

Second Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LX No. 11A – 10 a.m., Tuesday, December 4, 2007

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 201—The Phosphorus-Free
Dishwashing Detergent Act**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 201, The Phosphorus-Free Dishwashing Detergent Act; Loi sur les détergents à vaisselle sans phosphore, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: We are re-introducing a bill that we first introduced approximately a year ago. This is a bill which is designed to drastically reduce the amount of phosphorus in automatic dishwashing detergents. As we all know, the government has decided, rather than supporting this bill, so far—maybe they will support this bill—to introduce their own bill to reduce phosphorus in automatic dishwasher detergents; but we have decided to move ahead and re-introduce this bill because we see that it has certain advantages and benefits over the government bill.

This bill would move more quickly than the government bill and, specifically, this would drastically limit the amount of phosphorus that could be used in automatic dishwasher detergents for household use on or after January 1, 2009. It is our view that this time line is a better time line than the government's time line in their bill. The government is trying to bring the changes in for July 1, 2010, which would be a year and a half later. Certainly, with all the delays that have occurred to date in taking action on Lake Winnipeg by this government, it seems strange that they would want to delay even further the measures requiring phosphorus-free automatic dishwasher detergent.

Given the fact that there has been a dramatic increase in availability of phosphorus-free automatic dishwasher detergents in Manitoba over the last year,

in part as a result of all the efforts that we have made in promoting the use of phosphorus-free automatic dishwasher detergents, I think it's quite clear that there wouldn't be a major problem in having enough supply for the Manitoba market as of January 1, 2010. Certainly the fact that it would be required would mean that stores would have to put it in and, because of the volume, I believe that it would have a nice effect in reducing prices because of the larger volume of phosphorus-free automatic dishwasher detergents that are being used.

We should not have to wait for the slow government, NDP. We should be able to move forward quicker than the NDP are hoping to move because, quite frankly, Lake Winnipeg is in pretty severe shape right now. You only have to go up and see the extent of the algal blooms in September on Lake Winnipeg, to talk to fishermen to get an understanding of how severe this problem is. We should not be waiting an extra year and a half, we should be acting as soon as it can be and, I believe, that we should be able to act as of January 1, 2009.

The other area which is of importance is the commercial uses of phosphorus-free automatic dishwasher detergent. The problem in the government's bill is that it's not clear how they are going to treat commercial uses of automatic dishwasher detergent. In fact, from comments by the government it looks like they are probably going to give an exemption. About half the phosphorus that is delivered to Lake Winnipeg from the automatic dishwasher detergents actually comes from the commercial or industrial uses, and so we would only be doing half the job if we don't include commercial and industrial uses of automatic dishwasher detergent. This is clearly an important reason for supporting our bill because it provides that we would be banning automatic dishwasher detergent use for commercial purposes as of January 1, 2012. That gives commercial operations a little bit more time, but it brings them fully under the umbrella of the act rather than having the potential to make an exception for commercial uses, which make up approximately half of the phosphorus in automatic dishwasher detergent. In our view, our act is quicker, more comprehensive, and I would suggest that indeed it is simpler, by focussing on automatic dishwasher detergent.

I don't have a particular problem with including all the various other cleaning substances which are in the NDP act and including them for July 1, 2010, but I do think we do need to move more quickly on the use of automatic dishwasher detergent because it makes up by far the largest component of the phosphorus which now ends up in Lake Winnipeg.

* (10:10)

The problem that we face in terms of action on Lake Winnipeg is that if we fail to act we could end up with a situation where, all of a sudden, the algal blooms have progressed to the extent that they are eating up oxygen-producing toxins, and the result is, or could be, that we have a dramatic reduction in the fish in Lake Winnipeg. None of us wants that. Already it's very clear and it's interesting listening to people who have been on the lake for many, many years.

At a meeting in Gimli I talked to a boat captain and he was talking about how in the '40s and '50s and '60s you could just go over the side of the boat and scoop up some water, and the water in Lake Winnipeg was such a quality that it was fit to drink. That is not the case anymore. It is so gummed up with algal blooms that the quality of the water in Lake Winnipeg has deteriorated drastically from what it used to be. We need to be taking effective measures to reduce algal blooms.

