial Deficit Government Record

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not clear, but one thing is clear, that this NDP government made promises to Manitobans in the last election. Promises made, promises broken.

And one of those promises was to eliminate the deficit by this year. And despite historically low interest rates, despite record transfer payments and despite record government revenues, that deficit for the year now stands at \$432 million. It is not put away.

I want to ask this Minister of Finance: Why did the NDP break their promise to Manitobans?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): As I recall the last election, the member opposite was campaigning on a promise not to balance the books

'til 2018. That was the promise that he made in that election.

I would like to table for the member opposite some analysis of the budget by Laurentian Bank, and I would refer him to the part where it says: Even if it could be possible to return to balance one year earlier, the province has appropriately decided to not sacrifice key services to its population at the expense of a better bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, the Laurentian Bank gets that short-term cuts are—cause long-term pain for families. When will the opposition get it?

Mr. Friesen: I want to refer the Finance Minister to the third-quarter financial results, because she didn't indicate in her response that, because of massive overspending, the deficit this year is actually much worse except that she caught a lucky break when a cold winter and high water levels resulted in huge Manitoba Hydro profits that worked to mask the extent of NDP overspending this time.

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains they blew their budget.

How can the NDP say this time they have a plan, this time they have the numbers figured out correctly? Why should Manitobans believe them this time?

Ms. Howard: I'll refer him to the following paragraph of the Laurentian Bank's analysis of the budget where it says: In addition to showing strong fiscal discipline, Budget 2014 efficiently addresses specific challenges the province faces. More precisely, 2014 budget commits to reach its goal of providing jobs, a stable economy and key services that families count on.

The banks get that cutting today which will hurt families and destroy jobs is not a recipe for economic success. The opposition still doesn't get that. They still want to go back to the blueprint they tried in the '90s where they fired nurses and teachers, and they put the province on the wrong path.

We're on the right path. We're moving forward. The bank—the Laurentian Bank tells us that that is true. This is a good budget for Manitobans.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, they sell off the land registry unit, they raid Manitoba Hydro, they perpetrate the largest tax hike on Manitobans, gas is up, vehicle registration is up, and the result? They still can't balance their budget.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP government told Manitobans they would eliminate the deficit as of this budget and they broke their promise, and now they are saying that they have new targets to reduce the deficit for the upcoming year.

Mr. Speaker, what Manitobans want to know is: What spectacular, extraordinary event is the Minister of Finance hoping for this time around that'll help her get closer to her target? Because one thing is clear, they can't stop their overspending.

Ms. Howard: Well, there he goes again. He is so committed to his single-minded approach to cut services for families at any cost, an approach that the Laurentian Bank says is not the right approach, an approach that other economies have tried and has been shown to be the wrong approach.

But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, he campaigned on balancing the budget a year later than we say we're going to balance the budget. He campaigned on that.

And when the Leader of the Opposition was last making budgets, they had higher business taxes than anywhere else in the country. Today we have the lowest taxes on business in this country while we protect services, while we try to work with business to create jobs and while we work towards balancing the budget in a responsible way. That's the approach we're taking [*inaudible*]

Manitoba Economy Impact of Tax Increases

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Last Friday Statistics Canada released their Labour Force Survey for February, and once again Manitoba is at the bottom of the barrel. Manitoba's job creation numbers are dead last in Canada with a reported loss of nearly 5,500 jobs.

My question to the Minister for Jobs and the Economy: How is this good for our economy here in Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member for the question. And, certainly, looking at month comparisons is instructive, but, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the member that a snapshot in time versus a wider view is not particularly helpful.

What I can tell the member is that since the onset of the global recession, Manitoba's annual economic growth, Mr. Speaker, has been second best in Canada. Further, since the global recession began—I would think a salient point for the member

opposite—our economy has added, in fact, over 25,000 jobs in the private sector. In the past five years our private sector growth has far exceeded the national average at 4.8, Canada only being 3.2.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, according to the prosperity report by the Manitoba Employers Council, it says, and I quote: Manitoba remains dead last among its neighbours when it comes to average weekly earnings. End quote.

Clearly, the high-tax-and-spend policies of this NDP government are hurting the Manitoba economy.

What is this minister's plan to scrape off the—scrape us off the bottom of the barrel and make us more competitive with other provinces? Is her plan to raise the PST again? Is that what her plan is?

Ms. Oswald: Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, our plan is to invest \$5.5 billion in creating important core infrastructure that industry and community leaders have supported. They've advised us. We went and spoke to these leaders. They very clearly said to us, invest in core infrastructure that will absolutely have a great value add to our economy going forward.

And as an aside, obviously, to them, I can say that this \$5.5-billion plan, according to the Conference Board of Canada, will create north of 58,000 jobs now and will create prosperity in the future. That's our plan.

Mrs. Stefanson: Manitobans know that these—this NDP government has underspent their infrastructure for the last number of years, so they don't believe that they're going to do that now.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba continues to fall further behind other provinces in Canada. We are tied for dead last in employment, dead last west of Quebec for average weekly earnings. We are the highest taxes west of New Brunswick. What part of dead last doesn't this minister get, Mr. Speaker?

Will the Minister for Jobs and the Economy just admit that her high-tax-and-spend policies continue to leave Manitoba at a competitive disadvantage with other provinces in this country?

Ms. Oswald: Well, the very report that she was citing in her previous question itself says that Manitoba employment has increased by 14 per cent since the year 2000. The same report acknowledges the fact, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba is the only province with zero small-business—with a zero

small-business tax rate. Manitoba's seen a 7 per cent increase in the number of Canadian corporate head offices here in Manitoba.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. Did she only read part of the report?

School Bus Cameras Public Consultations

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, one of the roles of the new Minister of Education is to protect the children of this province. He is supposed to do everything in his power to listen to all the groups and concerned citizens in this province.

Mr. Speaker, today he outright dismissed an initiative that could have directly addressed student safety.

Mr. Speaker, who does this new minister listen to before he makes decisions that affect the safety of our children?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank the member for the question.

Let's be honest. There is nothing—nothing—more important than the safety and security of our children when they're going to and from school.

That's why there are very significant deterrents already in place, over \$650 sine if you pass a school bus, a couple of demerit points off your licence if you pass a school bus. Put simply, it is simply illegal to pass a school bus.

So my advice is to all drivers. If you see a big yellow bus in front of you, if you see the strobe light on, if you see the stop sign come out, stop, wait, protect our children.

Mr. Ewasko: According to the video, that doesn't seem to be 'resignating' with people in the province.

Mr. Speaker, children deserve to be safe in this province when they go to school. Parents deserve to know that their children are safe when they go to this school. The new Minister of Education is supposed to listen to the groups from around the province on issues of safety.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question is simple, and I'll break it down for him: How many groups did the new Minister of Education meet with before he made the decision to not support school bus cameras? Will he table that list today?

Mr. Allum: As I said in my earlier answer, nothing is more important than the safety and security of our children when they're going to and from school.

No province in Canada has the kind of law in mind that the member has.

And in addition to that, we make sure that the law is already in place by having a very significant fine as a deterrent, demerit points off your licence.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the answer to making sure our kids are safe is simple. You see the big bus, you see the strobe light, you see the stop sign, stop, for God's sake.

Mr. Ewasko: The new Minister of Education said today on CJOB, and I quote, we are talking about a fraction of something that might happen in a hypothetical circumstance.

The safety of the children in this province, Mr. Speaker, is important all of the time, and a hundred per cent of children deserve to be safe at school and on their way to school, not just some small fraction. We are not talking about some single hypothetical circumstances. We are talking about the safety of all children in this province who this minister should be protecting.

Mr. Speaker, when will this new minister start to protect all children in Manitoba, start listening to concerned parents and education staff in this province and stop dealing in hypothetical circumstances?

Mr. Allum: Again, I thank the member for the question.

It is a critical issue about making sure that our kids are safe on their way to school, on their way home from school and at school.

That's why last year, when we passed Bill 18 to make sure—for safe and secure schools, classrooms for all of our children, we talked to every Manitoban. We consulted. We made sure. The only people in the province of Manitoba who were opposed to protecting children were the people right across the way, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Charleswood has the floor.

STARS Helicopter Service Wheeler Report

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, the early version of the Wheeler report was very damaging to STARS. It also contained a number of errors, which I find troubling. So it was sent back to Dr. Wheeler for a rewrite. But it appears that somebody doesn't like STARS very much and leaked this confidential report to the CBC.

Considering only a handful of people had this report, can the Minister of Health tell us who leaked the report?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, these are very, very serious concerns that the member has been—raised, and I can assure you that we take these issues very seriously. Once those concerns were raised with the department, steps were immediately taken, including making sure that the Ombudsman was contacted.

Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. This is unacceptable. Privacy is an important part of our system. Patients deserve to know that their privacy is protected. It is absolutely unacceptable that a patient's privacy would be breached at any time in any way.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, a leaked report of this magnitude is an extremely serious issue. Surely, if this minister was in charge of her department, she would have been extremely upset about the leak and she would have tried to find the reason somebody leaked it and who leaked it.

Did she not make that effort to find out if that leak came from her department?

Ms. Selby: As I said in my first answer, as soon as these concerns were raised, steps were immediately taken, including contacting the ombudsperson, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very serious accusation, Mr. Speaker. It is not acceptable for a patient's privacy to be breached, if it were so, in such a manner. We expect our patients to have the right to privacy. We expect that to be respected.

Mrs. Driedger: I note that the Minister of Health is not answering that question, and I do find that troubling.

The Minister of Health has not been very transparent about STARS' grounding from day one,

and it's time that we get the whole story out there and not cover up important details.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if she will release the written response that she would have received regarding the Wheeler report that she would have received from STARS. Is she prepared to release that report and make it public?

* (14:00)

Ms. Selby: As we have said from the beginning, from the time when we followed medical advice to temporarily suspend the service, we promised to release the report by Dr. Wheeler, and, of course, we did release the report by Dr. Wheeler.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very big difference in how things were done in the '90s when they were in government. There was no law in place in the 1990s that would require medical errors to be reported or investigated. In the '90s when they were in government, when her leader sat around the Cabinet table, medical problems were ignored. They were swept under the rug, and opportunities to learn, to improve and to do better practice were missed. That's what happened in the '90s. Unfortunately, several lives were lost over some situations where they still swept problems at the pediatric cardiac surgery under the rug. Unfortunately—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

PST Revenues Infrastructure Spending

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, page 16 of the budget papers shows that the government will receive \$196 million in revenue from the increase in the PST in the fiscal year just ending but will only spend \$125 million of this on core infrastructure this year. Now, the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue show that the remaining \$71 million has been spent on items other than core infrastructure. The Premier said in his Throne Speech that every dollar raised from the new point of PST will be fully dedicated to new investments in core infrastructure.

I ask the Premier: Why has he already broken his commitment and spent that \$71 million on items other than additional core infrastructure spending?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, last week when we released our Five-Year Plan to Build a Stronger Manitoba, with respect to core infrastructure, on page 12 it indicates very clearly the

\$71 million will be rolled over into future years and will be invested in infrastructure. As a matter of fact, we indicate that our base spending plus the PST money will total \$5.147 billion, and, in addition, we've put another \$420 million aside to be able to cost-share with the federal government their infrastructure Building Canada Fund investment, which will be about \$235 million, less than 5 per cent of our total plan over the next five years.

So the money will be rolled forward. It will be accounted for on an annual basis on which projects it's spent in, and the entire five-year plan is laid out on page 12 of the plan that was put forward last week in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: We've had many plans before which never were pursued.

Mr. Speaker, the \$71 million, if they were legitimately set aside and rolled over, as the Premier phrased—phrased it last Thursday, the budget book of the government's revenues and expenditures would show it as a budgeted set-aside. It doesn't. Instead, the government's book on expenditures and revenues shows that every single dollar of that \$71 million has been spent on items other than additional core infrastructure.

Given the Premier's words, why did he break his promise and not spend all the money raised by the increase in the PST, money that he said was desperately needed last year, on additional core infrastructure as he promised?

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's fully accounted for on page 12 of the five-year plan.

An additional \$420 million has been set aside over and above the PST in core infrastructure spending, by the way, a historic, record level of spending on infrastructure never seen before in the province of Manitoba: 58,000 jobs, \$6-billion boost to the economy, very significant involvement in growing the Manitoba economy both in the short term and putting assets in place that will generate economic prosperity with good infrastructure in the long-term; \$420 million, ample room within there to fully take up the \$71 million and make additional resources available to cost-share the federal Building Canada Fund, which will be about \$235 million.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are not fools. In 2011 the Premier said he was never going to raise the PST and, of course, last year he did.

The Premier said he would spend every dollar raised by the new point in PST on additional core infrastructure, and now the budget papers show clearly that there was \$71 million raised last year by the extra point in PST which was not spent on core infrastructure; it was spent elsewhere. The Premier continues to reinforce, sadly, his lack of credibility.

I ask the Premier: Why did he and his government spend that \$71 million raised by increasing the PST on items other than additional core infrastructure?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have said since the outset that we are going to ramp up this infrastructure investment program with earlier tenders, more training.

The \$71 million is more than offset by \$21 million over and above the commitment next year, it's offset by \$66 million over and above the commitment in 2015-16, it's offset by \$79 million over and above the base commitment in '16-17, \$103 million over and above the base commitment in '17-18 and \$151 million over the base commitment in '18-19. We are delivering more value than the PST generates in infrastructure investment. It will be accounted for every year.

All the member has to do is look at page 12 and all the answers to his questions are there. All he has to do is read.

CentrePort Canada Way Extension Plans

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, this government continues to make historic investments in core infrastructure that Manitobans rely on. On this side of the House we have a focused plan to create good jobs, grow our economy and build opportunities for young people to raise their families right here in communities in our province.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation please tell us about the key investment in major Manitoba trade route announced earlier today?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased earlier today to join with Diane Gray from CentrePort, Terry Shaw from the MTA, Mike Major from CAA Manitoba, the Minister of Healthy Living and Steven Fletcher, the MP for the area, to announce \$150-million investment in the Headingley bypass, finishing the work on the existing alignment of Highway 1. And I want to say I'm particularly

proud is this government took a project that was going to take probably about 25 to 30 years to get around to doing, our goal is to start it and to finish it over the next five years.

So the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, this is a great province. It's got a great people, great future, and today's announcement was a great step forward for the people of Manitoba, particularly in the west end of the city and in Headingley.

