

**Fourth Session – Forty-First Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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

Tuesday, May 28, 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. Good morning, everybody.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** I've—my intention to call Bill 207 for debate this morning, however, I need a—to request leave to allow the MLA for Thompson to move the concurrence and third reading motion for Bill 207 on behalf of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to allow the member for Thompson to move concurrence and third reading of Bill 207 this morning? *[Agreed]*

#### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 207—The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act

**Madam Speaker:** We will move, then, to concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act.

**Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk), that Bill 207, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Bindle:** I'm pleased to speak on this bill brought forward by my colleague from—the member for Selkirk, honouring conservation officers, because

today's conservation officers have many duties and they deserve our gratitude.

They're involved in and responsible for parks and security. They oversee seasonal park patrol officers and campgrounds and cottage subdivisions within our provincial parks, including problem bears and problem wildlife—and that includes polar bears. They're involved in firefighting and supervising fire management teams. They're involved in forestry. They work with forestry staff, timber companies, First Nations and user groups to manage timber harvesting. They work in fisheries enforcement, sport, commercial and subsistence fisheries and liaison with rights-based harvesters. They lead the provincial agency for fishery and wildlife enforcement including licence enforcement and assisting inspectors at checkpoints and aquatic invasive species checkstops. They assist RCMP in search and rescue operations on land and water. They have a canine unit available. They perform public outreach and offer education programs. They're involved in trapline enforcement and maintain harvesting statistics. They main their—they maintain their firearm certifications and, among other things, they provide recommendations for regulation management of the province's natural resources.

In many instances, conservation officers are the first on the scene of incidents such as highway traffic accidents, drownings and wildlife collisions. They assist the police and protect the public whenever called upon to do so, and there is also the added risk of coming into contact with hazardous substances.

I encourage all members to support this bill, and I sincerely hope it passes today because it is non-partisan.

Among other numerous duties as assigned, conservation officers are on call day and night and they risk their lives whenever they respond. Like all enforcement agencies, they are easily identifiable as enforcement officers by bad guys in resentment and risk—and they risk resentment, retaliation and revenge from criminals.

There is always potential for members to experience PTSD from some of the incidents they witness, and, on top of that, they have families that worry about them.

I'd also want to honour and recognize the suffering that some families had to go through in this—through the sacrifice of some fallen officers. Those officers in the past have given their life on duty: Kenneth Skwark, Keith Bartley, Robert Logan, Allan Assiniboine, William McLeod and Charles Morrish.

In honour of the sacrifice and commitment of all Manitoba conservation officers in performing their duties and protecting our people, our wildlife and our province, I ask all members, please support this bill and that it pass today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further—oh, the honourable member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** That rousing speech will be a tough act to follow, but I'll do my best.

Of course, we support conservation officers on this side of the House, and, certainly, the member from Thompson talked about a conservation officer who lost his life in the performance of his duties who I'm well acquainted with because he was my brother-in-law. So there's a monument honouring him and several other people who were killed in a helicopter crash at Leaf Rapids. Even though he wasn't stationed at Leaf Rapids anymore—he had moved on to Winnipegosis—he did a couple things every year. He would always go back to help out at forest fire season and he also went to Churchill to help out on polar bear patrol whenever he was needed.

So I certainly recognize the importance of what the conservation officers do, and the question that always comes to mind when somebody brings forward one of these bills that says we're going to have a Conservation Officer Recognition Day is, well, what are you planning to do to recognize conservation officers on that day, because on that particular day there may be 15 other things that are being recognized.

I was quite surprised—I forget what day it was that—on a radio station, it was the date on or something, but then as they went through the list it was also the day to honour, like, 10 other things.

So, in order for a piece of legislation like this to actually have some meaning and actually honour conservation officers, we always want to know what's the plan? What are you going to do to actually honour those conservation officers on that particular day? It's nice to have the day set aside to honour

them, and I'm sure conservation officers themselves may want to do something on that day but, really, what we've never heard is—from this government anything that they actually do to honour conservation officers.

\*(10:10)

You know, one of the ways they could honour conservation officers is let them negotiate decent rights pay, but this government has decided to not do that so that doesn't really honour the service and dedication that conservation officers have when their wages get frozen and their collective rights to negotiate are taken away from them.

You know, some of the things that conservation officers need to be doing is, obviously, to be out in the field, checking and doing their jobs. So how else does this government honour those conservation officers? Well, they do away with the clerks' positions that worked in the conservation offices in the park. So somebody wants to go and get a fishing licence, a camping permit and nobody there. That doesn't really strike me as honouring the profession of conservation officer in any way, shape or form when they are expected to not just do their jobs but now to take on the role of clerk, as well.

So, you know, it's nice that they've come up with a day to honour conservation officers but now, if they would actually—this government; by they, I mean this government—would actually do something to actually honour those conservation officers, as they should be honouring all workers that work for the Province and do such remarkable jobs.

Interesting to see how the conservation officers now will fit in with the privatized water bombers. They used to have a pretty close working relationship with government Air Services. So we don't know just exactly what that's going to look like now either, and I suspect conservation officers would kind of like to know what exactly that's going to look like and how they will not just be working with the privatized water bombers, but I'm sure they have concerns as to whether the privatized water bombers will be available to actually assist them in some of their duties, like fighting forest fires, which with climate change happening, regardless of what this government likes to believe, it's here; it's happening; it's real.

Forest fires become a bigger issue, certainly, when we look at BC—the amount of province that's burning up. Ours pales in comparison to that, but it is

certainly a concern that we should all have and I'm sure conservation officers share in that concern.

So I, you know, I really want to just make sure that conservation officers continue to get the support that they need every day of the week—not just on October 1st. We see too much of that where, you know, they just want to do something to get recognition. And by they, again, I mean this government; they just want to get recognition to say, look what we did, when in reality they haven't done anything to live up to that commitment to actually honour those hard-working, dedicated individuals or other hard-working, dedicated individuals that work for this Province and carry out a lot of thankless jobs: whether it's conservation officers, jail guards, anybody else that works for the Province. Allowing them to actually negotiate collective agreements and have wages that keep pace, at least with inflation, never mind being able to negotiate wages that get ahead of inflation so that those hard-working individuals really have a sense that the government does honour them every day of the week rather than attacking them, except on a special day. Let's be nice to conservation officers just on a special day while they're—yet the rest of the year, this government's not so nice to them.

So those are certainly the concerns that we have. While we certainly recognize the hard work that—the danger that goes into being a conservation officer with the rise in guns in this province. You know, I was just reading an article about how people are rushing out to buy semi-automatic assault rifles before the federal government comes in with a final—maybe final—ban on such things.

Well, anybody that doesn't think that that puts conservation officers' lives in greater peril is sadly mistaken. The more of those types of weapons that are out there—not designed for hunting animals, but designed for hunting people—put those conservation officers' lives in greater peril again. So, again, there's something, perhaps, maybe that the government could've passed a bill that would have offered more protection to those conservation officers to get rid of some of those semi-automatic assault rifles that have no business out in the bush being used for hunting.

So, you know, that's really the whole meat and potatoes of recognizing and honouring those people is recognizing and honouring them all the time, not just on that special day.

So, you know, with those few words, we certainly look forward to seeing what the

government has in store to actually honour conservation officers October 1st of every year, but every other day of every year too. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise to pay tribute to the work that conservation officers do in Manitoba. I want to thank them for their contribution not just now, but going back over many years and, indeed, for their contributions moving forward into the future.

They have done a remarkable job often under difficult circumstances, and in the last decade or so often with funding cuts which have made it more difficult for them to do their jobs and lacking the support and so on.

