

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Man.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	Ind.
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
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SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 18, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

Bill 228—The Sikh Heritage Month Act

Madam Speaker: As previously announced, we will now be resuming debate at second reading of the second selected bill from the official opposition, Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act. As a reminder, in accordance with rule 24 and as previously announced, I will be interrupting this debate at 10:50 to put the question.

The bill is currently standing in the name of the member for Brandon East, who has seven minutes remaining.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): It's—got up this morning, went outside and thought, what a beautiful day it is outside and what a great community we live in, and we have the ability to live in such a great community because of the diversity we have in Manitoba.

And I noticed this morning, I walked in. I got beat into the House this morning by half a step by one colleague, but I did want to—I walked in here and, surprisingly—and pleasantly surprised—I looked up and I want to welcome our friends into the gallery today, which I did when I first walked in. But, again, welcome to your House. The Legislature here belongs to all Manitobans, and it is certainly a great pleasure to see you all join us today and listen to the debate about something so important as recognizing the Sikh heritage here in Manitoba.

I know as a government, and all sides of the House, I mean, we've—obviously, it's important to everyone. We've had a proclamation of a bill from the government proclaiming April as Sikh heritage month. We've had a Bill 228 come forward that we're debating from the opposition leader, and we had Bill 229—I believe it was—that we debated last week as well from an independent from Maples. So it shows that we're all on the same page here.

We all appreciate the diversity of cultures that we have in this province, and, Madam Speaker, I want to, again, talk about, very briefly here, that I didn't have the experience in my home community of Brandon. We do not have a gurdwara in Brandon. So, a year and a half ago, I had the pleasure of visiting a gurdwara here in Winnipeg South and it was certainly an experience that I enjoyed. I learned a lot of the culture and I thank you for that and I look forward to visiting again and even working with the Sikh population in Brandon so that I get to know more about their culture, their heritage, their religion.

It is certainly something that I look forward to when I go to different events even, is to have the ability—if I'm unsure, if my ignorance in their culture, their heritage, their religion is there—it gives me the opportunity to do some research to educate myself, because we all have to look back at some point in time—even my heritage, being an Icelander, we were not the first in this country. But my ancestors came over from Iceland and it created an opportunity for my family to grow here. And again, if it wasn't for that ability to open our borders to bring people into Canada, into Manitoba, I'm not sure what this province would look like.

But, again, you know, it is certainly something that I look forward to, getting more involved in and understanding a little bit more.

And, before I get into some comments on the Sikh heritage in Brandon and what's happening out there, I want to again congratulate the Sikh community here in Winnipeg. I started speaking last week on Thursday and in my first three minutes I didn't get to a point that I wanted to talk about last Thursday when we ran out of time. And that is the fact that the Sikh community here in Winnipeg were out—they've—not only work in their own areas but they work for the whole city. They were out last

Thursday collecting food. Their idea was to, because of the Sikh Heritage Manitoba, working hard for the Winnipeg Sikh Sangat Food Drive, their goal was to fill a five-ton truck of food by April the 12th.

And, of course, I wanted to push that out because that morning you had left and gone out on the streets at 9:15 in the morning to continue that drive, and I was hoping to get that word out so that people could hear that was going on and then maybe get involved and help as well.

So, again, I am looking forward to finding the results. I know the results were announced at Winnipeg City Hall last Thursday at 11 a.m. but, again, we were in the House and I didn't have the opportunity to hear that.

I do—I've only got three minutes left, Madam Speaker, so I want to just quickly talk about the Brandon's Sikh community. They are so involved in the community in Brandon and the importance part of overall education in the city.

The Sikh community has established a new scholarship at Brandon University in honour of Guru Nanak Dev, who was the founder of Sikhism. Continuing Brandon University students, on the basis of academic merit and on a record of significant community service to a volunteer organization, can qualify for this scholarship put forward in Brandon by the Sikh community.

The Sikhism philosophy for everyone to follow is clear. It was very specific, it's very simple, and I'm going read it here, Madam Speaker: Make your living by honest means; share your earnings with the poor, the sick and the disabled; and respect nature for the abundant resources provided by humankind.

And it's certainly something that we can all sit back and look at and take heed with and understand the values of this community, whether it be we talk—whether we talk about Winnipeg, whether we talk about Brandon or all of Manitoba or all of Canada, it is certainly something that we can all bring together and have a better understanding of how we can all work together.