Mining Exploration Government Intention

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, just like today's answers, last week's budget was full of twists on the truth. This is true of comments made on the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, the budget speech indicated that Manitoba continues to be among the most attractive jurisdictions for mineral exploration. The fact is the reality is far from this statement, as Manitoba is falling out of favour with investors.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know the NDP have broken their promises before, but I ask the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard): Why did the minister choose to mislead Manitobans in this important area?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to reply to the member that as we speak the largest mine in Manitoba history, in fact, the largest mine in a generation, is being completed at Snow Lake, called Lalor mine.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, last week at the PDAC meeting that I was at in Toronto we heard from several exploration companies that are talking about Manitoba gold, Manitoba nickel, Manitoba potash, all potential mines that are being explored and developed as we speak because we have one of the lowest rates of taxation on mining in the country and we have the best incentives of all provinces in the country with respect to mining exploration.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're also hearing about exploration companies wanting to leave the province of Manitoba.

The most recent Fraser Institute report clearly shows Manitoba moving in the wrong direction in terms of encouraging investment. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the NDP are sensitive about third-party reports that they don't pay for, but this survey asked mining companies, including exploration companies, their opinion on the attractiveness on doing business

in a given jurisdiction. Under this NDP government, Manitoba now ranks 21st in the world, down from our No. 1 ranking. We are now ranked second worst—the second worst province in Canada in which to invest in mining activities.

The NDP barely mentioned mining in their budget.

Why did the NDP fail this important industry here in Manitoba?

* (14:10)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, that would be the same Fraser Institute that wanted us to privatize home care and go on American-style health-care system. That's the same institute.

In addition to the outstanding expansion at Lalor mine, we've also seen the reinstatement of the Vale operation, Mr. Speaker, and a commitment by HudBay to develop 1-D and move forward in terms of construction and hiring of the individuals at that mine to provide a future to Thompson.

So, Mr. Speaker, not only do we have the largest mine in a generation being developed, but Vale is being back in the field developing and going forward to employ more Manitobans, to provide development to that city of Thompson, to provide a future for another 20, 25 years, to lead the province.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, the mining companies from around the world have 'degraded' our mining from No. 1 down to No. 21 under this government. We are the second last among provinces in terms of attracting investment.

Investment money goes where it's wanted and, clearly, it's not wanted here in Manitoba. Under NDP policy and their inability to manage this file, it's driving investment money out of the province, Mr. Speaker. The NDP have failed to recognize this, and it's a critical mistake for the NDP and for the mining industry.

Why is the NDP refusing to—not to tap into this valuable resource and to help spin off and better the economy here in Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: I often wondered why that Fraser Institute that wanted us to privatize health care and to make an American-style health-care system would make some of these determinations about mining when, in fact, that very same entity said that we had the No. 1 jurisdiction in the world with respect to petroleum and petroleum development.

And, in fact, we've seen more money and more investment in petroleum and mining, Mr. Speaker, in the billions of dollars and up to 5,000 Manitobans working and with the development of Lalor mine and the further developments with respect to the mines that are south of that and some of the gold mines that met with us, who said, by the way, that Manitoba's energy rates, which are the lowest in the country, are another reason why people are wanting to come to Manitoba to invest and have the lowest hydroelectric rates in all of the country.

Average Weekly Earnings Western Canadian Comparison

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, in last week's lame, do-nothing budget, the government neglected to mention that Manitoba has the lowest average weekly earnings in western Canada. We place dead last. Not just did the government neglect to mention that Manitoba has the lowest average weekly earnings in western Canada but also neglected to address this issue in their do-nothing budget.

My question is: Why is this NDP government running away from its dismal record?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member for the question. I would note that nowhere in that question, not for about three thousand miles of that question, was there any reference whatsoever to the \$5.5-billion infrastructure plan, Mr. Speaker.

We consulted with industry, with community leaders, who said, invest in core infrastructure that will help drive our economy into the future in key projects, but, Mr. Speaker, the jobs that will result, according to the Conference Board of Canada, just about 60,000 jobs, will be very high-paying jobs, high-skilled, high-paying jobs that will be good for our children, for our grandchildren.

I just don't understand why, in no way at all, the member opposite can get his head around that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: And while I'm on my feet, I'd like to draw the attention of the honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from HBNI-ITV System out of Fairholme school 19 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Evelyn Maendel. This group is located in the

constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome all of you here this afternoon.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Now we'll proceed to members' statements.

Commonwealth Day

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Every year, diverse countries from around the world celebrate Commonwealth Day on the second Monday of March. The Commonwealth is a unique organization in its own right for many reasons. What makes it special is that it has united so many nations from across the world, bridging ethnic, religious and linguistic differences to stand united under one banner. As Manitobans and Canadians, we take pride in belonging to this fellowship of nations.

Mr. Speaker, in the past, members of diverse Commonwealth countries have come together in times of need as well as times of celebration. For example, over 65,000 Sikh soldiers from India fought in World War I as part of the British Army, which gave them opportunity to immigrate throughout the Commonwealth, including to cities like Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, this May, Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, are coming to Manitoba for a royal visit on a tour through Canada. I know many seniors in Tyndall Park are looking forward to the opportunity to see the royal family again. Many people can still remember the royal family members.

Mr. Speaker, we are privileged to have the partnerships and goodwill Canada has during times of international upheaval. I hope that members of the Legislature will join me in sending our best wishes to Her Majesty and our Commonwealth friends from around the world.

Thank you.

Manitoba Starch Products

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Starch Products of Carberry is the only food-grade potato starch manufacturer in all of Canada, derived from potatoes produced by Canadian processors without the use of genetic modification. I am pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge two brothers, Earl and Derek

McLaren, who bought Manitoba Starch in January of 2002 and turned it into a successful enterprise. They have been farming potatoes since the early 1980s and have been recognized as one of the leading growers of—in the province of Manitoba. In 2002, Earl and Derek purchased the property right across the road from where they'd been farming for potatoes for 23 years.

The original owner made a starch co-product from french fry and potato chip industry that was often used in recycled cardboard products and in fertilizer plants. Eric and Darryl—Earl and Derek saw a much greater potential, and they converted the operation to manufacture potato starch for human and pet consumption. By 2004, the food-grade expansion was complete. Their addition of food-grade quality processing, packaging and monitoring equipment expanded the market to include food and food ingredient manufacturers.

The process of removal of the starch starts in four—Manitoba's french fry and potato chip factories: McCain Foods, Portage la Prairie and Carberry; Simplot in Portage; and Old Dutch Foods in Winnipeg. The process of removing the starch during the production at the factories dramatically reduces the amount of water used, which is a huge plus for the environment and adds value to a co-product. It also provides many jobs.

The company also has a close connection with the gluten-free industry, which is continuing to grow. Potato starch is as—is excellent as a replacement for wheat flour or cornstarch in gluten-free products. McLarens sell starch to some of the largest manufacturers in Canada, as when—well as many smaller clients, including bakeries that replace flour with potato starch. Potato starch is also used in the food age—in the pet food age—industry as a binding agent. And one of the other products is especially useful in gut health for the hog industry.

Since 2004, Manitoba Starch Products has continuously improved its facilities through the addition of new packaging systems, improved raw material handling, additional lab capabilities and a newer dryer with increased capacity.

Earl and Derek McLaren took a huge risk and threw themselves into something they admit they knew nothing about. Through hard work and determination, their initiative has worked out better than expected and they have turned this 'businet' into Canada's only potato starch manufacturer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating Earl and Derek McLaren for their continued success.

Thank you.

West Broadway BIZ

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to thank the West Broadway Business Improvement Zone for its role in our community. Annual events such as the West Broadway Art City parade, the Sherbrook Street Festival and the West Broadway 5ish–West Broadway Youth Outreach 5ish Fun Run are held in the heart of the West Broadway–Sherbrook Street corridor—have I said West Broadway often enough?

* (14:20)

This area has become a very special gathering piece—place featuring many new businesses where people come to celebrate and enjoy their community. Representing over a hundred businesses in the area, the West Broadway BIZ's mission is to enhance the vibrant neighbourhood it calls home. From improving business images and storefront to street-side cleanliness and safety, the BIZ is focused on responding to not only the needs of its business members but also to all residents and visitors of the area.

In the past six years alone, 20 new businesses have opened in West Broadway. These include a range of restaurants and coffee shops to an IT company and a big-box clothing store, all representing the diversity of opportunity this neighbourhood has to offer.

The West Broadway BIZ is supporting our growing business community through several new projects. The first is the online mapping tool of available commercial space so that new businesses can look to see the spaces that are available for them to open. The BIZ has also completed a master plan to renew the main thoroughfares of West Broadway. Landscaping, introducing local signage, creating better cycling routes and strengthening the character and identity of West Broadway are just some of the ways the BIZ is hoping to continue the rejuvenation of this important central neighbourhood.

Mr. Speaker, the West Broadway BIZ has become a truly integral part of the neighbourhood. The organization's dedication to creating a strong and sustainable community is a thrill to all who call West Broadway and the Wolseley neighbourhoods home.

I want to thank the BIZ executive director, Leah McCormick; board members such as local city councillor Jenny Gerbasi; and all those involved for their fantastic contributions to our local community.

Thank you.

Megan Imrie

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I am proud to rise in the House today and honour an Olympian from my constituency, Megan Imrie. Megan is a biathlete, a sport that combines cross-country skiing and marksmanship.

Megan's road to the Olympics started when she was just six years old. She watched Myriam Bédard win Olympic bronze in the biathlon at the Albertville Olympics, and that was enough to spark Megan's interest in the sport. From such a young age, Megan has been focused on training and working towards representing her hometown of Falcon Lake and her country at the Winter Olympics.

Megan made her debut at the 2008 world championships and went on to compete in the 2009 worlds where she earned the right to compete in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. Her family and friends all travelled to Vancouver and were caught on TV with signs that spelled out: Go, Megan, go.

Megan was invited to—in the 2012 worlds and the 2013 world cup in preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. In Sochi, Megan finished 31st in the 7.5-kilometre sprint, 28th in the 10-kilometre pursuit, 30th in the 15-kilometre individual, 27th in the 12.5-kilometre mass start and an impressive 8th in the four-by-six relay.

It costs about \$20,000 a year to compete in the sport of biathlon, including all of the equipment and training costs. Megan has to raise this money on top of working full time and her intense training schedule to prepare herself for the Olympic Games. Thanks to many sponsors and many fundraisers and Megan's tireless work ethic, her Olympic dream is alive and well, and we might see her in the 2018 Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Megan on her accomplishments in the 2010 and 2014 Olympic Winter Games, and I wish her nothing but the best in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Rainbow Pride Mosaic LGBT Awareness Week

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, this week students at the University of Manitoba are celebrating diversity, pride and equality at the LGBTTTQ Awareness Week. The annual event is organized by Rainbow Pride Mosaic, the LGBTTTQ student group on campus, and features educational booths, movie screenings and art displays for all students to enjoy. After many years of success, the event is expanding to also feature keynote speakers and discussion panels.

Rainbow Pride 'musoic' has a rich history stretching back to the early 1970s when the Campus Gay Club was created to represent the interests of gay students at the University of Manitoba. Since then, the group has grown and its mandate has expanded. Today Rainbow Pride Mosaic provides a safe place for students on campus and works to improve the quality of student life for the university's LGBTTTQ community. Through awareness, education and safety programs, Rainbow Pride Mosaic is an important part of student advocacy at the University of Manitoba.

Of the over 28,000 staff and students at the U of M, more than 1,100 are identified as LGBTTTQ. In 2006, they voted for a dedicated LGBTTTQ rep on the University of Manitoba Students' Union.

Mr. Speaker, we see time and time again the importance of having groups that advocate for and provide resources to the LGBTTTQ community. By providing a safe space and engaging people in meaningful dialogue, Rainbow Pride Mosaic is creating a more inclusive learning environment so that all students reach their full potential.

I want to thank Jay Rahn, the co-ordinator at Rainbow Pride Mosaic, for organizing an exciting line-up of events this week, and I also extend my best wishes to all LGBTTTQ students and their allies at the University of Manitoba. This week you celebrate your diversity, reminding all of us to promote inclusion all year round.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Under rule 32(5), I advise that the budget debate is being interrupted for debate on the government resolution on democracy in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that under government business that debate on the budget is being interrupted under rule 32(5) to permit debate on the government resolution on democracy in Ukraine.

GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

Democracy in Ukraine

Mr. Speaker: So we'll now proceed to the government resolution sponsored by the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources, and the title of the resolution is Democracy in Ukraine.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members of the House.

I move, seconded by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

WHEREAS Manitoba's identity and cultural landscape have been shaped by strong historical ties with Ukraine; and

WHEREAS democracy, human rights and a strong civil society are values that Manitobans hold dear and want to see respected in a united Ukraine and around the world; and

WHEREAS all Manitobans have expressed deep concern over violence that occurred against democratic protesters under former President Viktor Yanukovich; and

WHEREAS those who sought freedom in Ukraine paid a high price and the people of Ukraine deserve a future where they enjoy the same rights as the people of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the new government of Ukraine will be undertaking free and fair elections this spring, so that all citizens of Ukraine can exercise their democratic rights; and

WHEREAS in the interest of peace and democracy, the international community has condemned violence in Ukraine, including Russia's military intervention which is a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba is working together with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to provide humanitarian assistance for local organizations in Ukraine who are providing medical care for those injured activists.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize and

congratulate the new government of Ukraine, and encourage Manitobans to participate as international observers in upcoming elections; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba stand with the Ukrainian people through their struggle for freedom and strongly condemn all violence and anti-democratic acts both in Ukraine and perpetrated against Ukraine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba express its condolences to the families and friends of those who were tragically killed during the demonstrations and the Euromaidan movement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), seconded by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

WHEREAS Manitoba's identity and—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The honourable minister—the resolution is in order.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and again I wish to thank all members of the House; the member for St. Paul in particular, who is an opposition member, as all members would know; the leader of the Liberal Party; and all members of the House for providing unanimous consent for this resolution come forward and for assisting us in bringing forward this resolution.

* (14:30)

And I want to thank the individuals who are here from the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, provincial council of Manitoba, many of whom are up in the gallery, as well as people from SUM and other organizations who've spent countless hours in—by organizing, by participating and by raising the issue of Ukrainians and their Ukrainian plight that they are facing now. I want to thank them for attending those events, organizing and helping us as a government, all of us to work towards the ultimate goal of real democracy in a united Ukraine. I want to thank them for that.

I want to thank the Premier (Mr. Selinger) for his wisdom and insight in contacting other

government organizations and other governments in order to participate and assist in providing aid to people in Ukraine. I want to thank the federal government for the outstanding work that they have done in providing for Canada being one of the leading countries in providing assistance and support to Ukraine, and Minister Baird and the member for Selkirk, Mr. Bezan, who has also been very active in participating.

I want to thank the Polish community, the Jewish committee, the Latvian community, the United States, Britain, all organizations and countries that have come to the fore and stood proudly with all of us here in Manitoba and Ukraine. I want to thank them for coming forward on this very significant time and this very significant issue, Mr. Speaker.