This bill is just one part of that. There is much, much more that has to be done to reduce the content of phosphorus in Lake Winnipeg. Indeed, it is not clear where the government stands on what their target is. The Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), has been talking about a target of reducing phosphorus by some 10 percent, but the reality is that, if you look at the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board calculations, in fact we probably are going to have to reduce the phosphorus load in Lake Winnipeg by closer to 50 percent to 60 percent. That is a pretty steep reduction, and it means that we're going to have to do a lot of work and that this step is just one of many that are needed to improve the situation in Lake Winnipeg and make sure that we in fact are cleaning it up and improving the water quality, and ensuring that we will have a lake where there are substantial numbers of fish, a lake which can be enjoyed by Manitobans and by tourists from elsewhere. That is what we want. We want to maintain Lake Winnipeg as the jewel that it is, a jewel in Manitoba, a jewel for all of us. That's why it is so important that we are taking these steps,

including this one, and I would ask for all MLAs to support our legislation and to enable us to move forward in cleaning up Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure and privilege to stand today to speak to the bill put forward by the two members of the independent party on phosphorus reduction and, although I would compliment them on their positive thinking and focus on the environment, I do have to say that I see some deficiencies in this particular bill and think that those were recognized by the government and the Minister of Water Stewardship, and although it took us a little longer, we did apply sober second thought to it and, as a result, put together Bill 8, The Phosphorus Reduction Act, which I think is a little more comprehensive, a little more broad-based. It seems the Liberals are focussing specifically on dishwasher detergents, but there's an infinite variety of sources of phosphorus within the ecosphere, so I don't think that it's really all that sound in thinking to just limit it to one particular component. So I would put that forward as the first fault that I see in this particular proposal and the reason why I would suggest that the bill put forward by the minister makes a lot more sense.

Secondly, the Liberal Leader has suggested that this proposal should be implemented immediately, but, quite frankly, you can't do that. If you are going to function responsibly within the economy, you have to work with industry. You have to work with the major manufacturers and producers of these products. It's always a better approach, Mr. Speaker, to consult with the public, with industry, and try and work in conjunction with them as opposed to forcing something on people. That never goes over well in an economy, in a free-market economy, in a democracy. That's really not our course of action. It's not a positive way of doing things. So I think that's a point that was not taken into due consideration by the Liberal Leader, as well, when he put forward this particular proposal.

Our government, I am proud to say, has been active on this file since the very day we came into office. As a matter of fact, I recall back in 1999 the first three bills that went through the Chamber here. Of course, the first was the elimination of union and corporate donations to political parties, which was a brilliant move. Then the second bill was either the amendment to The Wildlife Act to ban panned hunting or the amendment to The Water Rights Act, as I recall, which reconstituted The Water Rights

Act, which a judge in the Hildebrandt case had basically thrown out the window because the previous Conservative government had been so derelict in their duty and so negligent in enforcing The Water Rights Act that a judge deemed them incapable of managing it. So this government had to step in and reconstitute it.

That was just the beginning for us. Very soon after that we implemented the water strategy. We indicated very early on that we would be focussing on the conservation district program to manage water across watersheds in a more holistic manner, not just drainage per se. That old saying, drain, drain, drain, put in the crops and pray for rain, I think applies here. That was the old mentality. Just dig ditches; run it off willy-nilly.

So the conservation district program was a much more strategic planning tool, and I am proud to say that was something that was put in place by a former New Democratic government, the first NDP government in Manitoba. It was put in place by the Right Honourable Ed Schreyer when he was the Premier, I believe in 1974. I think it's indicative that over the roughly 25 years, from '74 until 1999, there were only nine conservation districts created in the province of Manitoba, and yet in the eight years subsequent to that—the term that we've been in office—we have doubled that number. We are now up to I believe it is 18 conservation districts. It might even be 19, I am not sure. If it isn't, it soon will be because we are working toward constituting a West Interlake Conservation District. We've got the East Interlake one up and running, and it was I have to say a daunting task, dealing with some of the municipal governments in the area. I won't be critical of them because they're just doing their due diligence, but a lot of them were good Tory reeves, I have to say, that were quite reluctant to work hand in hand with this government.

So over time we finally convinced them of the error of their ways. I have to commend Mr. Harold Foster, who is the reeve of the R.M. of Bifrost. I don't know what his politics are but he finally stepped aside and then took the bull by the horns, and it was with his co-operation that we succeeded in moving forward on that.

* (10:20)

We face a similar scenario on the west side, but it's my understanding that we're very close to moving forward with what I think is the 19th conservation district in this province. So that certainly is a strong

indicator that this particular government is paying close attention to this file.

I would go on, if I may, in regard to agriculture, some of the actions that we have taken in that regard. I recall our first term in office, we put together the Livestock Stewardship Initiative. There's been quite an increase in expansion of the hog industry, for example, in this province, and it's a sound component of our economy. But we do have to proceed in a sustainable manner and, sad to say, sometimes that is not always necessarily the case, Mr. Speaker.