Again, I do want to give a shout-out to Mr. Ramjit Mann in Brandon who led the development of the endowment fund. This was off-supported by approximately 24 Sikh members in Brandon and the funds totalled around \$17,100 and they would have been matched by the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative. So there's \$34,200 available in a scholarship.

So that's what we talk about when we talk about community involvement. It's not just building at the roots, it's about expanding, it's about opening the culture, creating a heritage that we can all enjoy. And I know I've been very fortunate when I look at my circle of friends from different cultural backgrounds. My previous employment, I had the excellent opportunity to work with a number of people that have come into Manitoba, especially in Brandon to help build a community because we all need to work together to build strong, vibrant communities. And if it wasn't for all the cultures, again, we would not have much.

* (10:10)

In my last 25 seconds here that I have, Madam Speaker, again, I do want to say what an honour it is to stand up here and talk on this bill and acknowledge the Sikh community and how important you are to all of us here in Manitoba. I congratulate you on April being proclaimed as Sikh heritage month, and, as we go on, I'm sure that we can all work closer together on an individual basis as well as a Legislature.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I'd like to thank the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for bringing forward this important bill. It is—we are more than happy to support this.

This is a bill that is supported by the community. It was brought forward by the community with over 700 signatures, and 1,500 more people beyond that in the community have supported it. And it's very fitting, and perhaps overdue, that we're marking Sikh heritage month at a time when Sikh Heritage Manitoba is marking 50 years in our province.

And I just want to thank and recognize everybody who's in the gallery today to see this, because I think that the values of the Sikh culture are incredibly important in forming what we do as a government, but—and how it has contributed to our community and our province of Manitoba. There's a fundamental commitment to equality, to good works and to social justice, to ensuring that people have a roof over their heads, making sure that people have food to eat, and the Sikh community has made significant contributions to democracy in our province, to our community, to building Manitoba, and our province is the better for it.

So thank you, thank you very, very much for your contributions, and I look forward to congratulating you as we—with this—if this bill passes and we actually officially proclaim April to be Sikh heritage month.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I just want to put a couple of brief comments on the record in respect of Bill 228, Sikh heritage month.

First, let me begin, Madam Speaker, by congratulating the community for bringing forward this important bill. I know that we on this side of the House are very happy and pleased and honoured to be able to bring forward this bill in the name of the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). We're very honoured to be able to do so.

I want to also just acknowledge each and every one of our guests in the House who have come out to the Legislature—legislative grounds week after week as we've debated this, and so I just want to acknowledge you for your commitment and just lift up the importance of the work that you've done. I want to give a particular shout-out to my beautiful sister Imreet. She is all that is amazing and beautiful and great within the Sikh community, and the Sikh community is in great hands under her leadership, and she works so hard. So I just wanted to give her a quick shout-out.

I also wanted to give a quick shout-out, Madam Speaker, to someone who I absolutely love and adore. I am so privileged and honoured to know personally our NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh. He is an extraordinary human being, him and his brother and his parents.

I had the honour of going out to Ontario when Jagmeet announced his intention to run for the NDP leadership, and I also had the honour of actually being the one to call him up on stage and give a couple of words in his honour, really.

And I just want to say that—and I think that it is a testament to the teachings and the culture of the Sikh people on how humble Jagmeet is and how kind Jagmeet is and how genuine Jagmeet is, and I'm proud to stand up for leadership like Jagmeet. He is truly the definition of what a leader should and must be. He has always treated me with such respect and kindness. He has taken the time to listen to my, and sought my, expertise and my knowledge and my recommendations and my suggestions. And that goes a long way into, you know, ensuring that individuals

understand the leadership that you are trying to bring forward and buying into the leadership that you're trying to bring forward. So I just want to put on the record how much I absolutely love and respect our national leader, Jagmeet Singh.

And I want to put on the record that it would be naive to think that as the first person of colour to lead a national political party that Jagmeet Singh does not face additional pressures that I would suggest other leaders have not faced. And so he does so with a genuine—a sense of humbleness. Every time I have the opportunity to meet with Jagmeet and listen to him, he handles the pressures that he is currently facing with such grace, and I think that that is, again, a testament to the Sikh community.

Every time I've been—I've had the opportunity to participate in a Sikh community activity, I am always welcomed and shown absolute respect.