There is no—probably no better example of democracy than what we have in this Chamber, where we've just spent an hour disagreeing about issues and disagreeing with some ideas, but coming together, and I suspect it will be unanimously, too, to fight for democracy and talk about the freedoms that we have and the unique and wonderful opportunities we have in this province, in this country, to express ourselves, to have the ability to vote, to have the ability to express our opinions and not be afraid, Mr. Speaker, and not be in fear of violence, not be in fear of being condemned and not be in fear of jailed. We have such a wonderful civilization, such a wonderful society here, and we look—and we've been able and blessed to come together and have an opportunity to reflect on what we have and how we can assist those in Ukraine—in Ukraine—today.

Mr. Speaker, in 1919, if you're in Paris 1919, Ukraine was forgotten. It was shuffled away. In the 1932-1933, Ukraine was forgotten and shuffled away, and no one believed what was happening in that part of the world. Today, in the rallies that are taking place around the world, in the efforts that are being expressed in legislatures just like this and on street corners and in rallies across Canada, in efforts of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and other organizations to raise the plight and work that people are doing on social media, we are aware of right now of a country under siege, a country that could be faced with losing its democratic rights and its principles, if not its sovereignty.

As we speak, we have a duty and an obligation to speak up on their behalf because, Mr. Speaker, the extent to which we're able to share our democracy with others is a reflection of not only what we

believe in but how we believe the world ought to operate under rule of law, under rule of the democratic principle, under the right to speak freely.

It's often said the first casualty of war is truth. Mr. Speaker, prior to that happening, there's a—casualties that occur, and we're seeing that today in Ukraine. We're seeing propaganda coming out that attempts to put a different slant on what's happening in Ukraine. And I don't fault the Russian people, but I do fault the administration of Vladimir Putin for the tactics that it is using and the story that it's putting out about what is happening in Ukraine today. And the stories and some of the slants that are put on those stories are very similar to what's happened in Russia over the past 20 years, since Mr. Putin came to power. Is it by accident that dissidents have disappeared? Is it by accidents that people get put into jail? Is it by accidents that companies become, all of a sudden, privatized and people become multi-billionaires? I can't say it's directly involved to one particular individual, but certainly those who work with that individual have complied in some of these things happening. And they could very well happen to Ukraine unless the countries of the Western world and the democracies of this world stand up for Ukraine today and tomorrow and prevent what's happening in Crimea, prevent a dislocation and an invasion or a loss of status in eastern Ukraine and prevent the undermining of incipient democracy of people who want only what we have: the freedom to live, to speak, and to practise their religion in a place where they're—they don't have no fear nor favour from authorities.

It's easy to give advice from our location. It's very safe for me to speak in this Legislature. It's very safe to speak out in a democracy, Mr. Speaker, and it's very easy to take the moral high ground. It's much harder when you're in Independent Square in Kiev and there's guns staring you down, and there's propaganda coming in, and you're there day after day. But I want to give credit to those people of Euromaidan, of Maidan in Kiev who stood their ground day after day, week after week, month after month in a non-violent fashion.

The attractiveness and the validity of what's happening today is not so much a question of the violence that was precipitated in the last few weeks, but rather it's a question of the purpose and the efforts and the strength and the moral fiber shown by those people who stood there day after day and faced those obstacles, Mr. Speaker, in order to speak up for a free and democratic Ukraine. And it's those values

that we want to support and it's those values that we want to celebrate.

I want to take a very positive tone to this because I know many people—we've attended—many of us in this Chamber, I know, have attended many, many events and many supports and we've been educated, and most of the people that I've talked to are quite fearful, as I am, of what might happen in Ukraine. But I want to take a positive note. This week the Premier (Mr. Selinger) announced that it's going to be Taras Shevchenko Week in Manitoba. Taras Shevchenko being the bard and the universal poet, and a man of tremendous stature who helped the Ukrainian language survive, who developed some of the most prophetic and profound poetry in history. In fact, the poem, *My Testament*, Mr. Speaker, has been translated into a hundred languages. That man, and what he spoke of on the anniversary of his birth 200 years ago, talked about a free Ukraine, and he talked about a free united Ukraine. And I suggest that for the first time in 200 years we are closer to a free and united Ukraine than any time in the past 500 years. And I'm saying to—and I'd like to suggest to all members of this House and this province that with skillful diplomacy, with the use of economic sanctions and with the use of the iron determination of the Ukrainian people and the people of the West that free democratic united Ukraine can prevail, and we can play a part in Manitoba in supporting that by not only our donations, but our support.

One of the issues that's come up quite recently now, Mr. Speaker, is the whole issue of a potential of an armed conflict. That can be avoided—that can be avoided. And Manitoba—and I know people this Chamber and from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Canada, the federal government supports strongly having people on the ground. We need people on the ground from Canada from today through the election, through post-election to witness what is going on so the Ukraine is not forgotten as it was in past years. And we need people there to ensure that the determination of moral high ground, the determination of peace and the determination of a free Ukraine does not get put on the back or—backburner when other world events arise.

Mr. Speaker, the Budapest agreement of 2004 which guaranteed the sovereignty to Ukraine by Britain, by United States, subsequently by China, ought to be enforced. We in Canada are doing a marvellous job. We in Manitoba are doing a marvellous job. Let's continue the fight to raise, as

Taras Shevchenko said, to remove the irons from Ukraine and let that soul of that man finally rest, as it said he would, when there was a free and united Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to begin by thanking the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for his comments, and I appreciate his work and his initiative, as I do the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), and I thank him as well for presenting and making sure that this important motion came before the House today. We appreciate that and we thank him very much.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, in our time in this Chamber, we have many moments of debate and disagreement, and the member is quite right in pointing out that this is most certainly not one of those moments. In this moment, we stand together not only as Manitobans but as Canadians and as free people, and we stand united in our condemnation of Russia's violation of the sovereignty of Ukraine, and we stand united in our call for the international community to protect the independence of Ukraine, and we stand united in our hope for a future for Ukraine that is peaceful and democratic and free. Russia's violation of Ukrainian sovereignty is unacceptable. The territorial integrity and self-determination of Ukraine are non-negotiable, and the international community has condemned rightly the unjust actions of Russia, and all of us in this House are using this opportunity today to join in that condemnation.

Mr. Speaker, as Manitobans, we believe in the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and a strong civil society. And as Manitobans, we have the right to share our views, disagree with one another and try to make changes, and we can do that without fearing for our lives. This is what we wish for the Ukrainian people: a future where they have the same freedoms that we do here in Manitoba and that we too often, I think, take for granted; a future where they can live in peace and security in a unified nation; and a future that is freely determined by the Ukrainian people, not an outside power.

The new government of Ukraine will be holding free and fair elections. There will be an opportunity for the voice of the Ukrainian people to be heard in that process. We support this process because it is the Ukrainian people and only the Ukrainian people

who should decide the future of their nation. When Ukraine's elections get under way, Manitobans will have the opportunity to take part. As the member for Kildonan has referenced, international observers are needed, and we encourage Manitobans to get involved in that process. There's a chance now for us to show how deeply we are connected with Ukraine, how strongly we wish to see the future of Ukraine be hopeful and be free.

Mr. Speaker, those who fought against the violence and oppression of the Yanukovich regime paid a very high price. Many paid with their lives or suffered serious injuries. By refusing to back down in the face of violence and oppression, the Ukrainian people have shown incredible strength and incredible courage. We honour that courage and we stand with the Ukrainian people.

Ukrainian Canadian Congress and others have done incredible work supporting the people of Ukraine. Many Manitobans of Ukrainian descent are making important contributions, supporting Ukrainian families who have lost loved ones. And many other Manitobans have risen to the challenge of joining with our Ukrainian community here in Manitoba and offering their support, encouragement and generosity of spirit. It is this spirit of generosity and compassion that inspires all of us here and inspires, I think, all Manitobans, and it is one of the defining features of our province. All of us here today stand with the Ukrainian community in Manitoba and across Canada and, in fact, around the world, and we share their hopes and their prayers with our own hopes and our own prayers for the safety of their loved ones.

I'd like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that all of us in this House stand united in our support of the new government of Ukraine, in our congratulations to the people of Ukraine on the establishment of that government, and in our condolences to the loved ones who have lost family and friends in this struggle for Ukraine's freedom. Those lost will be remembered for their courage, their bravery, for their willingness to risk and ultimately to sacrifice their lives for the future of their nation. Their sacrifice will echo through time. Their legacy will be a free and democratic Ukraine. We stand with the Ukrainian people as they undertake the work necessary to secure that legacy for a free, democratic and peaceful future.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying the Ukrainian community in

Winnipeg has been tremendous in their leadership across the country in mobilizing support for the Ukraine. And I want to say today that Manitoba shares a rich history with Ukraine. Ukrainian immigrants have shaped our culture and our economy and will forever be part of Manitoba's identity.

Manitoba stands with the Ukrainian people as they work towards greater peace, democracy and freedom, and we stand in solidarity with our friends in Ukraine against the violence of the past months and in support of democracy and human rights. Russian military intervention in Crimea is a threat to Ukraine's sovereignty and a violation of international law. It is important that the people of Ukraine democratically decide their path—the path their country takes, free from outside intervention. Manitobans were deeply concerned by former President Yanukovich's decision to pull back from discussions with the European Union in favour of closer alignment with the Russian Federation. The people of Ukraine have made it clear that this decision does not align with their own interests and their aspirations for greater reform, democracy and freedom.

Here in Manitoba we are fortunate to enjoy and value our right to freedom of assembly, and we want to see this right extended to citizens around the world. It was deeply concerning to see peaceful demonstrations escalate when authorities failed to respect the people of Ukraine right to assembly and violence was used against those activists. We continue to hear horrifying reports of the imprisonment, abuse and torture of demonstrators. Street clashes have killed many and left hundreds more injured. The Government of Canada has strongly condemned the use of violence by Ukrainian authorities against peaceful protesters in Independence Square.

Manitoba stands with the people of Ukraine to ensure the freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are fully respected. It's important that all those responsible for criminal acts against protesters be brought to trial and held responsible for their actions. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Manitoba Provincial Council and the members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community have actively expressed concern over the situation unfolding in Ukraine. On multiple occasions, hundreds of Manitobans have gathered outside of the Manitoba Legislature to show their support for protesters in Ukraine and their opposition to the former government.

Medical support is greatly needed in Ukraine. Horrific injuries have been inflicted and brutal beatings have detained protesters and, during police raids on demonstrators, activists have been abducted, tortured and in some instances killed. On Saturday, March 6th, Winnipeg's Ukrainian community raised \$26,000 to help the protesters injured in Independence Square in Kiev. Our government has announced that we will provide immediate humanitarian's assistance in Ukraine which will be used to deliver first aid and medical supplies to help the injured. We are continuing to—we are committed to continuing to work with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to ensure the aid is delivered effectively in Ukraine.

In the past, both national and provincial chapters of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress worked hard to ensure there were many volunteers to help monitor elections in Ukraine. In 2004, we were proud to send MLAs Doug Martindale and Len Derkach to Ukraine to act as observers in the election. The decision by a Ukrainian parliament to remove former President Yanukovich was a first step towards peace and democracy for the people of Ukraine.

Manitobans recognize and congratulate the new government of Ukraine and commend the call for free and fair elections this spring. With dates for elections in Ukraine set this spring, it is important that the people of Ukraine be free to decide the path of their country. Over the past week, the world has watched as Russian troops occupied streets, airports, seaports and government buildings in Crimea. Russian military intervention in Ukraine is a violation of Ukrainian independence and their territorial integrity. These actions threaten peace and security in Europe and will not help stabilize the situation.

The federal government has taken several steps to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine by instituting a travel ban against a number of individuals responsible for threatening the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, economic sanctions on members of the ousted Yanukovich regime which includes the freezing of any assets in Canada, sent military observers to monitor the Russian military situation in Ukraine and recall their ambassador from Moscow and is pulling out of the G8 process being chaired by Russia.

* (14:50)

Manitoba shares a rich cultural and economic history with Ukraine that has shaped our province's

identity. Over the last century many people have immigrated from Ukraine to Manitoba, and we continue to welcome newcomers each year. In Manitoba we are fortunate to enjoy one of the largest Ukrainian populations in Canada. The vibrant culture brought to Manitoba by Ukrainian immigrants is deeply rooted in our province and has influenced our art, language and education. Twelve Manitoba schools offer Ukrainian-English bilingual programming and a number of schools offer Ukrainian language courses. The Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba is dedicated to creating, preserving and communicating knowledge relating to Ukrainian-Canadian culture.

For the more than 45 years the town of Dauphin has hosted Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. The music, dance, food and warm hospitality make the festival a popular summer destination for Manitobans of all backgrounds. On August 2nd, 2013, as Premier, we officially proclaimed Saturday of every August long weekend as Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day.

One of Manitoba's most 'famings' Ukrainian artists is world-renowned sculptor Leo Mol. Leo and his wife came to—immigrated to Winnipeg in 1948, and they lived for many years in my constituency. Today his beautiful works of art are on display at the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden in Assiniboine Park. And I can remember being a member of city council when we voted the money to put that sculpture garden in place for the benefit of everybody who visits. On the west grounds of the Manitoba Legislature a monument of Ukrainian poet Taras Hyravich stands—*[interjection]*—Shevchenko? Thank you, correction—stands to honour the incredible contributions he made to Ukrainians—to Ukraine's culture.

Manitoba has always offered itself as a home and refuge for persecuted peoples. Many Ukrainians fleeing the oppression and violence of Soviet-area Ukraine came to Manitoba. Every year on the fourth Saturday in November Manitobans come together to—in remembrance of Holodomor, the systematic famine and genocide which killed an estimated 7 million Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. The effects of this tragedy are felt for generations to come, and many survivors of the Ukrainian famine and genocide now make Manitoba their home.

A painting by Orysia Sinitowich-Gorski entitled Holodomor-Genocide No. 2 hangs year-round in the east hall of the Manitoba Legislature, and it serves as a reminder of these horrific events. Manitobans stood

by Ukraine during the time—this time of crisis, and today we do the same as Ukrainians face new threats to their peace, democracy and freedom.