I remember, for example, a—one of the lakes which has been pointed out as one of the worst managed lakes in North America, maybe in the world, Lake Winnipegosis, and there was a conservation officer who I think worked out of Dauphin at least for part of the time, and he was one of the first to say that there's a big problem on Lake Winnipegosis, and, in fact, he included a chapter in a book that he wrote dealing with Lake Winnipegosis and saying that this is a problem that hadn't been adequately addressed and—but he was more forward thinking. And year after year and decade after decade we've had governments which haven't paid enough attention to words from him and others who've called out for action and for measures to ensure that the fishery in Lake Winnipegosis is sustainable. And, as I was saying, the culmination in recent years of this understanding was a report several years ago from an international organization saying that Lake Winnipegosis continues to be poorly managed, I think understaffed, underfunded, not managed well because governments haven't paid attention—and that's both NDP and Conservative governments, too—a major problem which has been detrimental because of the depletion of the pickerel fish which has stayed at a very low level since approximately 1960 because of poor management over many, many years.

So conservation officers, whether in this instance or whether in many, many other instances of the things that conservation officers do day to day all over the province, make a major contribution. They make a major contribution in managing wildlife populations, in ensuring we've got species diversity, ensuring that when we have a problem with moose populations in certain areas, that these are known, addressed and arrangement enforced to make sure moving forward that moose are protected.

\* (10:20)

The conservation officers played an important role in Manitoba, interestingly enough, in bringing back bald eagles in eastern North America because they helped with plants—transplanted some young eagles into places like New Jersey. And New Jersey, which had in the 1970s virtually no breeding bald eagles, now have, thanks to the transplants from Manitoba, more than 100 breeding pairs and doing very well. It's remarkable story of recovery, and there's a story here which has not been fully told of the role of Manitoba conservation officers in helping to make that happen.

So there are, I suspect, hundreds—maybe thousands—of untold stories like this that need to be told, and these are the sorts of things that we need to be compiling and telling and particularly emphasizing on conservation officers recognition day. We need a good plan for this recognition day. We need to make sure that there is really good recognition of the work that conservation officers do and have done and that people all over Manitoba are doing well.

I want to pay a tribute to the MLA for Selkirk, who brought this forward. He's brought it forward, I think, in more than one session; had quite a bit of filibustering opposition to this bill but, nevertheless, has succeeded in getting this, this far, and I hope that today we can get it through third reading and finally let it see the light of day, so that this fall we can be properly celebrating October 1st as conservation officers recognition day.

I'm pleased to see and recognize the improvements that have occurred, over the years, in terms of the relations between conservation officers and indigenous people in Manitoba, that, in fact, there are more and more conservation officers who are indigenous themselves and that there is a willingness to work together and that this relationship is, as I say, has improved and is continuing to improve, and I look forward to that continuing well into the future.

This role of conservation officers is probably going to be even more important in the years ahead, as we get into days and weeks and months and years with hotter climates that—as the predictions go with climate change, that the boreal forest, at least at the southern edges, will be warmer and drier. There will be a transition that Hudson Bay itself will become warmer and that, overall, this transition—it will be important to have conservation officers there,

helping to guide us through and plan for what we need to do in this transition; that—how we approach the stewardship of the boreal forest; what we do in terms of trying to address forest fires.

I note that there has been more attention, that finally Thompson has developed a community plan for prevention and addressing forest fires. I had asked, a number of years ago now, for the community plan for, I think it was Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids when they were threatened by forest fires. I was told by the minister responsible that that plan would be made available very shortly. It was not made available, as far as I can determine after extensive searches. It never existed and when it came out that Thompson was the first community to have such a plan, then apparently Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids didn't have a plan, obviously, if that were true. And they should have a plan and all the communities in the boreal forest should have a very substantial and important plan. And there should be hard work to try and get that plan—those plans put together with the—in partnership with the communities or led by the communities but with substantial provincial and federal help, in terms of making sure that this happens.

So these are the sorts of challenges that we face. We will face more species that are at risk, as we know. I was at a centre which was, interestingly enough, a centre for making beautiful rocks for—from granite, right, for stepping stones and for design—apparently some have been used at the Winnipeg airport and a variety of other places. And at the site, they had one of these green frogs which are, I gather, threatened or endangered, and we can learn, right, about habitat of species like that which become threatened from time to time. And they may be small, but they're nevertheless an important species in the Precambrian shield country which is the area that they like to live in. And thanks to the conservation officers, I expect they'll have a better time in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I'm pleased to join my colleagues from various parties who have already spoken to the bill and put some good comments on the record. We, of course, are supportive of this proposal which would proclaim that October 1st, each year—just a few months from now—potentially could be the first that is officially recognized in Manitoba as Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day.

Personally, I am, of course, quite enthusiastic about properly recognizing Manitoba's conservation officers. I think that the first exposure that I had to this line of work would've been in my early 20s, ironically when I was playing baseball in the United States, but one of the main programs at the first school I went to was actually training people to take on a role—it wasn't called conservation officers at the time—but to take on exactly this line of work.

And, then, of course with my master's degree in natural resource management, there were lots of really wonderful opportunities to meet a wide variety of officers and to learn about the work that they did, whether they were coming to our classroom or the more exciting times were when we got to go and see them in their classroom or, rather, in their work environment—be that on the water or in the boreal or protecting endangered species and endangered habitats.

It was our previous government, of course, which took a major step forward when—in 2015, I believe it was—we passed The Conservation Officers Act and this was a major shift in the profile and empowerment of officers working in this area. They had previously been called natural resource officers, and we upgraded the name to conservation officers to more completely capture more of the work that they do on a regular basis and, most important of all, we empowered them with recognition that they have similar authority and capabilities now as peace officers do, same as police officers or RCMP. They are recognized as being of equal status, which just makes sense given some of the potentially very dangerous work that conservation officers can be asked to be involved in pretty much any day that they show up for work.

You never really know what's going to be going on or what they may have to deal with. They could be dealing with armed suspects; they could be dealing with illegal poachers; they could be dealing with illegal fishery activity; they can be dealing with illegal hunting; they can be dealing with people either deliberately or unknowingly damaging important habitat, you know, causing forest fires. Who knows what might come across their desk on a given day?

\* (10:30)

So it just made sense to our government that these people, taking on this very important role in our society, really being a very important set of eyes and ears right on the front lines of our natural spaces

and protected areas, that they should have the capabilities and the training and the protocols in place to support them properly in doing that important work.

Conservation officers, of course, are not the only Manitobans who enjoy visiting or even living in our protected areas or in our more remote communities, but they do play a very important role, and it has been very disappointing for us to watch this government unravel a lot of the supports for conservation officers, as this government has launched its unprovoked, unnecessary and unwise attack on public servants.

This is a government, let's not forget, that promised everyone, conservation officers included, that there'd be no cuts and there'd be no layoffs, and since getting elected, those two things are pretty much all the Pallister government has done. And they've broken that one promise over and over and over again, hundreds and hundreds of times. And conservation officers now are being asked to cover even more territory, even more jurisdiction, with the same salary that they had several years ago because, of course, their wages have been frozen, the same as every other public servant by the Pallister government.

So nothing like getting a day of recognition and also getting a de facto pay cut at the same time. Wouldn't think it would be too unreasonable to have both, you know, even a modest increase in wages to keep up with inflation, in recognition of the work that they do. But the Pallister government launched its bait-and-switch strategy back in the last election, where they promised one thing and then undermined that promise continuously. Ever since—I will give them top marks for consistency—they have consistently broken their promise over and over again, and for the conservation officers who are disappointed in that, I certainly want them to know that I share their disappointment.

And we only need to look at a couple of examples of decisions that this government has unfortunately made that really bring home the importance of conservation officers and what happens when they're not there anymore.

Let me just give you one example. Top of mind would be this government's, again unwarranted, unprovoked and unwise attack on the commercial fishers and the commercial fishery on Lake Manitoba. The now former minister for Sustainable Development one day decided to send around her

Dear Fishers letter, which is now quite infamous. Amongst other things, it refuted the notion that there were treaty rights involved for indigenous fishers, but she also made it very clear, even prior to legislation and regulations being in place, that conservation officers were being ordered to no longer enforce fisheries infractions from Lake Winnipeg. All the COs were pulled off the lake, and it was basically a de facto free-for-all because this government was of the opinion that the magic power of the free market would somehow raise all boats yet again. How many times have we heard this and how many times has it not worked?