And so I just want to put those brief words on the record about our national leader, and I think that Jagmeet Singh is somebody that we can all be proud of. He is part of your community but he is my brother, and I'm so proud to call him my brother, and I'm proud to belong to a political party that chose someone like Jagmeet Singh as their leader, as their first person-of-colour leader. I'm proud to say that I'm an NDPer in respect to that.

So I say congratulations to everyone today. Congratulations for the work, and we look forward to the rest of the morning.

Miigwech.

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): First of all, I want to thank those who are here today at the Manitoba Legislature to see democracy in action and debating bills and to vote on them in the best interests of our constituents and Manitobans. And today we debate and discuss Bill 228, Sikh heritage month.

Manitoba is a province that has been built on and by different ethnicities migrating here for hundreds of years. And today I'm here to put some words on the record why recognizing one's heritage and contributions to our province is very important.

The contributions of many cultures within our province should be celebrated. As a person of colour myself and a son of immigrants, I take pride in the long list of accomplishments made by the many immigrant communities such as the one I belong to, Madam Speaker, the Filipino community, an estimated 83,000-plus here in Manitoba.

The first wave of immigrants from the Philippines on record came in 1959, and this year will be 60 years since the first wave of Filipino immigrants has come to Manitoba. The first immigrants were nurses, then came garment workers in the late '60s and early '70s, which included my father who has been here now for 50 years. My mother and my older sister will have been here 50 years this year.

Lots of contributions made by immigrants who come to our province have also been an important time in history for many communities like the Sikh community, and the Filipino community that I come from, which I just explained.

When I think of Manitoba, I think of those who came before my dad. The Germans, the Ukrainians, the French, the Dutch, the Jewish, the Icelandic community, all had their waves of immigration to settle to Manitoba, and all have contributed in their own respective way, as well, for the betterment of our province.

Like communities I just mentioned, the Sikh community has contributed to innovation and economic growth in Manitoba. Diversity has contributed to innovation and growth. What is the definition of diversity, Madam Speaker?

*(10:20)

It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our own individual differences. Not only is diversity defined as dimensions of race and ethnicity, but gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies as well.

Progressive Conservatives, our government believes in freedom, opportunity and equality for all of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be on a diverse team on this side of the House where we can use our professional diverse backgrounds, diverse backgrounds which include business owners, educators, farmers, those with a social services background, and even a veterinarian, to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada.

The Sikh community should be proud on what it has accomplished and contributed to Manitoba and to Canada. They are diverse within their own community: notable politicians such as Tim Uppal, a former Member of Parliament from Alberta;

Dr. Gulzar Cheema, former MLA in Manitoba and British Columbia—and I was very proud that when Dr. Gulzar Cheema got elected in British Columbia, as a former Manitoban, I guess, at the time when I lived in British Columbia when I served in the navy—that he became elected in another province, and, actually, he was my mom's personal physician in The Maples, back in the day. So I have a high respect for Dr. Gulzar Cheema.

I actually went to university with a fellow by the name of Pawan Sohi at Royal Roads University, and he knew Dr. Gulzar Cheema as well, and years later, I went to see him again and he would give me advice before I went into politics. I didn't tell him that I was Conservative, though, but that's beside the point; Ujjal Dosanjh, the former premier of British Columbia and a former Member of Parliament; and the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) who has brought in his own bill to recognize the strengths and achievements of Sikh Canadians who throughout their history have done so much to make Manitoba the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous province we are today.

And there are many firsts in Manitoba with regards to our Sikh community. Mr. Kanhaya Singh formed the first Sikh Society in Manitoba in 1966, and was a founding member and president of the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Winnipeg; Dr. Rihal was involved in passing Manitoba's legal exemption in helmet laws that allowed for Sikhs to wear turbans rather than helmets while riding motorcycles. Manitoba was the first jurisdiction in North America to implement this exemption.

Speaking of firsts, this is the first time ever that Manitoba has officially recognized Sikh heritage month. Our PC government is pleased to officially proclaim the month of April Sikh heritage month in Manitoba for the first time in Manitoba history, thanks to our Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage.

As a Progressive Conservative, one thing our PC caucus takes pride in, the fact that our party, when it was in government under former Premier Gary Filmon, created the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, where I know, for many immigrants, including those from my Filipino community and the Sikh community, have benefited from. And because it is more enhanced and improved since we came back into government, the backlogs have cleared, applications are processed quicker, and

our PC government has invested just last week \$3.1 million in newcomer services.