And I can say, Mr. Speaker, some of the most recent immigrants from Ukraine that I have had the chance to speak with are already making a contribution in Manitoba as business people, as instructors at the University of Manitoba. And, as a matter of fact, one of the instructors at the University of Manitoba teaches the very courses I used to teach before I was a member of this Legislature. So I'm proud to see that tradition carrying on in this province, where people from Ukraine come to live in this province, make a contribution to this province, and it's only proper that we support them and their families and communities back home as they go through this difficult time. And we continue to be a voice, one voice, across the world, and eyes across the world to keep our attention on what's happening in the Ukraine—in Ukraine, and in Crimea to ensure that human rights are protected, that the rule of law is respected and the people of Ukraine are not left alone in their time of need and crisis. We will do that here in Manitoba, and we will enjoin other provinces and other peoples around the world to do the same thing.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It is indeed a very sad day in the world when we have to stand once again and talk about the fact that the very things that we take for granted, democratic principles, are again under attack. It is sad for us that in the year 2014, once again, we find that the things that we take for granted are once again being threatened.

I want to start off my comments by thanking the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for working very closely with us on this resolution. If I might say so, he embodies the finest of what a legislator should be. He's very, very fierce and partisan when need to be, and very, very bipartisan when the time calls for it. In fact, today in the gallery we have members from the Ukrainian congress and members from the Ukrainian community, and I welcome them here today. Amongst them sitting is one of our former colleagues, the now Member of Parliament, Kevin Lamoureux, I'd like to welcome also to this Chamber. And he would remember, as many of us would, that it's not this being the first time that we've come together on an issue. In fact, it was under the leadership of the member for Kildonan and Rosann Wowchuk, a former colleague of ours, and Len Derkach who came up with the resolution on the Holodomor.

And it's interesting—it's interesting that, again, today, we come together and talk about an issue facing Ukraine, like the Holodomor, which was something perpetrated on them by individuals and forces outside of their own borders. And I know that the—that Member of Parliament Kevin Lamoureux was very important in that, and we appreciate that he's here, and I think all of us would like to send back to the House of Commons the kind of demeanour and the kind of non-partisanship that has taken place in our national Chamber, that has taken on this issue in such a respectful fashion. They have set the tone on this issue, that we set aside all partisan bickering, all partisan debate and we deal with this issue above board. And perhaps we could say to Member of Parliament Kevin Lamoureux, perhaps he could send to the federal government and our colleagues in the House of Commons, our commendations, our respect for what they have done in the House of Commons, leaving politics out of this. We stand as a nation and we stand for Ukraine, and we appreciate that very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think there are some that might put forward the comment that, so, of what use is it that the Manitoba Legislature has a debate on something that's taking place in other countries? Perhaps it's best suited just for the House of Commons.

And I would counter that with, Mr. Speaker, that when good men and women stay silent, those with evil intentions win. It is important that on every street corner, that in every school, in every workplace, in every town council, in every legislature, everywhere people should be talking about this, because democracy is not a right. Democracy is something that has to be fostered, it has to be grown and we have found out that it can be taken away very quickly. And so it is very important that in this very Chamber—and I would point out to members in this Chamber that Ukraine is not dissimilar to Manitoba and the Prairies. In fact, I've been told that it is very similar. In fact, my father, Reinhold Schuler, was born in Volhynia, Ukraine, and he used to always say that the best years of his life were those years growing up in Ukraine.

And Ukraine has always been called the breadbasket of Europe, just like the Prairies is called the breadbasket of North America. So it's very fitting my father was born in the breadbasket of Europe, and I, a Prairie boy, born here, the breadbasket of North America. Fact, my father—my grandfather, Albert Schuler, used to own a mill in Volhynia, and he would always arrange that, for instance, in a

community or one of the satellite towns, that the entire community would bring their grains to be milled or the oats to be crushed. And they would come with all their wagons, and they would spend the entire day having their grains milled and their oats crushed, and often they could not afford to pay him. But they always were willing to barter and they said, you know, we'll give you a percentage of what you mill for us, and that was the payment. In fact, just a couple of weeks ago, I spoke with one of my aunts who still remembers her time in Volhynia, and she told us about the Ukrainians would come and they'd have their very dark schwarzbrot with a good piece of knoblauchwurst, or kielbasa, as we know it. And they would spend the day waiting for the mill to be finished and just the kind of community and the kind of sense of fun that they had. They, of course, all spoke Ukrainian and actually really enjoyed their time together.

So what changed, Mr. Speaker? What happened? The politicians got involved and came up with the Hitler-Stalin Pact; that's what happened. And all of that went by the wayside. I know in our case of our family they were first given a week, then it was three days and then they found out they had two hours to pack up and get out. And that's what happens when foreign countries step in and start to meddle in a country's own affairs. It was the Hitler-Stalin Pact that the Ukrainian people have had to suffer because of for so many years.

*(15:00)

Mr. Speaker, a national integrity should never be compromised, and what we've seen in Ukraine is completely—completely—unacceptable. In fact, in 1991, after the Cold War came to an end, it—the occupation, I would make the argument, that started with the Hitler—Stalin—Hitler Pact, actually came to an end in 1991 with the Ukraine declaring itself independent from the USSR, and that took place in spring. And that December in a nationwide referendum 90 per cent of all voters in Ukraine voted for independence. And I'd like to point out to this Chamber, the first country to recognize this independent Ukraine was Canada, and Canada has stood by Ukraine since then.

What we have seen, unfortunately, is now that this independence is being threatened. On November 21st, after the government—the then-government of Ukraine announced it was abandoning its agreement that would strengthen ties with the European Union, protestors took to the streets. By January, two

poster-protestors had died. By January 31st, activist, Dmytro Bulatov was missing. He resurfaces badly bruised and with part of his right ear cut off. It was a pro-Russian group that had instigated that. By February 18th street clashes erupted, leaving at least 26 people dead and hundreds injured. By the 20th, February 20th, a truth evidently had been announced, and it was soon after that that 82 people died in several days of violence—died, Mr. Speaker, by seemingly unknown assassins that were shooting into peaceful protests. It wasn't until February 22nd that parliament removed Yanukovich and held new—and called for new elections.

Mr. Speaker, the Ukraine is finding itself back to where it was some 60 years, and now we find that Ukraine is again being occupied by Russian troops. They have taken positions around coast guard bases. They have two airports in the Crimea, and they are not allowing many of the Ukrainian troops to even leave their campuses.

What's unfortunate was we have a mis-information, misinformation that is an insult to all those who see what's going on. It's reminiscent of the Baghdad Bob routine, this Russian misinformation, and it's very unfortunate because all of us can see what is actually taking place in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, none of us should consider us to be immune from what's taking place in Ukraine. In fact, in today's Free Press there is a very good article, and it says problems in Arctic a concern says Iceland's PM. And it has to do with the fact that Vladimir Putin, before the entire Ukraine issue had even started up, had already indicated that he did not view Canada's sovereignty as exclusive to the northern—northern Canada. I would point out to members, on top of this very dome we have a Golden Boy who looks north, because already almost a hundred years ago it was viewed that the North is where our future would lie. And I would point out to this House that there is someone who's looking back at the Golden Boy who is also looking at our natural resources, and that would be Vladimir Putin. And if anybody thinks that a Russia may just be content with taking the Crimea or parts of the Ukraine, I would be very careful, because—and I'd like to quote from this article—it makes other governments more worried about what might happen in the future, so it creates a sense of insecurity and maybe lack of trust. It goes on to say, if it is a sign of what is to come, it is quite worrying. And Canada does have a stake in what happens in Ukraine, because we—an expansionist Russia could be very detrimental to what happens in

northern Canada. So the position that's being taken by the House of Commons, the position that's being taken by our federal government is right and it is correct.

I would also like to talk about those individuals who died fighting for democracy. Mr. Speaker, in today's New York Times, there's an article, A Kiev question: What becomes of the missing? In fact, as of today there are still more than 250 people missing in Ukraine. The article goes on to say that the first was the killing of Yuriy Verbytskyi, a seismologist and an opposition activist who was found dead in January in the forest near Boryspil after being abducted from a Kiev hospital. The article goes on to list that there are many others that were found missing. Some came back badly beaten; others came back dead. So far that—the actual number is at 272 protesters are still missing and unaccounted for. And I think when we talk about what's going on in Ukraine, we also talk about the dead, we talk about the injured, we should also talk about those that are missing, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to conclude by saying that this Chamber and, rightfully so, Manitoba, which so much resembles Ukraine and the kinds of people and the kinds of attitude that they have in Ukraine, is the right place for this debate. And it is right for us to stand today united with those who died for what this Chamber represents, this very Chamber here in Manitoba, that we stand up for those that were injured and, yes, Mr. Speaker, those that are missing. Let us stand against Russian aggression and stand for a free, united, democratic Ukraine.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I really feel completely inadequate even to be speaking on this. I don't feel like I have a history in my world that comes close to what is being experienced in Ukraine. And I can't claim, you know, a lifetime of knowledge about the country. I do have relatives who dance Ukraine, and I have gone to many things over the years that show the joy and the warmth and the kindness of the people of Ukraine. I'd like to extend my thanks to the community for all the work that you've done, for your graciousness over my mistakes as I learn about Ukraine and what is going on there. And I can certainly express the horror that I have felt, as we all have felt, as we've watched the images come in from Ukraine. And imagine—I have a good imagination, so I can imagine the fear and the terror that one might feel there for

their family, and those who are here and the helplessness that you must feel in not being able to go there and do something, and make it better.

So I know people are doing things here, everything they can do. I've been to the fundraisers and I've been to many of the events with other MLAs from here. Some of those events they had, you know, the new technology of our world, and people would speak from Ukraine to us, kind of bringing it into—like you were in their living room; you felt like we were in their living rooms there. So you did experience a little bit more what they were—might be feeling. I had to get neighbours to translate for me what was being said, and I'm grateful to them for their help.

I'm grateful to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) for, you know, giving a donation from the Province and for calling the other premiers and urging them to also, you know, get involved in that. And many have, I understand, and I'm thankful for that.

My predecessor, Doug Martindale, went to Ukraine and observed in the elections, so we do encourage everyone in Manitoba, anyone who can, to go. I know that for him that experience was life changing. You know, it was scary even then. You know, it was a little different; it's something we don't experience here and we don't live with every day. It was strange as well to watch. I don't claim to, you know, know all the politics—it was strange to watch the Olympics with Putin and the attention that that country was getting and the billions of dollars that they spent trying to get good publicity for their country, only to, you know—only for us to know what was really, you know, going on there and the possible—the damage and destruction that may come from that country in Ukraine.

* (15:10)

So I would just like to say, I wish for Ukraine, and all the people in Burrows who are from Ukraine, peace and freedom and the democracy that we have, fair elections and human rights, the human rights that we have here. And thank you for coming down and listening to this, and thank you for everything that you're doing for your country.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for bringing forward this resolution.

There are many times that we disagree in this Chamber, but today we must stand together—stand together—as Manitobans to condemn Russia's actions

in the Ukraine. We must stand united in asking the international community to protect the independence of Ukraine. Coming from a country where we enjoy freedom, we must show our support for a future for a Ukraine that is peaceful, democratic and free.

As Canadians, we have the right to share our views, disagree with one another, as we do in this Chamber, while trying to make changes for the betterment of our country, but we do not live fearing our lives. That is what we wish for the people of Ukraine: a future where Ukrainians can enjoy the same freedoms that we do in Canada; a future where Ukrainians can decide their future without intervention from countries like Russia. There has been enough bloodshed, enough people have given their lives, the ultimate sacrifice, by refusing to back down from the oppression of the Yanukovich regime. Even one life is too much. The people of Ukraine want what we want and enjoy—freedom and democracy. We must respect this courage and stand with them.

The new government in Ukraine will be holding free and fair elections. All the Ukrainians will have the opportunity to decide the future of their nation. When these elections are under way, we need to encourage Manitobans to get involved as international observers, to ensure a fair election without outside tampering.

I am a proud Canadian but I still maintain my Ukrainian heritage, which I am also proud of. In the late 1800s, my ancestors came to Canada and Manitoba with the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants that made their home in Vita and Stuartburn area. Ukrainians have played an important role in the development of Manitoba and Canada. This is a chance for us to show how deeply we are connected with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would ask that the House stand united in our support for the new government in Ukraine, the people of Ukraine in their efforts to have a free and democratic country.

Thank you.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and truly recognition to my fellow member from Kildonan for bringing forward the resolution.

I have to kind of make it known that as I was growing up in—and I would look at pictures of my great-grandparents when they come from the country of Ukraine in the early 1900s, and, as a 16-year-old

or 15-year-old, and I look at them and I say, you just—you could see in the pictures how hard they've worked and the challenges they took. If we were to put things into perspective today, can you imagine boarding a ship from Ukraine and coming across the sea with infants that are probably six months old, two months old, three months old, and going into the undiscovered world without even probably a proper lighting system—all based on candles, going into the world where they're going to be placed in a place where there's only trees, not knowing how to fight the weather elements.

And when we look at that today from my perspective and my grandparents' perspective, and I wish I was able to talk to them today because there are stories that we could share of the challenges they encountered and the people today are 'encounting' very similar situations. In today's democracy, this should not be happening in Ukraine. These—this is the day and age of we need to.

Our grandparents, our great-grandparents went through the world of discovery. We don't need to discover democracy in Ukraine any more. We've paid our tribute to life, and I'm very proud to stand here in front of the Legislature and fellow MLAs to be Ukrainian. *Nashi lyudy*, which translated is our people. Everybody's proud of their culture and their character. I'm very proud to stand here because I'm Ukrainian and I'm part Polish. Regardless of our genetics, but we all should be proud of our culture and this gives me the opportunity to stand here today in front of all my fellow MLAs, of where we come from and where we want to move forward.

Let me give you something in perspective. Our family has been trying desperately to find out family connections that we have in Ukraine. As we know, the wars that we went through, the World War I, unfortunately a lot of the records were destroyed because that was the archives of a continuation to find out our families. We still continue to fight for that, to find records. Unfortunately, we can't.

A lot of times what we have to do, go by, is this person may look like my grandfather. So that's about the only way we could kind of similarly identify that's a possibility. We go back to where my great-grandfather used to live. So you go and visit. My aunt and uncle were there not that many years ago, and they went to the house—they were able to determine that—and asked the person, can you give us some history? And the challenges are there. The challenges are where my great-grandparents would

come off on the *Mayflower* in nova—on the eastern coast, and as the translator was trying to spell out their name, the name change occurred because they spelled it the way it sounded. And then from there on the documents, the challenge was to determine where did my cousin move to because there was a very poor translation of movement of the identification of the spelling of the last name, and that still continues on to go. And I think those are great stories we share with people.

I recently met a individual from Lundar, Manitoba, same last name, and we sat with the elderly gentleman. We talked about what is our family connections? Unfortunately, we weren't able to come up with any, almost spelled the same way. This, these are the things that we as people regardless of our culture—and today we talk about the Ukraine.

There is no necessity of this to happen in today's world. I really feel for the people that lost their lives, have gotten injured, but I want to make the statement today: I'm very proud of our culture. I'm very proud to be standing here as far as a Manitoban, and I'm very proud to be part of all the members in this room today that recognize the importance of freedom, of democracy in the world.