Well, here's another example. You pull the COs out of the situation; you bring in legislation that privatizes the fishery; and on the very next day, somebody who happens to be a Conservative Party donor—at least has been in the past—decides it'd be a real good idea to promise a group of fishers from four fish sheds that they would get paid if they only just gave them about a million dollars' worth of fish. And the fishers, unfortunately, agreed to that, and lo and behold, they never got any money.

Instead, what happened is that fish ended up being put in contaminated shipping containers that were supposed to only have been used for fertilizer ingredients, such as the innards of fish or fish heads, parts of the fish that were not designed for human consumption. Then the fish get sent to a number of different places in the United States which, surprisingly enough, don't know what to do with them, and nobody from the Pallister government even bothers to contact either the national Canadian or American food inspection agencies to warn them of potential contamination of the food chain on both sides of the border. No one really knows whatever ended up happening to that million dollars of fish, but the fishers sure know that they never got to see any money, and what was a key starting point in all of this is the fact that conservation officers were ordered by this government to no longer be on the lookout for unscrupulous actions like this which would see fish being sent outside of the province and all of the repercussions that have come.

And, speaking of repercussions, the anticipated further impacts of climate change are only going to make the jobs of conservation officers so much more difficult, and this government's approach to protected areas is only going to become more and more inadequate in the years ahead.

The United Nations—not that this government pays attention to science—has made it very clear that there are over a million species worldwide that are at imminent risk of extinction, and climate change and a lack of habitat protection will be fundamental parts of that.

Well, the current Sustainable Development Minister's made it very clear that while she likes preserving wilderness as a concept, she's not going to do it, and it will be up to the federal government to figure out how it is going to meet its international commitments and its global commitments to the future generations without any participation from Manitoba. The only time this government's managed to actually increase the number of protected areas is when they actually allowed mining interests to wipe out some of the spaces that were supposed to be preserved for future generations.

Conservation officers are doing their best—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** My friend from Wolseley was doing so well I was inclined to give him leave to keep going. He has so much to say on so many important subjects, and so I know this House will miss him when he's no longer here to convey very important observations and messages not only to the members of this Legislature, but to the people in his constituency of Wolseley and, of course, to the people of Manitoba.

I'm pleased to get up and speak to Bill 207, the Manitoba conservation officers recognition day. As you know, Madam Speaker, this bill has been through quite the torturous route to get here. It's been introduced, I don't know, a few times. We've had second reading on it, I don't know, it seemed to me on more than a few occasions, and then, finally, after the government got its act together and—because a number of mistakes have been made by the previous House leader—and I think the current House leader—in relation to getting this bill moved forward, but that—you know, let's be honest. The current House leader's made a number of mistakes on a whole range of issues, so this one's not alone.

But we have hope that some day he'll improve. He's had lots of practice at it over many, many years of being in this Chamber, and I know that the more practice one gets the better one gets, and so I look forward to him improving in that position.

But we know that it's been a problem for the government to make this particular bill a priority



despite the best efforts of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) trying to get this bill passed, and the—it's the oddest thing had—about it, Madam Speaker, of course, as you know, is the opposition by his own government to move this bill along. And so it's been quite the tortuous route winding and meandering to finally get to this point.

And I had the honour of being at standing committee when this bill came forward for public hearings, and, I think, so exhausted were the people of Manitoba by this tortuous route this bill took to get to even to public hearings, and so exhausted were conservation officers themselves who had initially turned up to be a part of it only to be disappointed by the government's fumbling about it. They didn't show up to standing committee, nor did any member of the public, if memory serves correctly.

\* (10:40)

And so this bill has not been a priority for the government, even though conservation officers do a tremendous job on behalf of the people of Manitoba. Every single day I think there's substantial risk in the work that they do. I think that there's any number of difficult challenges that they need to overcome each and every day in doing this—in doing the job, and so, to have a conservation officers recognition day always seemed to us to be a pretty good idea and something that should indeed be celebrated. And we tried, we tried so hard to get this bill to move forward—even though it's not an NDP bill; it comes from the government side—we tried to get behind it and move it forward, and as I said, only fumbling and bumbling by successive House leaders—and it probably starts with the Premier (Mr. Pallister), for all I know, and giving orders to folks—you know, do this, don't do that, and everybody gets confused—and so it's taken a long, long time to get here on third reading.

And I think, frankly, Madam Speaker, that part of the reason this bill hasn't been a priority is government's own treatment of public servants and the public service since they came into office. It's been repeated by many of my colleagues of the commitment that was made by the Premier in the election not to touch front-line services, to protect them, to make no—sure that nobody lost any jobs, to ensure that—I think that some of the verbiage was around actually making them better.

And we know, as a result of the austerity agenda followed by the government since they were elected in 2016 only three short years ago—though we seem

to be on the cusp of an election, but that's a subject for another day—that over three short years, the government has done such dramatic damage through their cuts to public services and their undermining of the work that public servants do every day.

They've interfered in collective bargaining. They've eliminated the department of labour. They've been Scrooge-like when it comes to the minimum wage. On a whole range of factors—including layoffs and position deletions—on a whole range of issues, the government undermines its own commitment to recognizing conservation officers because their austerity agenda, frankly, sends a quite different message—is that we'll say one thing one day out of one side of our mouth but then we'll say something on another day out the other side of their mouth. And the result of all of that, Madam Speaker, is chaos, confusion, uncertainty, all founded on the government's frankly dramatic failure to not only protect but enhance public services; not only to value public servants but to negotiate fairly with them and to compensate them appropriately.

And so, as many members of our side of the House in the NDP have pointed out day in, day out, whether it's in relation to health care, whether it's been in relation to education, whether it touches on housing or child care or immigration or justice or poverty reduction or services in the North or just the financial management of this—of the budget of this particular government, in every way possible, the government undermines the ability of public servants like conservation officers that do their job, feeling proud of it, feeling valued because the government has set forth an agenda which seeks to cut all the very things that I just enumerated.

And so we're left in a position where we stand on this side of the House wanting to value conservation officers, wanting to celebrate their work, wanting them to know that we in the NDP stand behind them every step of the way, not only in the work that they do each and every day on behalf of the citizens of Manitoba, but also as public servants who come to work on behalf of the public and have a right to be treated fairly, have a right to be respected, have a right to be valued. And all we've gotten from the Pallister government from the get-go is an undermining of all of those core values.

That's what separates us in the NDP from the Conservative government. That's what separates us in the NDP from the Premier of this province. That's what separates our caucus from the Conservative

caucus, because we value public service. We value public servants like conservation officers. We invest in the very things that make their jobs possible, doable, all to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Manitoba. And, in fact, the government has not done one single thing in that regard since they were elected three short years ago. When your only agenda, when your only plan is to cut services, Madam Speaker, there's very, very, very little else to do and that's why the government is so—government's agenda is so moribund. It's so weak. It's so lame. It's so pointless. It's so useless. It doesn't accomplish anything. It doesn't serve any value other than to punish the people of Manitoba for electing this government. It's the most bizarre kind of politics that I've experienced since the last Conservative government, whether federally or provincially or regardless of what province that we're talking about.

So we in the NDP want to say very directly, very clearly to conservation officers, we've supported this bill all the way through. We want to say very clearly and directly to conservation officers that we apologize on behalf of the government for their fumbling and bumbling on this file, which has caused considerable embarrassment, not only to the Conservative member who introduced the bill, but to the conservation officers as a profession because they were frankly told, through the government's mismanagement of this issue, that they weren't valued and they weren't appreciated. I'm happy to say, I'm honoured to say, I'm privileged to say that on this side of the House, in the NDP, we not only walk the walk, we talk the talk. We're happy, proud to support conservation officers every single day.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I'm pleased to get up and speak about The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act. It will proclaim October 1st in each year as Manitoba conservation officers recognition day, and that day seems like a fitting one. It will be very close to the annual peace officer memorial that takes place at or around this very Legislative Building, Madam Speaker. It's a very moving service that brings together conservation officers, police officers, correctional officers; all those who put themselves at risk for the rest of us. And I do commend the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) for having brought this bill forward. October 1st seems like a very fitting day.