I have always noticed whether it's the Sikh community, the Filipino community, so many are very welcoming, and that's why I would like to also say it's probably a friendly Manitoba thing. When I visit the local gurdwaras, whether it's the Guru Nanak Mission Centre in St. Norbert or the south Winnipeg Sikh centre on Dovercourt, members of the Sikh community always make me feel at home.

Most recently, some of my colleagues and I visited the Sikh temple on Pipeline and Mollard to present them the official proclamation of Sikh heritage month in Manitoba.

When I visit the local gurdwara, I always enjoy serving Langar. It gives me the opportunity to catch up with the many friends I have in the Sikh community and a chance to meet new ones, new friends.

Madam Speaker, to me, I would say, what brings community together: (1) food. The food served at Langar is vegetarian, comprised of many dishes such as lentils, chapati, desserts. I've—we can't forget about the chai tea. My son loves jalebi, by the way, and I love barfi—not barf, barfi. They're Indian sweets and they're very good. Just ask the members for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and—the—Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), right? We love barfi; we love jalebi. We love it all. *[interjection]* And the member—and the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), I totally forgot. *[interjection]* For the—Schuler-ji.

The other thing to me that brings community together is sports, Madam Speaker. With the Winnipeg Jets making the playoffs, look what it's done to our city in the last two years—or should I say since Jets 2.0 came back. Sports brings community together.

A popular sport within the Sikh community is kabaddi. Kabaddi, let me explain, is a contact team sport played between two teams of seven players. The objective of the game is for a single player on offence referred to as a raider—not an Oakland Raider, for the member of Minto, not an Oakland Raider, it's a raider—to run into the opposing team's half of the court, tag out as many of the defenders as possible and return to their own half-court, all without being tackled by the defenders and, in a single breath. Points are scored for each player tagged by the raider, while the opposing team earns a point for stopping the raider. Players are taken out of

the game if they are tagged or tackled but are brought back in for each point scored by their team from a tag or tackle.

Even the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) knows kabaddi because we go to those events; I love kabaddi. First time I saw kabaddi was in The Maples which I call the unofficial Punjab north; the unofficial Punjab south is my constituency of St. Norbert, 'richional' west and South Pointe, and I always have this vision of having a kabaddi tournament in Kirkbridge Park or in South Pointe. So to my good friend, Hardeepak Brar *[phonetic]*, who's in the gallery today, we got to organize something like that, hey? Kabaddi, right? In Punjab south.

Being an elected official in south Winnipeg is like Folklorama every weekend. And I have no shortage of events. And I tend to go to as many as I can. One of the many of the events hosted by the Sikh community—and our government understands the importance of recognizing the Sikh community for the contributions they made to Manitoba culturally and economically.

Manitoba joins several other provinces in recognizing April as Sikh heritage month, including British Columbia and Alberta. The previous NDP government had 17 years to recognize Sikh heritage month, and it failed to do so. I like to be part of great moments in history, and to have our PC government proclaim this month Sikh heritage month for the first time in Manitoba is indeed a great moment in history and great way to recognize the contributions of Manitoba's Sikh community.

And, Madam Speaker, we will continue support for the Sikh community which has made and continues to make important contributions when it comes to the multiculturalism that defines our province. One day I want to visit India; I'd love to see the Golden Temple.

And thank you very much. Thank you very much for being here. This is the people's building. We welcome you all. Thank you. Sat Sri Akal.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): It gives me great honour to get up and rise in this House and put a few words on the record about Bill 228, Sikh heritage month.

I just want to congratulate the community and say how much love we send to you and how we uplift you for bringing this forward. You know, this is truly government in action, listening to the

community and bringing something forward that you've been asking for. So I just want to honour your work and say how much we—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Smith: I also want to give a shout-out to Imreet because Imreet came to Wayfinders just after I was leaving and we shared many students together. We were like their second mom; they actually call us mom most of the time. So I just want to say great work there as well, supporting students and also educating them on Sikh history and culture.

So, you know, this bill would proclaim the month of April as Sikh heritage month, and I urge all of my members in this Chamber today to vote in favour of this, to, you know, proclaim the month of April and listen to the community. This is their bill; this is not our bill, this is just—we're the conduit of bringing this forward, just like all of us are the conduit for bringing our voice forward for our constituencies.