Thank you for giving the opportunity to speak on my behalf. Thank you so much.

Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel): Aggressive actions of foreign powers have been visited upon Ukraine over the past 600 years. Actually, more often than not, Ukraine has been governed by these foreign powers that do not recognize the geographic boundaries.

Today we see the Russian states under Vladimir Putin with tactics such as unidentified soldiers along the border between Ukraine and Russia, jet fighters flying over the Black Sea over recognized territory of Ukraine in the dead of night, finally, the physical invasion of Crimea. Odessa, the capital city, had been a vibrant culture, multicultural, one of the heartlands of Ukrainian culture as well as Jewish culture before the Nazis exterminated most of the population during the Second World War.

Between the cleansing of the Crimean Tatars and others, Russians have eventually become a somewhat dominant population in Crimea. As of the 2001 census, the population was just over 2 million: 58 per cent Russian, 24 per cent

Ukrainian, 12 per cent Crimean Tatar. The numbers undoubtedly have changed since that time.

Russia has invoked myths to justify its occupation of the Crimea. The first is that the Crimea is a land of Russian glory sanctified with Russian blood. Russia conquered it in the 18th Century and retook it from the Germans after the Second World War.

* (15:20)

This article of faith disregards the fact that both the Russian and Soviet empires were multinational states whose armies included plenty of non-Russians, that much blood of Ukrainians and other 'ethnithities' were spilled in the wars against the Ottoman Empire and the Third Reich.

The second little-known fact relates to the transfer of Ukraine from the Russians to the Ukrainian Republic in 1954. The story goes that Khrushchev, bypassing all legal norms, single-handedly gifted the peninsula of the Crimea to the Ukraine to commemorate its 300th anniversary with Russia as well as earn points with the then-Ukrainian Communist Party, in his struggle for power. Rarely mentioned are economic motivations.

The Second World War devastated Crimea, and Khrushchev was particularly troubled by the abysmal pace of recovery. The Ukrainian Republic's aid was seen as crucial, particularly in bringing water from the mainland to the Eyre Peninsula.

I understand today there is more Ukrainian culture here in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan than in Ukraine itself, as it was purged by the then-Soviet Union.

It is very important that we stand today not only as citizens as-of Manitoba and Canada, but more so as citizens of the world. Gone are the days when we can say that is happening halfway around the world or that is not part of my heritage so let it be, let it happen. I hope that our message today and our message as Canadians will get through to the people of Ukraine, and I know that we have great partners to send that message. And let the world, but mostly the Ukrainian people living, perhaps feeling alone and isolated, know that there are others who care about them and who are taking a stand.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, as we probably aware of my spelling of my last

name, I have a Ukrainian heritage and am very proud of it.

Both my paternal grandparents were born in western Ukraine near the Polish border. My grandmother came from—came to Canada at the age of 2 with her family in 1900, and my grandfather, Michael Piwniuk [*phonetic*], came to immigrate to Canada in 1912 at the age of 17. He left his family behind. What he did was he begged his—my grandfather begged his mother for money to travel to Canada, but she was very poor, so he asked his sister who owned a hair salon for the necessary funds. After arriving in Canada, my grandfather made his commitment to send \$5 to his sister every Christmas to return of her generosity. He would always get a thank-you reply from his sister. But when he's—when the war started in 1939, my grandfather did the usual by sending money, only this time he did not hear back from his family. He believed that they must have perished during the World War II, due to the battles in the region and starvation. But this was not the case.

In the last decade, my cousin's husband went to Ukraine to work as a agricultural adviser representing the province of Manitoba. During this time in the Ukraine, my cousin discovered our relatives actually did survive World War II and because of the Iron Curtain was unable to communicate with my grandfather, and he died without knowing that. This was the Soviet Union that did to Eastern Europe—what they did to Eastern Europe countries during the Cold War; they cut off all communications to relatives in North America.

This brings me today, the rest of the world needs to put pressure on Russia so that they cannot control Ukraine and restrict communications. Mr. Speaker, I stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian community of Manitoba and across Canada, I share the hopes and prayers of the safety of their loved ones, and I hope for a future where they can live in peace and security in a unified nation. Thank you.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It is a honour to stand today in this House and talk about a very serious issue, as we all know what's going on in the Ukraine and what's happened in the past. And I want to commend the government, as well as Ron Schuler, our—the member from St. Paul, as well, for a job well done, and of course welcome to the people from the Ukrainian society here in the province in the Legislative Assembly here today.

I can tell you that I'm very proud of the fact that in this House when we agreed a few years ago to send Doug Martindale and Len Derkach to the Ukraine to oversee the election process, and I know a number of us was quite involved in that and the decision that who was going to be able to go. But I'm very proud of the fact that we did take that leadership role and send those two individuals to oversee, along with a number of other politicians and other people from the areas across Canada, to make sure that the election process was indeed open and transparent.

And so that brings us to a number of issues that I think are very important for us to remember here in the province of Manitoba. And I come from an area in the Interlake where there's a large number of—not necessarily all in the Interlake, but there is a number of them in our area, and we host the Ukrainian Dance Festival and we're very proud of that fact. And we're so proud of not only the food and the culture and the memories that come about because of that festivity, and we're very proud to be able to do that.

And I know a number of my friends and neighbours that are in my area, how important this is to be able to get democracy back within the Ukraine. And I know that it is so important not only for the people in Ukraine but family members here, those that are reaching out and those that are trying to find family to relate back to them whether or not they are safe. And we know that every one of our thoughts and prayers are with those families that lost members through one way or another, and we want this to stop. We want to make sure—and I know every member in this House wants it to stop. So, as we move forward, we're encouraging stronger heads to prevail to make sure that next time the Ukrainian population has an opportunity for their election that will be done in a clear and transparent way.

I do also want to thank my colleague James Bezan. I know he's been very instrumental in working forward with the Ukrainian people and I know he was just there a couple of weeks ago as well—as all members of Parliament, of course, those that are not involved in politics, there's a number of them that's been there as well. But I think that James has done an outstanding job, and I want to give him full credit for that and that work that he's done and others.

And I just want to conclude by saying that I know when every member of this House have an opportunity to talk about these issues, we are so blessed to live in one of the greatest provinces in the

greatest country in this world and I don't blame them for coming. We'll welcome more but I know they want to stay in their part of the world and make it a better place, an ideal place like the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I'm pleased to follow my colleague from the Interlake who, as mentioned, represents an area that has a very large Ukrainian population, as does my community of Gimli.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, just the other day my daughter was telling me she had this assignment to trace her family tree and her roots. And, of course, in my case with my Icelandic roots, our history goes back to over 900 AD with the family tree that we've been able to trace. And she was asking her mom, why can't you trace your roots the way Daddy can? And her mom explained that being of Ukrainian descent that when they left the Ukraine because of the oppression in the 1890s and the realities that they had faced at that time, that many of them left without any records, without any resources where they were able to do so. And she could only trace her family roots to the 1890s when the Pylypow brothers led the immigration that took place here in Manitoba in the 1891-92 time frame.

So, for my daughter, she was really perplexed by this, and she, at 11 years of age, doesn't understand why it was so different. And here we see, today, that oppression has reared its ugly head yet again. And it's very hard to understand when we stand in this Chamber and debate on the principles of democratic community—a democratic country, I should say. It's very hard to understand why we, as the intelligent species on this planet, can't seem to replicate that throughout the world and everybody can enjoy a free, democratic society.

And I've been thinking a lot about this because of my favourite constituent, of course, my wife of Ukrainian descent, who—she always holds my feet to the fire and is my most challenging constituent on occasion, but she is very proud of her culture and her heritage and very proud of her community. And to witness this, yet again, in our time, it reminded me of a time when I was going to university and had a roommate from Beijing, China, living in my home, and we were watching things unfold in Tiananmen Square, and he was very hopeful that things would change in communist China.

* (15:30)

He was—to the point where he wanted to go back and be part of this change in our history, and I talked him out of it. And two days later—well, I don't want to use the expression about what broke loose in Tiananmen Square, but we remember those students standing defiantly in Tiananmen Square and what happened when the military moved in to suppress that free and—that demonstration, which we take for granted here in Manitoba. We're allowed to demonstrate. And I became his sponsor overnight to ensure that he would be supported here in Canada as a Canadian citizen.

And we see it time and time again. Just when we think that our world is getting to be a better place, just when we think that the principles of democracy are being spread throughout the world, we see things like this happen. And my heart goes out to everybody who has had a hard time getting a hold of their family and not knowing if they are safe, not knowing if they are secure and not knowing if they're still alive after what's been happening in the Ukraine.

And I'm very pleased that we are here today to show our support as Manitobans, because we all have that history, that immigration history, coming to Manitoba and leaving our lands for various reasons. And we know that there were very difficult times in the Ukraine in the 1890s, why they came here in the first place, just as we know there were difficult times in Iceland in the 1870s, why they came here in the first place. It's a story that's told time and time again. And I would hope that in my lifetime we'll see that democratic principles are found out throughout the world. And we certainly would like to—I would certainly like to echo my support for the people of the Ukraine and hope that a resolution, a peaceful resolution can be found and that we can continue to celebrate the diversity and the freedom that we have here in Manitoba and see that one day people around the world will celebrate that freedom and celebrate that diversity and celebrate the principles of a free and democratic society.

Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of all of those who have worked so hard to put this resolution together, particularly the members for Kildonan and St. Paul. I do think it is a critical time for us to be speaking up and to have our voices heard. And it is nice that we can stand in here, too, and set aside the partisan bickering we have here, or the disagreements, but it

is also nice to know that in Canada and in Manitoba we can fight with words and still have democracy. And that is what we hope for all countries, is that we can fight with words instead of guns and that words can be more powerful than guns.

Today I join many people across the world who condemn Russia's violation of Ukraine sovereignty, and I have to say that Russia's actions have shocked me. When all of this started, I really was taken aback and I was almost in disbelief when I first saw what was happening and I never, ever thought in my life that I would see something like this going on with Russia and Ukraine. And proudly stand here today, united with all of my colleagues in our call for the international community to protect the independence of Ukraine, and we stand united in our hope for a future for Ukraine that is peaceful, democratic and free.

Every day as we enter the Chamber here, I know I certainly look at the art that is on the wall at the door that I enter. And every day, it reminds me of something very, very horrific that happened in the Ukraine many years ago, and it is a powerful, powerful painting that does remind us of some very, very tragic aspects to our past.

Would like to also indicate and congratulate the Ukrainian Canadian Congress for the work that they're doing in supporting the people of Ukraine. And that is the one thing that is so wonderful about Manitoba, is we are so multicultural, and while we all are woven into the fabric of Manitoba there are also some very, very strong ties with countries from which a lot of people have come from.

And I'm sure, right now for a lot of the Ukrainian people in Manitoba this is a very, very difficult time, and especially if they have family members that are still there. Certainly, the work of the Ukrainians here right now shows a spirit of generosity and compassion that really does inspire all of us, and it is one of the defining features of this province. We share our hopes and our prayers for the safety of those in Ukraine. And it makes me remember, too, where I grew up, and I grew up in the Swan River valley, and in the Swan River valley, there are lots of Ukrainians, Polish people, English people, Irish, Scottish. Ukrainian certainly is a prevalent group, and also I would indicate Russians.

And I would say right now that I am of Russian heritage. My baba and gido right now, I think, would be saddened to see what is happening. They were poor farmers; in Russia, they would've been

peasants. But they were pure of soul. Growing up in Benito, I certainly spent a lot of time with them, certainly went to a lot of Ukrainian weddings, and that was the highlight of my time as a little girl, going into this curling rink, and Ukrainians have a culture when you're coming in—and this was the best part of the whole thing, when you're six or eight years old—you'd come in, the Ukrainian band would start to play as soon as you got in the door. They played their usual music, and you got a plastic flower. And that little plastic flower that you put on, in my little girl's mind, was just the greatest thing that could've happened. And I know there were also shots of vodka being given out, too, but I don't think it went to the kids, and I'm not sure that it was, in those days and where I was from, I'm not sure that it was vodka; it probably was homebrew. But the food, the dancing, you know, I learned to polka, schottische, do the butterfly. I mean, these are all things and part of the heritage of what we learned from Ukrainian people and, you know, Russian people as well. And I'm very proud of my Russian background and how hard my family worked on terrible soil that didn't yield great grain and my baba and gido were very poor, raising five children with very, very little.

Last night, my husband and I sat and watched 60 Minutes, and it was really quite incredible to watch Independence Square, to see the destruction, to see women crying, to see people laying flowers, to see this horrible, horrible situation that is happening across the world. And it may seem far away, but it's not that far because the world is so small nowadays. And we were just absolutely torn apart by watching what is going on there.

My in-laws also came from Ukraine. They are of Mennonite heritage, and they fled the Bolshevik Revolution. So, for many years, now, many decades, I've heard a lot about their lives in Ukraine and about what being part of that country meant to them at the time.

Last night, too, watching 60 Minutes and seeing what Yanukovich did with his money in building this house with a chandelier that was worth millions of dollars, while people are starving or struggling to find food and jobs, and to see the sense of entitlement and what he did to the people there is very devastating, I'm sure, to a lot of people.

My son asked me the other day, and I didn't think about it; I was shocked when he asked me. He says, my—he said, Mom, are we going to see World

War III? And I hadn't thought about that. And then I went to the grocery store later in the day, and there's some headlines that are wondering probably the same thing. And I have to hope and pray, no, that is not what can happen.

* (15:40)

But, as members have said, and I think the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) very—said it very well, we have to have very skilful diplomacy right now, strong sanctions that are sending the right message, a world standing together to let Putin know that this is not acceptable to the world, even though we are just, you know, a small part of the world here in Manitoba, we do not accept what he is doing, that we are standing together with them and hoping that this violence will end, because it is just not anything that makes our world a better place by this violence against people of our own culture or people of any other culture either. It is something I think that we proudly stand here today and speak up for a free and democratic Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): It's my honour to be able to say a few words today on this resolution. It is an exceptional day in this House when we take a moment to discuss and debate an issue upon which we are united, but also, I think, an issue which eclipses most of the things we talk about in this Chamber, and that is a very fundamental struggle for freedom and democracy.

And unlike many people who have spoken, I don't have any—I don't claim any Ukrainian heritage that I know of. My family's been in Manitoba a long time and we have welcomed many people of Ukrainian heritage into our family.