Now, with respect to this bill itself, I remember practising as a lawyer. Sometimes you get to court with a case which had been around for a while and

the judge would look at counsel and say, this case has grown whiskers. Well, this bill, Madam Speaker, has actually grown a full beard. We're glad that now it appears that we can move this bill now to finalized third reading and have it become the law of the province. We're glad that the government has now given this bill perhaps the attention that it deserves, and we were pleased to give leave this morning to make sure there won't be any further delays in making this bill a reality.

As has been said, I think, very, very effectively by my other colleagues who've spoken on this bill, our New Democratic opposition supports the good work of conservation officers, and we will continue to do so.

I don't think I have to tell anybody in this House that Manitoba is a place that's home to beautiful natural spaces, and we want to make sure that those treasured spaces and the animals and the plants that reside in them are there for future generations to enjoy. And, unfortunately, not every Manitoban shares that same goal, and we know the conservation officers really are a very thin line of protection for Manitoba species from those who would choose to hunt illegally or to trap illegally or to damage the ecosystem. We know that our conservation officers are spread very, very thin in trying to protect the natural bounties of our province, and we understand the important work that these officers do to enforce the laws that protect our natural resources but also educate the public and also assist the courts in investigations when charges are laid against Manitobans or others who do not follow the rules.

And, as I think has already been put on the record, it seems pretty basic that if you're going to bring forward a bill supporting conservation officers, there would be an equivalent recognition by the government of the day to respect those very same conservation officers.

\*(10:50)

And I believe that my colleagues, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) have made it very clear. But, just in case some of the government members aren't listening, I'll make it clear again: our NDP caucus has been unequivocal and clear in our support for public sector workers. And that's why we opposed and we continue to oppose this government's illegal, imposed two-year wage freeze

for more than 120,000 public sector workers across the province of Manitoba.

And we know, that even as the government has illegally frozen the wages of workers, they've also been choosing to cut positions, they've been leaving positions vacant in every single department, in every single area. If this was a normal year and if we had a government that had the courage to actually call Estimates so we could ask questions of ministers, we would undoubtedly be asking this government how many vacancies there are among correctional—or among conservation officers right now, and we would get an answer that I'm sure would be higher than the year before, and higher than the year before and higher again certainly than the year before. But this government, on the eve of an illegal election, is afraid to even call Estimates. They're afraid to even give members of the opposition parties the opportunity to ask questions to actually test them when they stand up and say, well, we support conservation officers.

Well, I'd love to know how many of these positions are currently vacant, how hard correctional—or conservation officers are now working, covering far more territory, doing far more tasks and, I'm sure, frustrated that they are unable to give the protection they want to, to Manitoba's natural resources.

We know that highly trained conservation officers have been departing the public service to take jobs in other fields. We know that many other conservation officers are leaving the province for better paying jobs and more fulfilling jobs in other jurisdictions and, frankly, that's a shame. What an opportunity here in Manitoba for people who love the outdoors, many of whom come from northern communities, from remote communities, to actually be able to have a rewarding career and to work in the area that they love. And, unfortunately, with this government's neglect and disrespect of the civil service, fewer and fewer of those positions are available.

Now, Madam Speaker, we know that conservation officers are crucial to Manitoba's conservation strategy and that's why it was, back in 2015, our government passed The Conservation Officers Act. And what that law did is it recognized conservation officers as law enforcement officers with the powers of peace officers. And it was an undertaking that we took on over a number of years to make sure that all of the different individuals in

our public service that have specific responsibilities probably needed more clarification in terms of the work we do. We know that police officers are peace officers. The question is, which other professionals require the very same kind of control because, of course, there are specific legal rights and responsibilities that flow on people that are peace officers: the right to detain, the right to arrest, certain ways they're able to gather evidence. And that's why we wanted to make sure that we truly respected and truly recognized the work that conservation officers do by changing the law to make it very clear that they are law enforcement officers.

And I would hope that this government, with some of the statements their members have put on the record, would have an equal interest in making sure that our conservation officers are respected but, instead, we see the exact opposite from this government.

And, again, they say the tone starts at the top and we know the tone starts with this Premier (Mr. Pallister) who, although on the one hand will profess to be the old teacher, as he calls himself, the old union guy, there has been nothing that I've seen this Premier say or do that would make us believe that his background provides anything other than anecdotes and folksy stories when he wants to deflect from what he is truly doing.

And I think that this bill is a further opportunity to put on the record once again how disappointed we are, that rather than support our civil service, rather than respect the important public services they provide, including protecting our natural resources, this government instead attacks labour, attacks public sector workers and has indeed passed anti-worker legislation which is now before the courts and which we fully expect—once the court cases are heard; once the appeal is completed—is going to demonstrate, once and for all, that this government broke the law.

And it is ironic that on the one hand, this government wants to stand up and support conservation officers who enforce the law, at the same time this government, whether it's passing this bill to freeze public sector wages, whether it's this Premier now musing about calling an illegal election despite a law which makes it very clear when the next date for the election would be, they can't seem to get their story straight. They can't seem to get their story together. I can, however, say on behalf of my colleagues on the NDP, that we respect conservation officers. We respect all public servants and we are

quite prepared to have this bill pass this morning and, hopefully, it'll receive royal assent very soon after.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I am pleased to get up on the House this morning—sorry, pardon me—to put a couple of words on the record in respect to the Manitoba conservation officers recognition day.

It certainly is—everybody on this side of the House has already said, Madam Speaker. We do support Bill 207, the Manitoba conservation officers recognition day. I don't think that there can be, you know, any confusion that I would suggest all of us in this House support conservation officers. They do—certainly do—very important work on behalf of all of us, but certainly on behalf of the environment and ensuring that our parks and our environment in its totality is safe and that we are safe.

I think that the only couple of words that I want to put on the record is that I think it's incumbent on me to officially note for the purposes of Hansard that this is, I think, maybe the fourth or fifth time in the last three years that we are getting up on this bill and that is, I would suggest to you, a testament to then, really, the commitment of the Pallister government towards conservation officers.

As you know, Madam Speaker, when you are in power, when you are the government, you have the privilege of bringing forward government bills and it would have been nice to see this Pallister government actually bring this bill forward if they were so concerned about conservation officers and really wanting to acknowledge and honour conservation officers, that they do so earlier than they did already.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act.

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

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Also, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

Seated in the public gallery from École River Heights, we have 25 grade 8 students under the direction of Katherine Abra, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, can we move directly to private members' resolutions? Can we call it 11 o'clock?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

### RESOLUTIONS

#### Res. 14—Filipino Heritage Month

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Martin),

*WHEREAS the first Filipino migration to Manitoba began in 1959, when four nurses arrived to work for the Misericordia Hospital; and*

*WHEREAS a surge in the numbers of skilled Filipino migrants steadily started to increase shortly thereafter, as initiated by Manpower Canada, which recruited Filipino workers to help the market needs of manufacturing companies in Winnipeg around 1968; and*

*WHEREAS such recruitment continued during the 1970s with an increased representation of workers in sales, manufacturing and clerical categories; and*

*WHEREAS in the 1980s and 1990s the age, gender and occupational profiles of the Filipino community in Manitoba began to expand, as a large number of sponsored relatives arrived under the Family Reunification Program; and*

*WHEREAS the Filipino community has become an integral part of Manitoba's society and social fabric, including in the areas of health care, agriculture, education, business, government, hospitality and retail, finance and economics, art, sports and entertainment, with many successes being achieved; and*

*WHEREAS citizens within the City of Winnipeg and Manitoba as a whole, have learned to appreciate the culture that Filipinos have brought to the province; and*

*WHEREAS according to Statistics Canada, the Filipino dialect of Tagalog is the second most spoken common language in Manitoba since 2016; and*

*WHEREAS Filipinos have chosen Manitoba to establish roots and call it their home, with a strong and continually growing population of 83,000, reaching every corner of the province; and*

*WHEREAS because of their success as a community and culture, the celebration of Filipino heritage has been traditionally celebrated in Manitoba throughout the month of June, with June 12 being Philippine Independence Day; and*

*WHEREAS the Filipino community has made tremendous contributions to the growth, prosperity and development of Manitoba and continues to do so; and*

*WHEREAS the year 2019 is the 60th anniversary of the first Filipino migrants arriving in Manitoba which should be recognized and celebrated.*

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to designate the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Martin),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to designate the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Reyes:** This year, 2019, marks the 60th anniversary of the first Filipino migrants arriving in Manitoba—one of the many reasons why all legislatures in the House today should support this resolution to designate the month of June as Filipino heritage month here in our province.

*Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I am honoured to have some distinguished guests from our Filipino community today from various parts of Winnipeg as well as rural Manitoba. Thank you for all making the time out of your busy

schedules to be here with us this morning to witness a historical moment for our Filipino community and Manitoba as a whole.

So let me begin right—let me get right into it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Why should we as legislators support this resolution? What significant contributions has Manitoba's growing Filipino community made so that we can designate the month of June in Manitoba as Filipino heritage month? There are multitude of reasons. As I mentioned, this year is a very significant as it is our 60th year as Filipino-Canadians that we celebrate the arrival of the first Filipino immigrants to our province.

So what would possess people, who come from a warm, tropical-weather climate and move to Canada and to Manitoba 60 years ago? One of the reasons people immigrate to another country are for jobs and business opportunities but in the case of the first wave of Filipinos, it was more about the jobs that were available. It was nurses, doctors, medical technologists and other professionals which constituted the first wave of Filipino immigrants who arrived in Manitoba from 1959 to 1965. During those years, these were the occupations that our province needed to fill, the services of professionals, from these immigrants who had been living in the United States and those who came directly from the Philippines.

Fe Ryder was one of those first Filipino immigrant nurses who arrived in Manitoba in 1959 from St. Paul, Minnesota, and decided to stay in Winnipeg. Fast-forward 60 years later and we have had many from Manitoba's Filipino community contribute through the nursing profession, including my mother-in-law, my aunts through my wife's side of family, and my wife herself. Thank you for all you have done and what some of you continue to do to take care of the patients around our province.

Doctors were also recruited to come to Canada, and most notably a fine distinguished gentleman who I got to catch up with at the Asian Heritage Month Community Leader Awards, Dr. Rolando Guzman and his lovely wife, Dr. Irene Guzman. They have been pillars of the Filipino community, having made Manitoba their home since 1961. Dr. Guzman was a pathologist and Dr. Irene Guzman a family doctor—my mother's family doctor. Like so many of the—those in the Filipino community during the early periods of Filipino settlers in Winnipeg, they organized many groups for teachers, nurses and garment workers, opening their homes to welcome

the many Filipinos to our province. They were known as the father and mother of then the young immigrants. Many years later, Dr. Rolando Guzman would be appointed as a Philippine honorary consul general.

Madam Speaker, I—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke of garment workers and I know that another wave of Filipino immigrants in the late '60s and in the '70s would go on to help Manitoba's economy through the garment industry, the path that many including my father, Reynold Reyes and my Uncle Henry took to better their lives in their new adopted country of Canada right here in Winnipeg. The TanJays, Acme Bedding, the Nygards employed many of the first generation Filipino-Canadians, and our community thanks these companies for giving them the opportunity for employment for coming to Canada.

Danny Sevilla, my constituent in St. Norbert, still works to this day as a garment worker for Canada Goose, a very successful, globally recognized company and a Manitoba success story, gainfully employing many immigrants, including those from our Filipino community.

I mentioned a couple of professions that—where the Filipino community has contributed to serve our province in different capacities. Our noticeable arrivals during the '60s were teachers, and under the former Premier Duff Roblin, he made education a priority through the construction of new schools, libraries and other educational facilities to accommodate the needs of the increasing number of students. Naturally, teachers from the Philippines immigrated to Manitoba to help fill the need of teachers.

Thank you to the former teachers, current teachers and educators at all levels involved for your contributions to the education system in our province.

We know family reunification is another key reason people immigrate to where—with respect to the Filipino community—many came in the '80s and '90s to join their family members. With a steady inflow of immigration from the Philippines, the community would start opening up small grocery stores so people can enjoy the taste of their former homeland. And some would also open up their own restaurants. I remember Fil-Craft grocer on Notre Dame and Tawagin, which specialized in TV, video and audio equipment sales. These were the small-business owner pioneers of the Filipino community.

As a—as the founder, former president of the Manitoba Filipino Business Council, as a former small business owner myself, I thank the Buenos, the Tawagins and all those who took a chance to go into private enterprise, to create those jobs back in the day because it has inspired many individuals in our community to go into business.

When a community grows like ours, it contributes to the economy directly and indirectly. We see that Filipinos have significantly contributed with a lot of professional occupations and in the labour market. We have many lawyers, doctors, dentists, engineers, pharmacists, accountants and I can go on and on.

When it comes to the workforce, just the aerospace industry alone: the Boeings, Magellan, StandardAero employs a lot of Filipinos. There's also Motor Coach and New Flyer with a significant number of Filipinos, and I'm just talking about the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well, let's talk about rural Manitoba: Neepawa, Steinbach, Virden, Russell, Brandon, Thompson—where many Filipino-Canadians are gainfully employed in our health-care system, hospitality service industry and in agriculture.

I remember the news documentary why the Roman Catholic churches have survived and thrived in rural Manitoba because of the Philippines, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Philippines has been one of the top immigrant source countries to Canada and the top source country to Manitoba, which is not surprising, as you can see some evidence-based statistics that show this. Tagalog, a Filipino dialect, is the second most common language in Manitoba since 2016.

There is now a Filipino bilingual program offered in the early years of education, Arthur E. Wright Community School. In the Filipino bilingual program, Filipino is used as a language of instruction in social studies, health, Filipino literacy and daily routines. The program is open to everyone, whether they speak Filipino or not.

As a politician myself and as a proud member of the Filipino community here in Manitoba and as a Manitoban, I'm very proud to note that the first Filipino-Canadian elected in Canada and the first Canadian elected MLA was the late Dr. Conrad Santos from Manitoba. The first Filipino-Canadian elected to the House of Commons, first Filipino-Canadian MP, the first Filipino-Canadian appointed

to federal Cabinet, Dr. Rey Pagtakhan from Manitoba. The first Filipino-Canadian woman elected in Canada and the first Filipino-Canadian appointed into provincial Cabinet, the member from Logan from Manitoba. The first Filipino-Canadian that became a city councillor in Winnipeg, Manitoba—I just spoke to him on the phone last night—my good friend, Mike Pagtakhan from Manitoba. And I want to thank those who I've mentioned and also to include and by thanking the former MLA for The Maples, Cris Aglugub, and the current MLA for Tyndall Park and those who have served in school trustee positions as well. I see you there take the floor so thank you very much for your service. Thank you for your dedication to serving in public office, and thank you for your contributions to your constituents and to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba is also open for business, and you can tell when a community has influence when they start opening global food chains from the Philippines, like Jollibee, Max's Restaurant and the soon to be opened Seafood City, a Filipino supermarket chain. Remember, the majority of Filipino immigrants who came here for job opportunities are now the influence of the Filipino community is creating jobs, whether it is the local Filipino entrepreneur or large corporations from overseas. Great to see many people, including some of our business-minded members from our Filipino community investing in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to add, many immigrants move to offer more opportunities for their children, opportunities for a better education and hoping to have good careers for their children and the future generations to come.

I personally want to thank my mother, Letty Reyes, who'll be celebrating her 50th year here in Manitoba, for raising my two sisters and I, along with our father and guiding us to the right paths in life. Thank you, Mom.

All throughout the month of June there'll be many events open to the public to celebrate our Filipino heritage, through arts, food and cultural displays. I hope to see you all there and I hope my proposed resolution for Filipino heritage month gets passed today so we can all celebrate the significant contributions to our province made from Manitoba's glowing and vibrant Filipino community.

Mabuhay, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (11:10)

## Questions

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

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I wish to ask and, of course, I want to thank him for presenting this resolution, but why a resolution, not a bill?

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the simple factor is time. We have significant number of bills to pass, but I'm proud that I'm able to bring the significance of the 60th anniversary of the first Filipino immigrants to Manitoba through this resolution. I'd love to propose this as a bill in this next session when we're re-elected again.