We've been listening to them. This isn't, you know—this is non-partisan. This is about supporting community and what they're asking for. So this is true democracy. People would, you know, support in what they're asking for.

Manitoba is, you know, a home to a large Sikh community, and they face lots of discrimination and racism, just like, you know, our brothers and sisters in the indigenous communities. So we share a lot of the same, you know, struggles in terms of being recognized for our contributions to the creation of Canada.

You know, and you play a large role in, you know, the contributions that have made and shaped Canada and we need to recognize that here in Manitoba. And this is just one other way that we can do this.

* (10:30)

And, in fact, when we were in government, there was a tree that was planted just in the back of the Leg., closer to the river, in honour and in celebration of Khalsa. So when the member from St. Norbert was talking about, you know, the former government not—doing nothing and not recognizing, in fact there was a recognition for the Sikh community.

And, you know, we're recognizing them right now. And we're asking for everyone's support in listening to them. We are just bringing this forward.

This isn't our bill, this is their bill. This belongs to the community. So please listen to them.

You know, we—through this bill, you're going to be able to create awareness, you're going to be able to educate the community, and show how vibrant the Sikh community is and help schools. When I was a schoolteacher, I taught in The Maples for 15 years. And you know, I learned so much from the students, from the parents, from the celebrations we had, and the multiculturalism of the students that were in that division, and how open people were to share and to support one another. And this is what this is about. It's about stepping up, listening to the community, supporting one another, and creating a month that's been there for a long, long time. But actually proclaiming it here in Manitoba, in legislation. And, you know, celebrating and bringing that forward.

And it's important, you know, to honour the history and contributions that the Sikh community have had here in Manitoba. You know, and it's—again, and I want to stress this, that—you know, we need to be a diverse community that represents everyone, that brings everyone's voice into this very Chamber. And I can't say that enough. I talk about, you know, the struggles of being an indigenous person here in Canada and being extinct from, you know, the history. Yet, you know, the indigenous people were the First Nations people, the First People here in Canada. And we were extinct from that history for so long.

So it's time for us to move on and make sure that every, you know, one is recognized that contributes. And certainly the Sikh community is a big contributor here in Manitoba and right across Canada.

You know, I was so proud when Jagmeet was elected. And Jagmeet actually came to Manitoba when I was in—knocking on doors; and came out with our leader—our member from Fort Rouge here—and knocked on doors in the North End, in the developments. And talked to our indigenous people; and we talked about the similarities, and how we are so unique and how, you know, we need to uplift one another, and recognize how, you know, amazing we are.

I was so thankful for our brother Jagmeet to come and knock on doors with me and take that time. And he actually came and visited some of our women's centres; he came to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre and he came and he listened to the women there. He talked to them about,

you know, what are the needs of the community, and, you know, he was—he wanted to hear and he wanted to listen and he wanted to, you know, bring that voice to Ottawa as well, because people are struggling right across Canada.

He also came to Ikwe women's centre, which is a shelter where women go that are exiting domestic abuse. And he spent a whole hour with them in their circle room and he smudged with them and he listened to them. And he talked about, you know, what his vision was for all of Canada. And how, you know, we need to end all forms of violence, whether that's discrimination—you know, something that we've all faced.

So, you know, I always want to acknowledge him and how proud I was that, you know, we finally have someone of colour, you know, that's possibly going to be the Prime Minister of Canada. And then how proud I was of our leader here. And, you know, indigenous people not that long ago weren't even in this House. I think about my sister from The Pas, you know, 2015, she was the first indigenous woman elected to this House. And you know, we need more women, we need Sikh women in this—represented in this House as well, to bring their experiences.

So, you know, I encourage my brothers across the way, and sisters and everyone in this House to support, you know, our Sikh community in bringing this bill forward. It is their bill, it's not our bill. We're just bringing it forward for them. And that everyone stands up and supports it and makes April Sikh heritage month here in Manitoba.

Miigwech.

House Business

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, on House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business—the honourable member for The Maples, on House business.

Mr. Saran: Could you please canvass the House for leave to withdraw Bill 229, The Sikh Heritage (Creation of the Khalsa) Month Act, with the understanding that the bill will be removed from the Order Paper?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the member for The Maples to withdraw Bill 229, The Sikh Heritage (Creation of the Khalsa) Month Act, with the understanding that the bill will be removed from the Order Paper? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Saran: As that bill has now been withdrawn, and—would you please also canvass the House for leave to not have Bill 229 count as my selected bill for this session?