But I want to start by speaking for a moment of the neighbour that we had in my childhood home in Brandon, and we lived next to an older woman who we all called Baba, her name was Mary Dymytriv, and she was—she would fit the classic picture of an older Ukrainian woman. She had a huge garden. She had a double lot. She plowed the entire thing, there was no room for a lawn. Every piece of land was dedicated to food production for her and she grew bushels of potatoes and garlic and tomatoes, and gradually she allowed that we could have a small section of this also for our family and we delighted in helping her plant the garden and bring the garden to harvest. And as a child I didn't really understand why this one older lady was spending so much time

in a garden that, really, could've fed the entire street. But as I grew older and got to appreciate some of the history of Ukraine, I understood that she fled that country with her family after a famine, after a famine that was used as a tool of war. And so for her there was never going to be a day where she felt that she had enough food, that she was insulated against that possibility, and so if that meant that she had a basement full of potatoes and garlic and a freezer full of pierogi, that's what she was going to do. Because people who have grown up through the Great Depression, through World War II who have experienced hunger and that what I can only imagine is panic of realizing that you may not be able to feed your children, for them that never leaves, and so she was dedicated to making sure that she had food in the pantry at all times. And that benefited me because as she was our neighbour and she was the person that you went to when you forgot your keys after school to get into the house. And whenever you went over, it didn't matter what day it was, there was homemade bread usually fresh out of the oven. She would cook up some pierogies for you, the most beautiful, delicious little meatballs. And so I forgot my key quite often I will confess, as a child, so I could get to go and sit with her in her kitchen, which was always easily a hundred degrees warm in her home. But so I could get to sit with her, and she would feed me and talk to me and share that kind of warmth and love and joy that we've heard about are the hallmarks of the Ukrainian culture.

And to—and I think all of us in Manitoba have some connection to the Ukrainian people and to that culture either in our own families or because we've all experienced it. We can all relate to the story of going to a Ukrainian wedding. We can all relate to the tremendous warmth that comes from a people who have been persecuted throughout history. Who have quested for a place to call home in a safe place to call home throughout their history.

And my colleague from Gimli was speaking about watching the events of Tiananmen Square, and I've also been reminded of that as I've watched the news and what has been happening in Ukraine. And what I've been reminded of is that the quest for democracy, the quest for freedom, that is an unquenchable quest in human beings. It is something that, although we are fortunate that we are never called upon to put our lives in danger, across our world, time after time, people have risked their lives and lost their lives because they desired to be free. They desired to be the ones who decide how they

should be governed. They desire that for themselves and for their children, and a desire that is as great as that that you decide that you would be willing to lose your own life, if it moves that quest forward, that is a fundamental human desire and we're seeing that play out again in the streets of Ukraine.

And as I'm watching this, I've also been reminded of other struggles in our global history: the struggle against apartheid in South Africa which took generations—generations and generations and generations struggling for an improvement for a land where everybody could be free and for true democracy. And Canada played an important role in moving that forward.

And I think the member from St. Paul gave a good, solid case for why we should be talking about this here today. It's easy when you watch events unfold across the globe, for us in Manitoba or Winnipeg perhaps to think what can I—this is horrible but, what can I do to affect this? But taking time today to talk about this issue, to stand united, to give the well-earned praise to the local Ukrainian community for what they are doing, it does matter. It does send a message, and the whole world coming together to send that message will matter.

As the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) was saying, I, too, was chilled to see that—this happening, and at first didn't understand and couldn't quite believe every day as the news got a little bit worse and that there were now Russian soldiers who were occupying Crimea, couldn't quite believe that this was really happening. And perhaps naively, especially on the heel of the Olympic Games with the whole world's attention focused on Russia that they should take that moment in the spotlight to show the aggressiveness and the brutality that they are showing in Ukraine. It is quite chilling to see that.

And so today is one afternoon in the Legislature, and it is a resolution that I think the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) should be very proud of having brought forward. But it is a way that we as the leaders in Manitoba can say we, too, stand with other provinces, with the federal government of Canada, with other nations in saying to the Ukrainian people, your struggle is our struggle, and we are watching and we will not leave you to mount this struggle alone. The struggle for democracy, the struggle for freedom, which is, in essence, all human struggle, that is something that today happens in the streets of

Ukraine, but has happened in many, many countries around the world, and in all of those countries the right people win and I am sure that that will also be what will happen in Ukraine. Persistent struggle, persistent commitment to those values will mean victory.

And I want to thank, again, the members of the community who are here today, the members of this Chamber, and this is an afternoon that we can stand together in some—for something that is much bigger than any one of us, and that is a fundamental human right to decide who governs you, to live in freedom, to celebrate your culture, to celebrate the diversity of the human experience.

Thank you.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise in the House today, and I thank the sponsors of this resolution to give us the opportunity to voice our displeasure, our disagreement and our condemnation of Russian aggression in the Ukraine. It is, indeed, disappointing on the heels of the Olympics, as the previous speaker mentioned, when we're watching the zeal and the competition and the sportsmanship and the compassion of the Olympics to see this unfolding at the same time, and the disappointment of—and the tragedy that we saw in those news clips.

* (15:50)

You know, Brandon has a large group of Ukrainians, and we have some recent Ukrainian immigrants that have come to work in Maple Leaf and they have found an opportunity there to come to our democratic country. And when I meet them at the doors and in public, especially when we're doorknocking during an election and one of the questions is, you know, can you vote? Well, no, I can't, but I really want to, because they know that their vote back home didn't always matter, and it will be here.

You know, I have a—I do have a Ukrainian heritage, and it took me a while growing up to try to figure out the Ukrainian side and the Polish side, as it seemed that we went to weddings every weekend. One involved a fiddle and one involved an accordion, and the food kind of seemed to be the same, and the people kind of seemed to be the same, and the dancing was the same, and you're always welcome. But, as anything, the food is a big part. And I'm very pleased that my niece and nephew, Bronya and Taras, have taken up Ukrainian dancing and continuing with that heritage.

In my travels around Manitoba, I don't always go the easiest path, and often when I'm travelling to meet farmers and other people, I'll take the back roads. And so it was that I came upon, near Oakburn, Manitoba, the Ukrainian Pioneer Mass Grave Site. It's in the RM of Rosssburn. It had to do with pioneers in 1899 travelling across the prairies to escape persecution in the Ukraine. And there was an outbreak of scarlet fever, and 40 children and three adults died. Coming across this site in the back roads of Manitoba was a very haunting experience. I'd encourage all of you to spend time there. It kind of puts it into perspective, what we have in Canada and what people across the world want to experience as well.

We celebrate that heritage often, and the Lieutenant Governor's Winter Festival in Brandon is one such celebration. The Ukrainian pavilion is one of the most popular. It's certainly one that I can get my son to come and stand in line with me for well over an hour, because we're going to have pierogies. Of course we're going to experience the culture, watch the dancing, meet old friends, but most of all we're going to have some comfort food. I grew up with that comfort food: pierogies, cabbage rolls, kielbasa, borscht. Didn't always appreciate it, but certainly the pierogies were there.

I know we often feel helpless about what we can do here. But we do extend our condolences and we do extend our support of the Ukrainian community in Canada, and hope that we will find a peaceful way to resolve this crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, I think as Manitobans we are certainly fortunate to have inherited government that safeguards human rights and the rule of law and democracy. We can't ever take those advantages for granted though. We always have to be vigilant here at home, first of all, but because those democratic values are so absolutely fundamental to human dignity, we have a responsibility globally to be vigilant, as well, and to take necessary action wherever those democratic institutions and human rights are at risk.

So, given this, our democratic institution right here, in this Legislature, in our collective view, is compelled to vigorously support the hopes and aspirations of the Ukrainian people as they work to achieve democracy and those fundamental values. I think we are also compelled to acknowledge the new

government in Ukraine as it launches its early work to restore trust in the country's institutions.

Now, as one MLA who represents the wonderfully diverse and welcoming part of Canada, north Winnipeg, I'm reminded daily how tightly connected Manitoba and Ukraine are. Ukrainians have shaped and strengthened our province in every way. They've strengthened life, enriched our home as well.

I understand about 167,000 Manitobans have origins associated with the four waves of Ukrainian settlement in Manitoba, including about 15,000 new immigrants just over the last decade. Most maintain an active and heartfelt interest in the old country. And I know, for example, from my neighbour, whose 90-year-old mother lives in Ukraine, how rightfully anxious Manitobans are about recent events in their homeland.

In the first nine decades of the 20th century, few would ever have predicted that Ukraine would be a sovereign nation before the end of the century. Yet, in December 1991, Ukrainians took advantage of circumstances resulting in the breakup of the Soviet Union and voted 90 per cent for independence in a national referendum. Of course, that new Ukraine would face many challenges in its first 20 years, not surprising given the sudden change from a Soviet Republic to independent democracy, but as well a strategic geographic location between Western Europe and Russia in a post-cold world—Cold War world.

In 2004, the peaceful Orange Revolution made headlines around the world when people refused to accept a rigged election and demanded respect for democracy. Now this dream for self-determination is a long one, so Ukrainians don't hesitate when it comes time once again to act against corruption.

The Euromaidan movement began in mid-November when Ukrainians in Kiev once again took to the square, or Maidan, in Ukrainian, to protest their government's refusal to enter into preliminary partnership with the European Union and instead went and pursued closer ties with Russia.

There was also, of course, widespread disappointment—rightfully so, as we have learned increasingly—with President Yanukovich and the Ukraine's political leadership. Fundamental rights were curtailed and ignored, and corruption wasn't—at a unprecedented scale. Many began to see the Maidan as a revolution for democratic dignity.

Last month, as the protest continued and police violence escalated, government snipers killed close to 90 innocent demonstrators on the Maidan. This bloodshed further strengthened the demonstrators' resolve.

Last month, Yanukovich and his entourage suddenly departed Ukraine, ending up in Russia. In his place, a new interim government was elected by the Ukrainian Parliament.

So the past week it's become clear that the Russian military is now occupying the Ukrainian oblast, or Crimea, an action in clear violation of international law. Make this clear, this is an attack by one country against another. This dangerous misadventure by Russia not only infringes on the sovereignty of an independent nation, but risks far-reaching consequences worldwide.

We must stand in solidarity with our friends in Ukraine and condemn the violence of the previous government and Russia's unlawful intervention in the affairs of Ukraine. We must ask Russia to vacate the Crimea oblast and return it to the Ukrainian nation. Canada must continue to play a role in Ukraine with observers. Our expertise can help ensure that Ukrainians develop permanent democracy.

I was very proud, as I think all of you were, to see the Ukrainian flag fly here at the Manitoba Legislature last—this week, this past week. I—it is our united hope that this bolstered the spirits of Ukrainian Manitobans who have been so active in the campaign here.

On March 1st, I attended the Maidan fundraiser at Institute Prosvita with many friends and neighbours, and enjoyed the inspirational speeches and beautiful singing. And I understand that more than \$25,000, amazingly, was raised in that one night. And I know a lot of work went into it. My wife came back with a couple of—yes, oh yes, yes, let her get near those silent auction tables—and so I was glad to contribute, perhaps disproportionately, but I—but pleasantly so. But it did match our government's contribution. That is partnership in action.

*(16:00)

So I want to take this opportunity to thank the work of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Manitoba Provincial Council and its component organizations. I understand the—or there's been what, seven events that the congress—seven or eight events, demonstrations to bring the crisis to the attention of all and to raise funds. And I for one have benefited

by the awareness raising. Our family gathered around the computer and looked at the history of Ukraine, and I think all of us understood and explored in ways that we hadn't before. So thank you for enlightening all of us.

And I want to say this, Roman Yereniuk, who's here today, said look, don't forget to remind everyone that these demonstrations took place here on the Legislative grounds at the monument for Taras Shevchenko, a great freedom fighter who has influenced so many. And we believe that he has influenced, as well, the spirit of the Maidan revolution. So may the 200th anniversary of his birth inspire all of us.

Many youth as well have been—and students—have been really involved, and I think that is tremendous to see. We know that Ukrainian youth in my neighbourhood have been so active in Ukrainian culture and other events, but to see their 'integral' involvement and empowerment through this is really inspiring. And I pay great respect to the role of youth.

The two traditional Ukrainian churches in Manitoba, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and the Ukrainian Catholic church of Canada, have provided great strength from prayer and their services. I saw that at the fundraiser the other night, for example, their very strong presence. And we have to commend their leadership in the community.

Our prayers are with the people of Ukraine, and we express our profound sympathies to the victims of violence and to the surviving family members. We stand with our local neighbours of Ukrainian heritage and ask that Canada and the whole international community pressure Russia to withdraw from Crimea and allow Ukrainians self-determination without any further interference from Russia.

From independence to the current Euromaidan movement, the people of Ukraine have proven they will sacrifice, they will work tirelessly to improve their nation, and we stand with them.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) for bringing this forward, and thank the member for Kildonan for the opportunity to have input into the resolution so that it could be truly an all-party resolution. And, indeed, we stand united

here in support of this effort to help and support the people of Ukraine.

Recent events leading to the departure of the former President Viktor Yanukovych, and the new government led by Alexander Turchinov and Arsini Yatsenyuk and their commitment, of course, importantly, to free and democratic election, it is now particularly important that we have this resolution today as a result of the movement of Russian troops into the Crimea. And the fact that the integrity of Ukraine is threatened, it's essential that we as MLAs all come together and support the people of Ukraine and do everything we can in not only voicing, but standing up and spreading the word around the world how important it is to support people in Ukraine.

I remember a previous occasion when we as MLAs came together to support Canadians of Ukrainian origin to recognize that the internment of Ukrainian Canadians in the First World War was wrong. I want to thank Yarko Petryshyn who was here—I'm not sure if he's still here—but for his efforts when he was working in my office to bring that to fruition. We as MLAs came together on another occasion to recognize the famine in Ukraine, Holodomor, as a genocide, which it was. And we have—came together to pass a law which brought into place not only to recognize the tragedy of the Holodomor, but to recognize and set aside a day in November to remember what happened, to give our thoughts to what happened and to give emphasis in our efforts to build a society, a world where there were better approaches, whether it was human rights, which was front and centre, and the importance of people and of freedom and of democracy. And we have all, in various occasions, come out and celebrated the wonderful Ukrainian culture in Manitoba, whether it is Folklorama, whether it is in Brandon, whether it is in Dauphin, whether it is in many, many other places around our province. It is part of who we are as Manitobans, and so it's important that we now come together and support the people of Ukraine in their time of need.

You know, for me, so much of what I have been involved with, whether as a physician or a scientist or as an MLA, has involved working together with people who have Ukrainian origin. I have travelled the province, not only with people like Yarko Petryshyn and Marvin Krawec, and met and worked with so many others. Even recently, just last fall, John Petryshyn and Erena Donovan were very involved in a special dinner that was put on.