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** Welcome to our guest, mabuhay.

I'd like to ask the member what the contributions are from the Filipino community economically, socially and culturally to this great province.

**Mr. Reyes:** Well, I'm proud to, again—I'm proudly part of a growing and vibrant Filipino community. The contributions, as I stated in my speech, we can talk about all the occupations that chronologically comes to health care, education, and you can fast-forward now into business. And from a social standpoint and from a cultural standpoint, we've seen that the Filipino pavilion, Magdaragat, and, prior to that, Karilagan, when there—Karilagan and Kayumanggi when there were two pavilions at the time. We've contributed significantly to the culture in Manitoba and you can see it when you're travelling, as well, rurally. When I driven to Virden I stopped at—

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I'd like to thank my kuya and my colleague from St. Norbert for bringing forward this resolution. It's a wonderful resolution and we're looking forward to supporting it.

And I was hoping that the member from St. Norbert could let us know if he was planning to attend any specific events this coming Saturday?

**Mr. Reyes:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm planning to attend the Sri Lankan event in my constituency and also a local basketball team's event that's in my constituency, but I'm also honoured to be nominated for an award at the—I believe it's called the national Philippine heritage awards council put on by the MLA, so thank you very much—the MLA and her father.

**Mr. Marcelino:** I thank the member from Burrows for raising that question, and I also want to thank everybody who has attended and presented themselves here. I'm very proud of my heritage.

**Mr. Reyes:** I just want to add to that—other notable mentions I want—just want to add, Mr. Deputy Speaker—the influence in our community which the member for Southdale had mentioned: radio CKGS; I remember the late doctor—the late Mr. Joe Sulit; Filipino Media; Filipino Journal; Pilipino Express, periodical; I see Hot Rod up there, Mr. Rod Cantiveros—thank you for being here—and all the leaders from every organization that are here. I have a time limit but I just want to recognize you all. I see Tita Perla, the Honourary Consul Ronaldo Opiña—thank you for all being here.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Traditionally, the Filipino community has immigrated into the city of Winnipeg. However, we're seeing that community expand outside.

Can the honourable member share his thoughts on that?

**Mr. Reyes:** Well, today we have Kris Untong, the past president of the Southeast Manitoba Filipino Association, in the gallery, so thank you for taking—making it worth the trip here to Winnipeg from Steinbach. Again, through my travels as Special Envoy for Military Affairs and when I go visit my colleagues' constituencies, I've seen the contributions of our Filipino community through the workforce—like I said, the hospitality industry, agriculture. It's great to see them gainfully employed in rural Manitoba, not just the city of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Marcelino:** I just want to ask the member from St. Norbert, is there lunch after?

**Mr. Reyes:** That's a great question there. So, right afterwards, I invite everyone in my other role as special envoy for military affairs, we do have a—we are commemorating D-Day and there will be some refreshments and snacks there. I apologize to the member from Morris that there will be no spring rolls or lumpia, we're just pressed for time. Unless

someone can make a delivery up there and make a phone call.

**Mr. Smith:** I do thank the member for introducing this resolution, and I want to just get some clarification. Who did the member consult with to come up with this resolution, and how did he come about it?

**Mr. Reyes:** Thank you for the question. The many connections I have in the Philippine community, well-respected individuals who have made a significant contribution to our province, as well as community leaders of the many organizations here. It was last month, and I would have some late night conversations with them.

So I thank Gary Sarcida and the honorary consul Ronaldo Opiña, and the many leaders who I've spoken to about this resolution.

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

**Mr. Martin:** Yes, I'm wondering if the member for St. Norbert, he's talked about Manitoba being an entry point for our Filipino guests and that—over the years, and the prominence of that community within Manitoba. But how does that relate to other jurisdictions in North America?

**Mr. Reyes:** Well, when it comes to the top source country, the Philippines is No. 1 when they're coming to Manitoba. We are the home of hope. And I've seen it over years that, not just Winnipeg but in rural Manitoba, that we have many people from the Filipino community contributing to Manitoba and are gainfully employed, and now purchasing businesses, creating jobs. And, as I said, I'm very proud that we've had some members from our community, including the members for Logan and Tyndall Park, in public office as well.

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** If there's no other further questions, the debate is now open. Any speakers?

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I rise to give praise to the people of the Philippines who came here knowing fully well that it's a very cold country. And we brought the warmth of the Philippines across the ocean and melted some of the snow.

And, while we are at it, I want to give thanks to those who came here before me. I came here in 1980, January, which is the wrong month to be here. And I didn't have any winter jackets, and I froze. Not really



froze as in frozen, but I froze because I was so afraid that it's a very strange land for those who came here.

And I was a trained lawyer, I was a member of the Philippine Bar and I was driven away by some good friends who sent me a coffin and threatened my life and my family's.

And for those who don't know the difference between the life in the Philippines during martial law years and the life we that we have here, it was a relief that you feel safe. Canada gave us that sense of refuge, asylum, and piece of heaven. I always call it a piece of heaven.

Manitoba, I chose. I don't know if Manitoba chose me, but I chose Manitoba because of the plains. I hated mountains. Not true; I loved mountains. But Manitoba presented itself as one where the blowing snow is also beautiful; as far as I'm concerned, January was a good month for me to observe the difference between -28° and plus 28°, and the wind chill. And I didn't realize I would love it.

\* (11:20)

Most Filipinos who came here, I'll cite some names and—just for the record. We have doctors and we have nurses. And now we have a slew of lawyers. We have Dr. Violago, Dr. Narvas, Drs. Guzman—that's Irene and the honourable Consul General, Dr. Malabanan, Dr. Milambiling, Dr. Padua, and I'm missing some.

Now, for those nurses, I'll mention some names: Hilda Dayanghirang, Kelly Legaspi, Maggie from Misericordia, Sheila from Deer Lodge. And I'm—it's intentionally—I don't want their last names used because we have come to represent a whole new wave of service providers and front-line workers and professionals and government workers. And I worked at 7-Eleven, so store clerks.

And we have the lawyers: Dan Cleto, J.B. Casares, Amado Claros, Dexter Lacanilao—these are lawyers, recently passed the bar—as in, maybe 10 years ago.

And for those who are caring for people who are in nursing homes, I remember Socorro—guess who that is? That's my wife, worked at Holy Family nursing home, and Rosario worked at Maples personal care home, and Norma, who worked at the—Tuxedo and Edith, who worked at the Health Sciences Centre.

And we have housekeepers and we are very well entrenched in Canadian and Manitoba society. Entrenched as in you cannot do anything without us.

In the Legislature, we are lucky that we have people who are either, well, friends of the Filipino community—not for political purposes only, but sincerely. And I thank everyone—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, whose daughter is the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux). And they have served the Filipino community and the Filipino community has responded very well.

Now, in closing in order to give others a chance to speak to this matter, I will just say that Canada and Manitoba has given the Filipino a chance to shine. The sponsor of this resolution himself tried real hard to do it on his own. And I will agree that sometimes we have our disagreements. And I like it; I like it when we have disagreements, which means that we've come from sometimes really opposing views. But that's the essence. That's the essence of what we are doing here in this Chamber. And that's the essence of how I sometimes propose that we respect indigenous too, because we cannot forget that even with the Filipino heritage, we have to help, especially those who need help.

And I'll speak for the indigenous nations of our country, of our province, especially the stereotypes that we have learned prior to the Truth and Reconciliation should be discarded, should be thrown away because they are just that: stereotypes.

And we should take a look at the eyes of the homeless and for those who are begging on the corner of the streets. We have to treat them with kindness because we are so fortunate that we don't have to beg for food and we don't have to really look for a place where we could lay our heads and sleep. Those are the people who are homeless.

Our community should try a little bit harder and we should try and encourage others to do the same. Have we done that?

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

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** It's always a pleasure to rise in this Chamber and as part of—it's not only an opportunity to celebrate—or potentially celebrate—Filipino Heritage Month and to that I welcome all our guests here today and more importantly I thank my colleague, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), who has done a tremendous amount of work in his role as the military liaison officer and has shown all of us here in this House

how important the immigrant community is to our military, to the defense of our country and to many, many people around the world as the face of Canada in conflict zones, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it's always a pleasure to be part of that democratic process.