Madam Speaker: As that bill has now been withdrawn, is there leave of the House to not have Bill 229 count as member for The Maples' selected bill for this session?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Given these arrangements, I will now advise the House that the previously scheduled vote on Bill 229, which had been deferred from last Tuesday, will no longer proceed today at 11:55.

* * *

Madam Speaker: We will now continue with debate.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): I am happy to stand and say a few words in support of Sikh heritage month and the many inspirational individuals who are part of this vibrant community.

Any person of faith recognizes and values our fellow travellers along this journey we call life. There is something very unique and endearing about those who choose to seek wisdom and truth beyond what our eyes can see.

Madam Speaker, in the political world, there can be times that our human brokenness causes us to behave in ways that do not reflect wisdom nor care for one another. I have seen instances where communities have been encouraged to be divided in order to score political points. This type of behaviour goes against the very grain and core tenants of a faith community, and it really does reveal the ugliness that humans are capable of.

Madam Speaker, in the past few weeks we have seen some of these very behaviours of division that reveal the focus has been taken off the positive attributes of the Sikh community in order to argue amongst the political few. We all have an opportunity to change this dialogue and be true leaders for those whom we serve.

Madam Speaker, April 1st, 2019, recognizes the strengths and achievements of Sikh Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Manitoba the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous province that we all are today.

The month of April is a special time in Sikh faith. It is the month of Vaisakhi, the Khalsa day when it is celebrated. Madam Speaker, this is why our Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, Minister Cox, recently—oh—

Madam Speaker: I think the member just realized that when referring to Cabinet ministers, it is to be by the title of their ministry.

Mrs. Guillemard: My apologies, Madam Speaker, I should know better.

And I was just so excited to highlight the achievements and the wonderful day that we all celebrated together. It was a wonderfully well-organized event put on by the Sikh community where they all came together and shared their culture with us, an openness I think that we all have learned from and grown from. And I hope to celebrate many more Sikh heritage month days with them.

Madam Speaker, I just again wanted to highlight the excitement that we all felt on that day when the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox) had proclaimed it as Sikh heritage month.

I also want to highlight a few prominent leaders. So, as I was reading through some of the notes and doing some research, because, clearly, I'm not an expert in the area of the Sikh faith. However, it's a fascinating, fascinating read and I would love to hear more from my individual friends who are part of that community.

*(10:40)

But in reading—so, I found that the early Sikh settlers, Mr. John Baboo and Mr. John Singh joined the Canadian Armed Forces during First World War. Madam Speaker, the contributions to our community were well beyond just localized; they contributed to the freedoms and all of the joy that we experience today and we have a great amount of respect and thankfulness for the community to come along and support and help set Canada up as we now know today.

Madam Speaker, I also read about Mr. Kanhaya Singh as he formed the first Sikh community in Manitoba in 1966 and was the founding member and president of the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Winnipeg—another example of leadership and there's plenty of examples of leadership. I couldn't possibly list them all, but these were just the key few ones who jumped up as I was doing my reading. There's Dr. Rihal who was involved in passing Manitoba's

legal exemption in the helmet laws and that allowed for the Sikhs to wear turbans rather than helmets when riding motorcycles. Manitoba was the first jurisdiction in North America to implement this exemption. These trailblazers have had significant impacts and—on Sikh heritage and are—the Sikh heritage bunch gives us an opportunity to reflect on their contributions.

I have—oh, sorry. Madam Speaker, I would now like to actually read out some definitions and I'm going to ask you to indulge me here because there is a reason that will be revealed, but I looked up the definition of the title guru. This is a special title given to very few within various faith communities but it's a unique title that has a very significant meaning behind it. Some of the definitions that I came across defines guru as a spiritual teacher, especially one who imparts initiation. Each of the 10 first leaders of the Sikh religion were bestowed with this title of guru. They are an influential teacher or a popular expert. Another definition states guru is a Sanskrit term for a teacher, guide, expert or master of certain knowledge or field. In pan-Indian traditions, guru is more than a teacher. In Sanskrit, guru means the one who dispels the darkness and takes towards the light; traditionally a reverential figure to the student with the guru serving as a counsellor who helps mold values, shares experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, an exemplar in life; an inspirational source who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student. A guru is also one's spiritual guide who helps one to discover the same potentialities that the guru has already realized. In Sikhism, the guru tradition was played a key role since its founding in the 15th century. Its founder is referred to as Guru Nanak and its scripture as Guru Granth Sahib.