So that it is this working together with people here in Manitoba which is so much a part of who we are, different cultures, but of course today we emphasize particularly, though, Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian people. And today we do and we must support democracy and freedom, which are so vital. This democracy and this freedom depends today on people around the world being ready to speak out to ensure that the people in Ukraine have the opportunity to be free and democratic and united and secure.

And I want to thank, in particular, those who are in the Ukrainian community in Manitoba and in Canada, in their readiness to stand up and speak out about events and make sure that everyone else in Canada is aware of what's happening and how important it is to support democracy and freedom in Ukraine.

And to those who are in Manitoba and Canada and, indeed, elsewhere in the world who are concerned about this situation, we, as MLAs, say to you we are united in our support for a free and democratic, united and secure Ukraine—a Ukraine whose territory remains intact, a Ukraine whose people can prosper,

Ukrainian people have come to Canada, have contributed so much to Manitoba and to Canada, often facing many challenges to do so, and it is our job now, as Manitobans, as Canadians, to support you and to support people in Ukraine. So we thank you for what you have done for Canada and we support you now in your time of need and Ukraine's time of great need.

Thank you.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): I want to start by saying thank you very much to my colleague the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and my colleague from St. Paul for bringing this resolution here today. I also want to say that I am very, very grateful that I get to stand as an elected representative with the colours of Ukraine on the lapel of my suit jacket and speak my mind about an issue that is very important, not only to my constituents, but to Manitobans. Not all—not all—jurisdictions get to have people stand in a legislature and exercise that right.

* (16:10)

It was J.S. Woodsworth who said that what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. Well, our wish today is that the people of Ukraine would have the

right to govern themselves and to choose the people who do that governing.

Mr. Speaker, I wish that from those elections there would be people that would have the same right as I do, to stand in a legislature, in a parliament, and speak on behalf of their constituents, expressing their desires and their wishes. It's my desire that people can go to church in Ukraine, that people can go to school in Ukraine, that people can go stand in—on a corner in Kiev and talk about democracy and have some influence over the people that they elect to a legislative body. It's my wish that they could simply sit in a coffee shop and talk about politics, talk about government as they do in Dauphin and every community in this province, every single day of the week. Most of all, it is my wish that the people of Ukraine get to choose those leaders, they get to vote in free and fair elections and that's one of the main reasons why today, here in Manitoba, you have an expression from elected representatives, elected representatives in solidarity, in unity with the people of Ukraine to make those goals happen.

I live in Dauphin, and as the Premier (Mr. Selinger) mentioned earlier—appreciate him putting a plug in for Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. We'll, in not too distant future, we're going to hit the 50-year mark. In 1966, a group of people from Dauphin decided that they needed a Ukrainian festival, a national Ukrainian festival and for a number of reasons. I know many members of the Legislature have been to Dauphin on the August long weekend and I certainly invite you back again this year and the next year and the next year. Come on back, because we do a lot of things at the Ukrainian Festival. We have a lot of fun. We have a parade on the Saturday morning. We eat a little bit, we drink a little bit, we dance a little bit, we have fun. Hopak is great. We have parties. We party into the night. It's an expression. It's a celebration but we do a lot more than that at the Ukrainian Festival, Mr. Speaker. I see, over and over again, young children learning how to bake bread in a kiln, out at the Trembowla Cross of Freedom, in connection with the Canada's Ukrainian—National Ukrainian Festival. I see elderly people and young people talking about the skills that Ukrainian pioneers used to survive in some of the—probably a lot like the winter we've had this year, but without the kind of conveniences that we have today.

I see those sorts of things happening—that intergenerational conveyance of knowledge, conveyance of tradition, conveyance of value from one generation to the next. You know what else we

do at the Ukrainian Festival? When you come up to see our festival this August, go up to the upper hill—the stage down and the stage at the bottom of the hill—up at the top, you'll see—be prepared, though, when you go there because it's heart-wrenching—you're going to see a statement that our community and the Ukrainian community of Manitoba and of Canada has made, in terms of some of the history that the Ukrainian people have been through, not just the recent history but dating back.

We've mentioned Holodomor here, today, a number of occasions. You might be a little taken aback when you go up to the top of that hill and you see the kind of work that has gone into the statues, the kind of thought, the kind of reverence that the people who have organized the top of the hill in the—at the Selo site in Dauphin, Manitoba.

It reminds people—it reminds people of what the Ukrainian people have been through for generations and the kind of struggle that it has been to create a Ukraine, a Ukraine that is free and democratic, a Ukraine where people can live knowing that they have the security and the safety that some country isn't going to come ramrodding through, as has happened over the centuries.

Many of my constituents worked very hard to make sure that people understood the history and understood even more so the recent history of what Ukrainian people have been through, both in opening up the Dauphin area and settling and homesteading and on the bigger world scene, and how that has impacted Ukrainians.

On Saturday, this past Saturday, I attended the Daffodil Tea in Dauphin. This is sponsored by the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League, and it's always a very good event. It's always well attended. I always get an earful as the local MLA. This year was no different.

One earful that I got that I think was especially pertinent was from an elderly woman who wanted to talk to me about the very thing we're talking about here today, and I came away from that discussion with an elderly Ukrainian person kind of optimistic, because she reminded me of what it was like 20 years ago and how good she felt attending the Ukrainian festival the year that the festival took it upon itself 20 years ago to celebrate, you know, the political goings-on back in the day, and the kind of freedom she felt and the pride that she felt. She's pretty confident—I would suspect she's somewhere in

her early 80s—she's pretty confident that the Ukrainian people will see this through.

She's very appreciative that our federal government and other governments in other countries are standing behind Ukraine, as we are here today, to help and to make sure that the things that her family here in Dauphin is concerned about actually comes to fruition in Ukraine. She's worried—absolutely she's worried, but she's confident and she's optimistic.

One of the things we talked about was a fellow by the name of Fred Zaplitny. Fred Zaplitny was a Member of Parliament up in our Dauphin area back in the '40s through the '50s. Fred went from farmhouse to farmhouse, not unlike what we do these days, and talking to people. But what Fred was up against was a Ukrainian population that had felt disenfranchised, disconnected from the Canadian political system, from our system of governance here in Manitoba. They weren't part of this. Over and over and over again we voted in the Dauphin area for English-speaking, pretty much all men, English-speaking, non-Ukrainian.

Fred Zaplitny went on to the farm site to farm site, spoke in Ukrainian with people, engaged them in the political system, encouraged them to vote, to come out and participate. And elections aren't just about voting. They went to town halls. They asked questions. They asked questions of Fred in the Ukrainian language. They engaged themselves. I think what we need to remember here is that those of us that are here today owe it to a lot of people who have gone before us and have blazed the path for many of us to be here. I count Fred Zaplitny as one of those.

I think what we need to do as a province and we need to do as a nation is understand that that works, too, on a national basis. That many countries ahead of us blazed the way and that our democracy is made so much better because of other countries and their sacrifices: sacrifices in wars, sacrifices as we've seen in the Ukraine with people being sniped—innocent people.

My optimism comes from the elderly person that I spoke with at the Daffodil Tea, that down-deep confidence that the Ukrainian people will at some point experience permanent democracy; will at some point experience an economy that grows because of its association not just with Russia but with the European giant next to them and because they've taken their proper place on the world stage—proper place on the world stage as leaders.

* (16:20)

So, Mr. Speaker, I think, for a lot of reasons, what we're doing here today matters. I think what we're doing here today is the right thing to do, and I am absolutely pleased to be able to stand here and lend my voice and my support to the people of Ukraine.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join all members of this Legislature, as we set aside our partisan differences today, on a day to support our neighbours and our friends in the Ukrainian community here in Manitoba and right throughout the world, who are devastated by the activities and the atrocities that are happening just in these last few short months. Hard to imagine that within just a couple of months, a whole country and community can be turned upside down by the decision of the leadership of that country to move in a direction that is very contrary to what we all believe in, and that is democracy.

We believe and we have such opportunity here in Manitoba and in Canada to exercise that democratic process. We can stand and speak freely. We can be critical of each other and each other's policies and decisions that one government might make that might be contrary to some of the beliefs or the decisions that another political party would make, and we can stand without fear that there's going to be an army move in and occupy the land and remove those freedoms that we have, that freedom of speech to express what we feel and what we believe as citizens of our country and to imagine that those in the Ukraine who had hope for the future as a result of what happened in 1991 when they did experience the opportunity to establish a democracy, to have that torn away from under their feet in just a few short months, Mr. Speaker, is 'incomprehensible.'

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I grew up in the North End. I was born and raised in the North End of the city of Winnipeg, and completely immersed in the Ukrainian culture and traditions. And most of my friends were of Ukrainian descent, and there was always that standing joke in the North End: either you were Ukrainian or you wished you were Ukrainian. And, you know, I was one of those that wished that I was Ukrainian because I looked at the pride and the tradition and the culture and the fun and the activity that were all part of the Ukrainian customs and traditions. And most of us that weren't Ukrainian did adopt all of those cultures and

traditions. It was the food that was so very important to their everyday lives that were shared so generously with those of us that wanted just a taste of that culture and that tradition. There were the socials, the wedding socials and the weddings that were part of that Ukrainian tradition and culture that we all adopted and that we all followed, and I did, in fact, have a Ukrainian wedding and a Ukrainian social, although I didn't marry a Ukrainian. But many of those that grew up in the North End of Winnipeg remained in the North End of Winnipeg and became very successful.

And I do know that in the first years that Ukrainians immigrated to Manitoba and to Canada, they were some difficult years, and there were years when people of Ukrainian descent weren't allowed to apply for the police service or other occupations within the city of Winnipeg. And, my, how we've changed and how we've progressed and we've moved forward. And, Mr. Speaker, we're so proud of the way that everyone that comes to Manitoba is welcomed with open arms and, regardless of your culture or your background, you have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our community here in Winnipeg. And I'm extremely proud of that.

And I do know, Mr. Speaker, that as we stand here today and unite in our support of our neighbours and our friends who may have relatives back in the Ukraine that may be suffering the persecution that they're suffering today, I want those in our community to know that we stand united in support, that our prayers are for those in the Ukraine that deserve to have the kind of freedoms and the kind of democracy that we enjoy here in our country.

So I just want to say thank you to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), who brought this resolution forward that have united us here in the Legislature, that we are able to stand together as one and condemn what is happening in the Ukraine today and pray for peace and democracy to be returned.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): It's a real honour to have the opportunity to stand today to speak on this very important resolution that's been brought forward by this House. And, especially when talking about this subject, it really does make you appreciate how lucky we are as legislators to have this opportunity to speak in this House and to put on the record our thoughts, our feelings, without fear or without any

concern about retribution. And it really puts it in perspective when you're able to see what's happening in Ukraine and to see what's happening on the streets there.

I wanted to start by saying that I—that along with everyone else in this Chamber, wanted to express my condolences to those families and those people that have been wounded or lost their lives in the peaceful protests that have turned very, very violent. People have been shot and killed and wounded, and there's reports of folks being imprisoned, and our thoughts and our prayers, of course, are with those folks.

What I saw in those images coming back and what I saw in the—on the streets of Kiev and elsewhere, was courage—was an incredible amount of courage from those people that were willing to stand up, and they were willing to put their lives on the line for their country—their country—for the people's country, and it's incredible to see them. They're still there, of course, remaining vigilant. And to have that conviction to put everything that you care about on the line for your country and for democracy is an incredible inspiration for us, I think, around the world.

I was proud to stand with the community here in Manitoba and to pray with them and to cry with them and to share in their pain. And, like many others, I do have ties to the Ukraine. My family has ties to Russia and to the Ukraine, so this does hit home, and it does hit home for many of us. But I don't think that this is about one community and having their feelings for the people that are there. I think it's all of us, I really do. I think that all Manitobans can appreciate what those people are putting themselves through to defend their country.

I wanted to thank our—my colleagues in the House—all colleagues, but in particular the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler). You know, sometimes there's a lot of white noise, a lot of static in this place. When we can come together, when we can talk about an issue that's vital to world peace and we can just talk about it as Manitobans and come together, I think it's refreshing for me as a legislator.

* (16:30)

And, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, when I think about the situation and I think about what the people on the street are going through, I also think about what the people—what the legislators there are going through and what the folks who have put themselves

forward to be elected and to represent the people, who are still now putting themselves on the line to keep the government functioning. We—I know, I can take it for granted sometimes about just how lucky we are to have this opportunity, and when you see the violence even erupting within the Chamber there, it's just so stark. So I think we can appreciate it at maybe a deeper level here in the House as legislators. And I wanted to commend the courage of those legislators who are coming in day after day to keep the government functioning.

As I said, my family does have deep roots in that part of the world, and many in the Mennonite community have ties with that part of the world. But we're not alone in that and we're not—I don't think the Ukrainian community has felt alone in their concern for what's happening. Of course, I'm proud that this Legislature that we're allowed to come and bring this forward and I think we were, you know, on the leading edge of—in terms of getting that bipartisan support and the support across the political spectrum for this resolution.

So I think it just shows that from all corners of the province and all backgrounds, it really—there's unanimous support for this incredible resolution and this support for the people of Ukraine.

As we watch horrors playing out in Kiev, we know that the history of Ukraine has been violent, that it's been a part of the history and a part of what the people of that country have had to endure. But it's also been a history of freedom fighters, of people who are willing to stand up to risk absolutely everything just for the future of their country and for their comrades. So it's just an inspiration for me, as somebody who has had the opportunity to work across the country and, in fact, in other countries, on various elections, in various ways, when it comes to promoting democracy and ensuring democracy is preserved. You know, it's an inspiration to me the majority of my adult life has been dedicated to democracy in one form or another and to learning more and to supporting it.

But I ask myself the question, would I be willing to die for democracy? And I'm glad that that's a question that I don't have to answer because I don't know and I don't think any of us can really know until it's put on the line. And we've seen the bravery of the people in Ukraine and I believe that they've shown that they're willing to do that. I don't—I pray that we never have to see that here in Canada. Of course, it's now part of the international discussion at

the international community level and the Canadian government has been a voice—a leading voice in that, so maybe I'll just leave it at that.

I'm just—I'm proud, Mr. Speaker to be a member of this House and I'm proud to be in a House where we can come together with unanimous support for such an important issue, and I'd like to thank everyone for showing their solidarity with the people of the Ukraine.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Bitiamo to the guests in the gallery. It's been a very emotional afternoon for many of us in the Chamber and I want to thank the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) for bringing forward this resolution that speaks to our support for the Ukrainian people through their struggle for freedom and strongly condemns the violence that is taking place and the anti-democratic acts that are both taking place on Ukraine and the people of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I want to—I want to thank the members of the Canadian-Ukrainian Canadian Congress for the work that they've done and continue to do on behalf of us Canadian Ukrainians, and I want to say that it's not lost on a lot of the people that live in the rural communities within our province and within our country. The word spreads quickly and how helpful and useful the information that you share and that you provide to us is very, very rewarding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about how the identity and the cultural landscape have been shaped by the strong historical ties with Ukraine.