Now I listened very carefully to my colleague, the MLA for Tyndall Park, and I noticed that he made the comment that he chose Manitoba and he wasn't sure if Manitoba chose him. And I can assure my colleague for Tyndall Park that, no, and it's with the greatest respect, that, you know, obviously since 2011, Manitobans have made clear their choice for him as their elected representative here in this Chamber. So I can assuredly tell him, yes, Manitoba has—has—chosen him, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This truly is an opportunity to acknowledge the impact the Filipino community has had on our province and it is an amazing impact, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I mean, 60 years ago, starting with simply four nurses coming here to Winnipeg, to the Misericordia hospital and I'm not sure if there is another community—newcomer community here in the province of Manitoba has—that has had such a profound cultural, economic and educational impact on our province in such a short time frame of 60 years, as our—as the Filipino community has which is now, as noted by my colleague, the MLA for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), some 83,000 strong and only growing.

And so I look forward, as I make the transition from MLA for Morris to potentially MLA for McPhillips, I look forward to engaging even more with the Filipino community.

I noticed—I note that the Filipino community is growing outside of Winnipeg. I know they have a large footprint in the city of Steinbach and we're seeing that community in all parts of Manitoba which speaks to their pioneering spirit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I'm going to share a bit of a personal story when it comes to the Filipino community. I think it's quite appropriate that those first four Filipino immigrants were nurses because actually if it wasn't for a nurse, Yorobe, who was from—or who was a nurse and happened to be of Filipino background when our first son was born back in 2005, I wouldn't be a father.

\* (11:30)

It was a long and difficult labour for my wife and there were some complications resulting, and at

one point, after my son's birth, he began to choke and turn colours as my wife was trying to have him latch on as he—as, you know—as part of the breastfeeding and that.

And nurse Yorobe, who had been with her throughout the entire process, actually stayed beyond her shift just to check on my wife and Jack to see how they were doing, and she immediately grabbed my son and whisked him away and made sure that, obviously, the situation was immediately resolved. And after spending the next three or four days in intensive care, my son, obviously, came through and he's healthy and happy today, but that wouldn't be so if it wasn't for nurse Yorobe. So for that I am forever indebted to that community and to nurse Yorobe, who made that decision to come here to Manitoba to practice the nursing profession here in Manitoba, and to make Manitoba her home.

And so, on that point, I say thank you to all of our guests, to our 83,000-strong Filipino community. It is my sincere hope that the member for St. Norbert's (Mr. Reyes) resolution be recognized today as a non-partisan resolution, as an opportunity for all MLAs in this House, from all political parties, to stand united to say, thank you for your contribution, thank you for making Manitoba part of your home and thank you for making our home even better with your presence.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** It's an honour, a pleasure for me to put in a few words in support of the resolution—private members' resolution put forth by our colleague from St. Norbert.

Thank you for bringing this resolution, although I echo my colleague's question why it's a private members' bill and not a resolution. If it were a bill, I'm sure the House will support it because a bill would enshrine heritage—Filipino Heritage Month for a very long time. And I think it's appropriate and it's just right and fitting that the many, many contributions of the Filipino community for 60 years and over, and even earlier, should be recognized by everyone in the province, and thankfully even recognized federally from coast to coast through the bill passed in the House of Commons recently. So starting June 1st up to the end of June, all of Canada will be celebrating Philippine heritage month. I look forward to the time, hopefully in the next months or so, that a bill on Filipino Heritage Month will be passed by this august body.

And I would also like to mention the lost opportunity that I hope, next time, the member from

St. Norbert will take note, that an invitation to the community like this should have a lunch and we'll all agree to that; we'll vote for that.

Anyway, thank you to members of our community who are here—wonderful seeing you again. And there's another opportunity to see you in the coming days: Philippine heritage month being celebrated, flag ceremony, the MAFTI event, welcoming the new immigrants and, of course, not to be forgotten, the independence day ball on June 22nd. So hope to see you there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're celebrating 60 years of Filipino presence in Manitoba or in Winnipeg, and we can't celebrate that without mentioning names of pioneers, those who came early when hardly any visible minorities could be reckoned to be here in Winnipeg. I'd like to mention a few. Maybe it was mentioned already but they're so important to our community that we have to mention their names: Dr. Roland and Irene Guzman in 1959 moved to Winnipeg from Ottawa; Dr. Jerry and Pat Bigornia in 1960, and Dr. Bigornia became the first president of the Filipino organization in 1962; Dr. Paulino and nurse Clara Orallo in 1962 moved here from Chicago; Fran and Lily Violago—Dr. Violago also moved here in 1965 and followed by Drs. Rudy Pascua, Rudy Padua, Ernie and Ligaya Milambiling in the early '80s. And I just heard from Laling Orallo. Dr. Jose Belmonte is still in Winnipeg and he's now 91 years old.

I would also—I won't mention the lawyers because it's been mentioned already, although right now the community is so proud that many young lawyers have taken up membership in the Manitoba bar—the Law Society, and I always believe it's a very much needed profession in addition to the medical profession, but at this time I'd like to mention the contributions of many unsung heroes in our city from the Filipino community, and they are the garment workers. Many of them came, some in the '70s and the '80s and those were considered the golden age of the garment industry in Manitoba.

Golden age in those decades, many, many Filipinos, garment workers came and with their families and their friends afterwards, and they made this industry boom because of their skill and their dedication; and can't help but mention the contribution of social workers to the successful settlement of the garment workers. There are several of them but two names stand out: that's—they are Perla Javate and Esperanza Oliveros Ramos. Without

their guidance, their mentorship, the garment workers would be quite homesick or at a loss, and they made sure the garment workers felt a home in Winnipeg because of the presence of several members of the Filipino community already, but because of their guidance and their love and their friendship with the garment workers. And many of the families of the garment workers now are thriving. Their children are doing very well, successful because of the efforts of the four—of the first garment workers in the province.

\* (11:40)

There's a name, if we were to mention garment workers, that is also should be remembered. She's no longer with us, but her contribution to the life and settlement—successful settlement of the garment workers should not be forgotten, and she is Carolina Custodio. Because of her love and friendship, even to those who came here with no friends or family, they settled and thrived well. She welcomed them in her home. She took them as—and considered them as their—her friend, her sister, her children. So she became a mother, a ninang, a godmother, a sister and a friend to many, many garment workers, and for that we can't thank her enough.

We—when we speak of Filipino nurses, the name of Fe Ryder also stands out. She was one of the pioneer nurses in Manitoba, and I recall I was in one of the rural areas 10 years ago, and around that time many Filipino nurses have been assigned to rural areas after the 2001 recruitment of 100 or so Filipino nurses in the Philippines. I think I was in Minnedosa and there was a—

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Again, I'd like to thank my kuya, my colleague from St. Norbert, my fellow Spartan for bringing forward this resolution in celebration of Filipino heritage here in Manitoba. And it's a real honour to be able to stand and speak to this resolution.

You know, my tito from Tyndall Park actually mentioned how—he mentioned some very kind words about my father and I—and I take them with a grain of salt, and it means so much to me—but the reason why my father and I have been able to put in all of this work is because of the Filipino community and how welcoming they have been to both—my entire family. You have made us felt like family, and I mean it

from the bottom of my heart. Just thank you for that, that continued support.

And, even biologically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my Aunt Karen actually married a Filipino man, my Uncle Amato. I have Filipino cousins here in Canada, and my Uncle Dale, he lives in Victoria, he married my Auntie Grace. He immigrated from the Philippines a few years ago. And one of my cousins, he's actually taking his oath in Vancouver on July 12th, and so I now have Filipino in my biological family, too, and I think that's wonderful and I'm looking forward to seeing generations to come.

You know, I can't help but reminisce about my high school years. You know, I went to Sisler High School with my colleague from St. Norbert, although he was there about 10 years before I was, Mr. Deputy Speaker—didn't say the year.