Madam Speaker, I have listened closely over the last few weeks as this particular bill has been debated both inside the Chamber and in the media. I have noticed in recent days that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) has been using a new word to describe the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba. It's not a secret how the members opposite feel about our Premier and have used many creative ways to express their disapproval, but the word used in the last few days, as recently as yesterday, was guru—not in reverence, or to denote respect and honour, but rather with disdain. This word, particularly given the debates today, is an egregious example of ignorance displayed and highlights a rather careless use of the title that is to be used for good, not for mockery.

I hope the member for St. Johns will find time to apologize to the Sikh community for this error and learn from this experience. In my experience, I know they are a very forgiving and welcoming group. In this day and age of sensitivity it would serve us all to be more careful with our word choices and our actions.

There are many wonderful young groups being formed within the Sikh community and I would like to highlight one of them that I learned about recently in my reading, Madam Speaker. This particular group is called the Sikh Heritage Manitoba and they formed in March 2018, and they are a youth-led, non-profit volunteer organization comprised of nine executives and approximately 35 volunteers, all under the age of 25.

Their objective is to celebrate, reflect and explore the multi-faceted experiences of Sikh Canadians to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of—for this Sikh contribution to the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of Canada.

During the organization's first year of operation, Madam Speaker, they held a Sikh youth media literacy workshop and panel discussion, which was attended by approximately 50 Sikh youth.

Annually, in April, local Sikh communities gather to celebrate what is known as Vaisakhi, a celebration that marks the creation of Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith.

Madam Speaker, we are happy to be able to celebrate this, year over year, with such a great vibrant community. I know that my experience with every member who I have come across and met and had discussions with, has just been a wonderful moment where we can learn together. We can bestow each other's wisdom, life lessons, and there is so much to learn from every different culture that makes up Canada because we don't have just one identity. We are multiple identities that choose to work together for the success of all, and I am so happy to be a part of not only Canada and Manitoba but also all of the diverse communities that have welcomed me into their midst.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to start by welcoming those in the Sikh community who are here and say thank you, everyone, for the effort of all people in the community who have put together an effort to

recommend that we have Sikh heritage month and that all Manitobans can learn about the Sikh community and Sikh heritage.

I think the—it is going to be important that we make sure that we have details of Sikh heritage in the curriculum that children all over Manitoba learn about.

It is going to be important that we make sure that when we are considering—and yesterday we were talking about the consideration of judges—that we are considering the diversity of people in Manitoba; that we are making sure that when we are considering our education system and our teachers, that we are recognizing that the people who have—from the Sikh community are part of our community. And we welcome members to be teachers and help teach all Canadians, not only about the Sikh community and the Sikh heritage but about the important contributions.

I think—to me, one of the things that is really incredible is the emphasis on equality that has been for not just a few years, not just a few decades but for centuries, in the Sikh approach to how we should live and the Sikh approach to social justice, that this is an important part. And we need, as a community in Manitoba, all of us to reflect on what we have learned from you and from the Sikh teachings, in how we conduct ourselves within the Chamber, how we develop policy, how we make laws, and how we move forward as a province and how we move forward as a country.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few words, I will conclude, and if there's others who want to speak, they will have an opportunity as well.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

In accordance with our rule 24 and as previously announced, I am interrupting this debate to put the question on the second official opposition selected bill.

* (10:50)

The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act.

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

All those—it has been agreed, then, to accept this motion.

Recorded Vote

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): Request a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (11:50)

Order, please.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mayer, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Saran, Schuler, Smith (Point Douglas), Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 48, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

House Business

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Gerrard: Pursuant to rule 33(9), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux). The title of the resolution is Winnipeg General Strike.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Burrows. The title of the resolution is Winnipeg General Strike.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there's leave to call it 12 noon?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 12 o'clock? [Agreed]

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

CORRIGENDUM

On April 16, 2019, page 1261, second column, eighth paragraph, the first sentence should have read:

Also, Mr. Speaker, I am part of the heritage. There were only 50 or 60 Sikhs in Manitoba—in Winnipeg, and I came in 1971.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 18, 2019

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