My grandfather came from the Ukraine. He came to Canada when he was 15 or 16 years of age. And I look at my son, and I, you know, he's now 19, and I still think that he is not mature enough or have enough backbone to have made that type of a trip. And I believe that it's based on Cameron being very spoiled by his Ukrainian babas, and knowing that, you know, it's something that he will never have to experience. And I know that my grandfather did not speak of his life in Ukraine or his travels to Canada. And I believe that it's something that, unfortunately, he took to his grave. But I do know that it was probably not something that would have been very pleasant to share.

My grandmother was born here, but she quit school in grade 3 because she was bullied because

she could speak very little English. Her Ukrainian was her first, you know, the mother tongue. So she quit school at grade 3 from being bullied, and—but had a lot of knowledge. She, through her years, was president of the church board, not the women's group, but the church board, and also was on the school board, which I thought was fantastic for a woman who had very little formal education—had a lot of insight into the importance and the significance of education. She lived to see me become an MLA and was very proud that I had taken on this role and then was very supportive. So she would be very proud today to know that we have all stood together in the Chamber and showed our support and our indignation of what Putin and Russia are putting the Ukraine through. And it's correct; the Ukraine has gone through many struggles and has been a country that has had to fight and to persevere so many persecutions over the years. And I believe that what we're doing today is a very strong commitment to our support for Ukraine.

I haven't had the opportunity to visit Ukraine. My parents have, and my brother has through his work in agriculture, has gone over three or four times to work with the Ukrainian people to help them become better farmers, better producers, and he's very proud of that experience. He has appreciated the hospitality that he has received, and that's from growing up with two babas who were very strict on making sure that you eat everything on your plate, you do not throw out your bread or your food, you eat it, and you don't waste it. And I believe that my brother's experience, Jeff's experience in the Ukraine, proved very useful, because he enjoyed the hospitality, enjoyed the meals, even though at times you could tell that it was very—it was almost the last thing that they had to provide as a gift to Jeff.

We have relatives in Ivano-Franko, and I keep in contact with Ira. She's a cousin who is struggling through this, and she is very, very strong, very, very stubborn. I think it sort of runs in the family. She's very strong. And she continues to send us emails and articles, and we send her things back. And, you know, I don't know how safe that is, but I just am so, so pleased that she continues to keep in contact with us, and lets us know that she is safe and we know personally, you know, how she is doing and the family are doing in her community.

Her last email to me said: The situation is getting worse and worse. Nobody knows what to expect from Putin. We are all praying for peace. Thank you for your care. So what I'm saying today, is everybody

in the Chamber who have put words on the record, thank you for your care.

Dyakuyu.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record. I'd like to thank the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) as well as the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler).

* (16:40)

There's been much said about the Ukrainian people in Canada and in Ukraine, and we all have personal experiences. My first experience was when I went to school. I went to school with a number of Ukrainians. We lived in the same community. And my first political experience was when I was elected to council and the ward that I represented was 85 per cent Ukrainian. I weighed much more when I finished that term on council than I do now. The favourite saying when you stopped in was: Eat, eat; tomorrow make fresh. And I ate and I ate and I ate lots of pierogies and lots of—lots of pastry as well—I have a bit of a sweet tooth. But we made lasting friendships and those friendships were built on respect, and that, today, is what we're talking about here, is respect, respect of democracy, respect for freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of speech. And that's been taken away, not once, but it's been taken away a number of times from the Ukrainian people of Ukraine.

When we look at our history, we're all descendants of immigrants. They came to Canada for a number of different reasons, but a lot of it was from oppression. And we see what the—what our immigrant friends and neighbours have produced. They produced a group of MLAs that are willing to agree that we need to stand up against the political aggression in Ukraine by a fellow by the name of Putin.

We have to wonder, in the back of our mind, will he be satisfied with just the aggression with Crimea? Will he begin an action of purging and cleansing, gradually working his way across the Ukraine, because we know what happened in the Holodomor. Many, many thousands of Ukrainians died by the actions of a lunatic that controlled by food. Will he control by food or will he control by energy or will he control just by sheer force? We stand here and we speak very freely in our democracy without fear of prosecution. The people in Ukraine stood and spoke and many died recently. My condolences goes out to their families, but, at the

same time, they stood up for what they thought was right.

Would we stand up in Canada for what we think is right? Today we stood up here in the Legislature for that. Yes, we did. But if the aggressor was at our door, would we stand up and do it? It's a big question. Can I imagine the fear that the people faced? No, I can't imagine that, nor do I want to.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I have friends in Ukraine, friends from a constituency that I used to represent that's now represented by my colleague, Mr. Smook, the colleague from La Verendrye—excuse me. These friends went four years ago to do missionary work, and they are sons and daughters of immigrants to Canada. They've started a dairy in Ukraine. They've shown the people how to fend for themselves, how to supply food for themselves, how to grow, because they didn't know, when they were under the Communist rule, they didn't have that opportunity. Someone made decisions for them. They teach English, and when I see the amount of money that Yanukovich spent on his personal self, and know the fact that these friends of ours work with the orphanages with donated money from Canada, it's disheartening, to say the least.

We know that we stand united in our condemnation of Russia's violation of the 'sovereignty' of Ukraine. But, as we stand here one by one, how much difference can we make? But when we stand united, united in this House, united with the Ukrainian society of Canada, united with the federal government, united with many, many other countries around the world, individually and collectively, we will make a difference. There's no question in my mind.

And, when I see what has taken place in the past in Canada, when I think back to 2011 when the Ukrainian settlement train ran the tracks that it had made one year—one hundred years earlier, and we've seen an individual from Manitoba, Leo Ledohowski, do a video of the Holodomor and the survivors to raise money to send to Ukraine and help finance that train that went across Canada, again, one hundred years later, to celebrate that heritage. And the heritage in Manitoba is rich, very rich.

In Gardenton is the first Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada. Well-maintained today—and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) and I had the opportunity to sit there with members from the clergy in Ukraine in a ceremony, in a church service, in 2011. In the member from La Verendrye's own

church, in the Catholic Church, there is art that's indescribable and can never be removed. It's painted on the walls and on the ceilings, because that's what they had to paint it on. And I understand that the painter did this for, basically, food.

So our heritage is rich here. We have to stand against this oppression of Ukraine today. And we have to move forward. We have to thank people like our MP from the Interlake, Mr. Bezan, for being the voice of Manitoba in the federal legislature. We have to give our federal government the backing that we can from Manitoba, all be that verbal backing, but we have to give them that. And I hope that cooler heads prevail. I pray that this is the end of violence and things will get better in Ukraine.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start off saying thank you to everybody who put a few words on the record today in regard to this travesty that is happening in the Ukraine. I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan and the member from St. Paul for bringing forward this resolution in such a non-partisan way. My ancestry is Ukrainian, and as I was sitting here listening to many, many—to all of the stories this afternoon and words that were put on the record, I'd said that I'm going to share just a few words today, but a lot of things that hit home, and that's all of the hard work and dedication that my baba and gigi had done through very, very difficult times even here in Canada. But the couple things that they did pass along was the hard work and the hard-work ethic to my dad, and then that, of course, to my—both my parents, and then on to my brother and myself and our families, and to not forget our Ukrainian heritage, Ukrainian-Polish heritage. And this goes with language, food and culture and everything in between.

* (16:50)

I must say that the one—one of the things that's stuck with me from the member from St. Paul had shared was the fact that we must not sit silently and just think that this is happening, you know, across the world, because there is a 16th degree of separation from everybody. And we all know somebody, or we're all being affected in one way, shape or form. I like to think of something like this that is happening in the Ukraine as a teachable moment. And this goes to all of our youth and to our friends and family throughout Manitoba and as far as many of the miles that we can share this message

throughout Canada, but throughout the world as well, is that we have to be thankful for what we do have. We do live in a fantastic democracy that allows us to get up on a day like this and put a few words again on the record.

But, at the same time, use those teachable moments, I know that we've been using, unfortunately, the travesty that's been happening in the Ukraine, and we pray every day for everything to work out in the Ukraine. My wife, Tracey, and myself, we sit with our boys, and we watch the news and we do watch the various, I guess, that made for the TV specials as well as well as informing us of what exactly is going on.

I, too, would like to thank the Ukrainian Canadian Congress for being here with us today as well, and, of course, the people who've sat with us throughout the whole afternoon. The MP for Selkirk-Interlake, I know it's been mentioned a couple times, Mr. James Bezan, and, of course, the MP, Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, who is here with this afternoon for a time; for all the work that they're doing on the federal level and taking our message from the provincial and municipal levels all the way to the federal, and then passing that on throughout the world.

So, with that, I—on a day like this, today, it makes me very proud to be a—an MLA in the province of Manitoba and to be able to look across and know that all of us are standing together and having hopes and dreams and prayers for the Ukrainian people and their country, and to move forward at a time of need.

So I again thank you all for your words that you've put on the record and the stories; it makes it even easier to go home and to pass those messages along.

So thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): And I, too, would like to put a few words on the record regarding the situation in the Ukraine.

I would start by liking—I'd like to start by thanking the honourable member from Kildonan and from St. Paul for working together to craft this resolution that expresses so very well what many of us in this House are feeling.

I've had the opportunity in the past to travel in the Ukraine a bit, particularly in rural areas, and I found that the people there were very much like rural

people anywhere. And they, their love for freedom was very heartfelt. The period of time that I was there was shortly after they had regained their democracy, and they were very proud of that and certainly very prepared to defend it then and, I suspect, prepared to defend it now.

So I certainly wish them well, and my heart goes out to any families who have suffered losses in the violence that has occurred up until now, and, hopefully, there will be no more in the future.

Certainly, the constituency I represent also has a very significant Ukrainian population, and I know that many of them are reaching out to family back in the Ukraine, and certainly they're hoping that everything turns out well and that there is simply no more losses, no more deaths, and that democracy can be returned in a timely manner without any further violence.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly all wish them well.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe we're getting to the end of debate, but just to make sure that we're not hurrying, is there agreement of this House not to see the clock at 5 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit all those wishing to speak to this resolution that we not see the clock until all of the debate has concluded? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, it does not take long for a new MLA such as myself to realize that legislative debate can often be caucous and partisan. Today is not one of those days.

Today we 57 MLAs have the unique opportunity to unequivocally and symbolically stand with the Ukrainian people, the 47 million Ukrainians whose sovereignty and territory have been illegally violated by Russia.

Mr. Speaker, while my own recent by-election may have been delayed, it was done under the auspices of a law in Manitoba and was, without a doubt, free and fair. It was, in part, this desire for free and fair elections that resulted in my paternal grandmother family, the Shadrachs *[phonetic]* and Larankas *[phonetic]*, to leave Ukraine and to emigrate to western Canada.

As many of us here in this Chamber and throughout Manitoba, I watched the pictures of Russian troops entering eastern Ukraine with

trepidation. I listen to Russian rationalization and justification, which not surprisingly, rang quite hollow.

With elections scheduled this spring, it is important that we as Manitobans draw from our extensive experience and participate as international observers where available. As we, in this House and MLAs, stand and rise in the House, and to support this motion—and this resolution, the people of Ukraine risk their personal safety to protect their democratic rights and their future. They engage in dangers most of us cannot comprehend. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this resolution in the Ukraine. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): As the opposition House leader, I am pleased to close debate on this important resolution on behalf of our caucus. I want to say how proud I am of my colleagues this afternoon. When I mean colleagues, I don't mean my colleagues in the Conservative caucus, I mean my colleagues in the Legislature. This, I think, is demonstrated of what we do the best sometimes here in the Legislature. It's our best work when we come together on an important issue, an international issue, and speak with a unified voice. And there are many eloquent speakers here this afternoon, and I know that there are many who'll have the opportunity to review Hansard and to hear the comments. And I think that they'll be encouraged by the fact that we, united as an Assembly, have spoken with one voice in support of the people of Ukraine. And I want to thank those who've been with us this afternoon to observe the debate and for your great work and support of this resolution, particular of my colleague from—member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), who I know worked with his counterpart across the way, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), to ensure that a resolution that was meaningful, that was timely and that was important would come forward for debate and be supported by all political parties.

I'd like to think that, regardless, if we had connections through culture and through history with the Ukraine, that we would still be having this debate. I know, as Canadians, there are many people who've come to this country, and so we often feel an obligation and a special connection to those who've come from other areas, and whether it was the typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines where Manitobans came together to offer support or now this, because of a shared common history and culture. Regardless of that history and culture, I'd like to believe that this

Assembly would do the same thing because we stand for democracy, because we believe that democracy and freedom, which has been repeated many times, that we have the advantage to have here and that we can hardly and scarcely understand what it would be without that freedom, that we would do the same thing, that we would stand up for another country—for another country of people who want that democracy and the freedom that we have grown under and that our children and our grandchildren, we hope, will grow under.

And I think this Assembly would do that. I think we would all stand up on behalf of those in the Ukraine or any other country who was struggling for freedom and for democracy and stand with one voice, because there might come a day, and it might be in the sands of time that long, where the Ukrainian parliament might stand up some day, hopefully, in a free Ukraine, and stand up to defend the right and the freedom of another country. That would be our wish, and that country might even be Canada. One never knows who they might be defending the rights and the freedoms of. But that is our hope, and we certainly hope that all the other countries that are involved in the free and democratic world—in particular we speak of our friends in the United States and other leaders in the western world—will be strong, be advocates to ensure that the Ukraine has that democratic right, has that freedom.

I want to echo the comments from others about ensuring that Canadians and Manitobans are engaged in that on the ground in Ukraine as the eyes and the ears for Canada so that we can ensure that we are seeing unfiltered what is happening in the Ukraine and to be a part of that, to ensure that we are doing our part to ensure that elections are free and fair and that the aggression put forward by the Russians is not tolerated.

* (17:00)

So we have seen this afternoon the best of this Assembly. We have seen this afternoon the best of democracy. And it's a democracy that we want for the people of Ukraine and all the people of the world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The House ready for the question?

The question before the House: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek leave to make the vote on this resolution unanimous.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the House to adopt this resolution unanimously? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek leave that this Legislature send this unanimous resolution to the federal government of Canada and to the national government of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Speaker forward the copy of this resolution to the Government of Canada and the Government of Ukraine? *[Agreed]*

I thank honourable members for the debate this afternoon.

And I'd also like to—I'd like to thank honourable members for the debate this afternoon and to also thank our guests from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, who are also our guests here this afternoon. Thank you for being with us for this entire afternoon.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 10, 2014

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