And I know, I can recall sitting by the swing set, and I had friends who had recently immigrated from the Philippines and they would teach me words in Tagalog. And I remember sitting by the swing set and they would test me all the time: Okay, Cindy, what—or, can I say my own name? They would test me and say, what is the word for rice and chicken, and it's kanin and ulam. And they would test me and say, how do you say I love you? Mahal kita, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's many—it is a wonderful language.

And what I really took away from this is it is so 'exemplary-fying' how proud people are of their Filipino heritage, as they should be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I also remember my friends telling me about the white sandy beaches. You know, I've been to the Philippines three times and I've still yet to experience these white sandy beaches. And during our sleepovers they'd make me sing Filipino songs on karaoke which I was absolutely terrible at—I have no musical talent, but that's okay. And, again, what I just took away from this experience—not only the expansion to my vocabulary, but it's undeniably evident how proud people from the Philippines are of their heritage.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has rippled over onto us Manitobans and to us as Canadians. We are so proud of our Filipino-Canadian heritage. And, as everyone in this House already knows, our Filipino-Canadian heritage is being recognized at both a federal level and a provincial level for the first time ever simultaneously.

We know that celebrating Filipino heritage is not new to Winnipeg, but it is new for Canada has a nation. For the first time ever, it's going to be celebrated and recognized from coast to coast to coast. And that's what really makes this June so special and what makes this resolution being brought forward from the member from St. Norbert so special and timely.

You know, I—just before this resolution, I was speaking with a couple of my colleagues on the other side of the House. And I could not remember the name for it, but there's a tradition called boodle fight. Am I pronouncing that correctly? *[interjection]* Yes, I'm getting the nods. Mr. Deputy Speaker, boodle fight is one of my favourite traditions to do with my friends from the Philippines where we all surround a table of food—and sometimes it's a seafood dish, sometimes it's a dish of meat, maybe it's a vegetarian dish—and we use our hands and we get right in there, we roll up what we want to eat. And it is a wonderful tradition. It is so communal. It is a lot of fun, and I'm looking forward to doing more of it this summer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, everyone in this House should make it a point to go to the Philippines. The Filipino culture is now a part of our culture here in Manitoba. It's part of our identity. And so we Manitobans, we need to experience it first-hand.

Now, a lot of my role models have been and are pioneers from the Filipino community. I know we have some association representatives up in the gallery today. I'm scared to start listing names, because I know it's inevitable I'm going to miss some of you, but I know just from looking above there's a couple of you—you know who you are—you always keep me very well dressed in Filipino street festival parades. And I appreciate what you contribute to the education and the awareness of the Filipino community here in Manitoba and in our country of Canada.

There are two people—they're not in the gallery today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I do need to mention. I want to talk about my tito, Henry Celones, and my tita, Linda Celones. Tito Henry is—he's like a godfather to me, he's like a second uncle. He's been my father's best friend for my entire life, and he's always been, like, my biggest protector, my biggest encourager. And his late wife, Tita Linda, she passed away not long ago. Tita Linda was the hardest working woman that I know. And, to my core, that—I truly believe that Tita Linda is the reason the Filipino community has expanded the way that it has and

been able to settle here in Manitoba. She invested so many of her efforts into making life better for anyone that she could, and we really, really miss having Tita Linda around.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in celebration of our Filipino-Canadian heritage, this Saturday my father and I are hosting an event—the event that the member from St. Norbert mentioned in one of his answers to my question. Some of our volunteers are actually up in the gallery, too, which is great. And it's an opportunity to celebrate and learn about Filipino-Canadian heritage. We are going to be having live performances of dancing, including Sisler's Most Wanted, singing, poetry reading, as well as short, historical presentations of our Filipino community and how the community has contributed to our Canadian heritage, economy and more. There are going to be exhibits to enjoy from and learn from and have fun at, as well as basketball tournaments and some good food.

It's going to be at Maples Collegiate this Saturday. That's 1330 Jefferson Ave., from 4 to 9 p.m., and everyone is welcome.

So, in wrapping up, I want to make sure everyone has a chance to speak to this resolution. I want to thank the member again for bringing forward the resolution. It's wonderful. We are happy to support it. And I thank everyone who has joined us out in the gallery.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I trust the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), who is a football official, will give me an appropriate warning if I'm getting close to the adjournment hour because we certainly want this to pass this morning.

As the MLA for Minto in the West End, I've had tremendous opportunity over the past 15 years to learn an awful lot about the Filipino community and everything that community has brought to Manitoba, enriched all of us. Probably my notary seal and I can tell many, many stories. I've had a chance in my office on Sargent Avenue to meet so many families over the many years.

\* (11:50)

When I was first elected, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was actually a requirement under the Provincial Nominee Program that the nominee documents had to be notarized, which meant that I had the chance to talk to hundreds and hundreds of families, many of

whom had only arrived from the Philippines three or five or seven years before, who now wanted to invite their brothers and sisters and cousins and nieces and nephews and grandchildren to come to Manitoba. And that has always been a tremendous benefit to our province. It is one of the reasons why the Philippines has become the No. 1 source of new Manitobans for us, and it's a true benefit.

So I know, as well, that now many, many foreign-trained Filipino nurses and other health-care professionals require their documents to be notarized, so we've had a second wave of folks coming into the office on Sargent Avenue. I'm not really worried about whether they live in Minto or live in the West End, I'm happy to help anybody who wants to make our province a better place.

If I can talk briefly about some of the benefits that I've begun to realize over the years of our strong, proud Filipino community, I guess I can summarize it with family, faith, food and fun.

And, in terms of family, we know the strength of so many Filipino family units. Tonight I'll be at the Sargent Park School for that school's celebration of the arts. On Thursday, I'll be over at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate for their spring concert, and my main role, as a VIP who's often given front row seating, is to make sure I don't get in the way of any Filipino grandmother who wants to make sure they're getting a picture of their child.

In all seriousness, going to the schools, the community clubs, other events in the community—it's very, very obvious and very clear how strong Filipino families are, and I know all of my colleagues on all sides of this House that have Filipino families in their constituency know exactly what I'm talking about.

The second item, I guess, would be faith. St. Edward's church, which is an old Catholic church, is located at Arlington Street close to Notre Dame. Over the years in the West End it has changed in terms of who worships there, and now if you go to a service at St. Edward's church, you will find it is probably 90 or 95 per cent Filipino.

There's also the Church of Christ, which is located at Lipton and Portage, right next to the Dairy Queen, and you will see just how many people visit that church, as well as other denominations.

Food, I would be remiss if I didn't mention. I know the member for St. Norbert mentioned Jollibee and Max's. Of course, right down Sargent Avenue

you can go to Jeepney Restaurant or you can go to Myrna's restaurant. But probably even better, if my kids were here they would certainly tell you the best place to have Filipino food is at big Filipino event.

And I'm thinking, for example, some of the local barbecues at Kildonan Park or at Assiniboine Park, and I remember having to brief my kids a little bit on the way in to say, okay, here's what's going to happen: we're going to play some games, you're going to meet some folks, and then we're going to go in there and there is going to be an entire pig—the lechon is going to be there, do not be surprised by this. My daughters were not surprised by this and thought it was great. They also got to learn all part of the fish with our Filipino friends, and, as a result, that's one of the reasons why my kids have been prepared to try just about anything, and that's been a very, very good thing.

I also want to mention fun. I think it's probably safe, as I come close to ending my career in this Legislature—I know I've got another year here until the legal election date—but I know that I can probably share with people one of my tips for success in the West End: never let them hear you try to sing karaoke and never let them see you try to play basketball. And with all that in mind, we've had a good relationship over the years.

So there's many more things I could say, but I know that all members of this House want to pass this resolution this morning. We celebrate our strong Filipino community in Manitoba and we will continue to for a long time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So no further speakers?

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

I declare the resolution carried.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Could it be noted for the record that the resolution passed unanimously?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it—the rules of the House didn't have it recorded unanimous—voting on it unanimous for the Chamber here? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is it the will of the House to call it noon?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it will of the House to call it noon—12 noon? *[Agreed]*

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 28, 2019**

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