We have since gone even further. We've created the Department of Water Stewardship, one of the—I think it is the first of its kind in North America, if not the world. If that's not an indicator that this government is focussed on protecting our water resources, I don't what is. I recall the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was our first minister of that department, Mr. Speaker, and his commitment has been unwavering. It was in that portfolio, and it continues on in his current portfolio as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

I just have to think of the amendment to The Planning Act that we made just in this last session of the Legislature. Most farmers are very proactive and want to work with government, but there's always a few out there that will try and get around the regulation and try and skirt technical reviews or public consultation processes. We found that that was the case, and it was necessary to make this amendment. So, acts like that are fundamental, if we're going to clean things up. But it's not just rural Manitoba. You look to the city of Winnipeg. There are close to three-quarters of a million people contributing their manure, if I may use that term, to the system every day, and if that's not treated properly, then that certainly doesn't help. Mr. Speaker, our commitment to reducing both nitrates and phosphorus from the City of Winnipeg wastewater treatment is critical to the whole system as well.

So, I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. My light is blinking, so I'll have to wrap up. But, in conclusion, I would say that our proposal is definitely superior to the one put forward by the Leader of the Liberal Party and I guess I would close my comments by saying, if only when he was in the federal government as the Secretary of State for Science and Technology, if only he had followed through at that point in time when he was in a

government and had the authority to do so, then maybe it would have been a better world today. But, that was not the case, as we recall—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It's certainly a pleasure to be in the House this morning and have the opportunity to talk about one of our great resources here in Manitoba; of course, that being the resource of water. I certainly want to commend the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the Leader of the Liberal Party, for bringing forward this particular piece of legislation. I believe this is at least the second time that he's introduced this particular legislation. As we know, it deals with the phosphorus in household dishwashing detergent. It also talks about the commercial-industrial use, and that's very important. That appears to be a bit of a deviation from where the government is going in terms of their particular legislation.

I think what this particular bill has done, by the Member for River Heights bringing it forward to the House in the past, it has actually made the government take notice of this very significant issue. As we have seen in the past, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day is reacting again to a situation being brought forward.

It was interesting to hear the previous member's comment, the Member for Interlake, and it's quite clear that this government is focussed on the past. It's unfortunate because, Mr. Speaker, we should be focussed on what's going to happen in the future. If we're going to make some significant changes to Manitoba, the government should be focussing on how they can make some positive changes to the future.

We hear every day in Question Period, the government of the day going back to the 1990s, maybe even further back than that, and it gets a little tiring after awhile. This particular government has eight years to fix some of the issues relevant to Manitoba, and we've seen very little in that particular regard. Certainly, we've seen them spend money. We know they can spend money, but we as opposition are interested in getting results. We think the government should be looking at results and not just be out there to spend money. Whether it be in health care, whether it be in education, or whether it be in dealing with water management strategies, the intent at the end of the day should be to actually determine some results and have some results for Manitobans.

So, again, we compliment the Member for River Heights forcing the government to take notice on this very significant issue. Just to point out a couple of the differences in his legislation compared to what the government has proposed here in the last couple of days, the Member for River Heights, his particular bill would bring the legislation in one year sooner than what the government has intended and also deals directly with the commercial side of the equation, which we know, Mr. Speaker, is very significant as well.

There was also paid particular attention to the minister yesterday when she talked about her particular bill, Bill 8, The Phosphorus Reduction Act. In her address, she talked about a strategy and this particular bill being part of the comprehensive plan, I think, was the term she used yesterday. Well, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we as opposition and people around Manitoba would love to see what that comprehensive plan is. I would hope that the minister and the government would open up and let us have a look at the plan.

It would appear that their plan is more of a reactionary situation, and we'll talk a little bit—the Member for Interlake brought up the whole idea of the hogs in Manitoba. Well, we currently have a moratorium or a pause, I guess, is the term the government uses for that. We've been waiting for quite some time for the Clean Environment Commission to report back to Manitobans. We're looking forward to see what the findings of that Clean Environment Commission hearing have been over the last number of months. The whole idea is we want to see what Manitobans had to say. Hopefully, there'll be some science behind the background on that particular review, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

I have a feeling what the report is going to say. It's going to fall into a situation where we know the government—and the minister talked about it yesterday—bringing forward some more legislation dealing with water quality management zones or nutrient management zones, whatever the term of the day is going to be. We know they've reviewed that for several years now. They've been going back and they have had some consultations with Manitobans. So we're really looking forward to what the next draft of that whole water quality management or nutrient management zone, what those regulations are going to look like.

Mr. Speaker, our feeling on this side is that the whole Clean Environment Commission hearing process is really just going to be a springboard to bring forward those changes that they've had in the wings for quite some time.

The other issue here, and it seems to be a contradiction in terms for me. The minister gets up and talks about phosphorus being the problem. This particular bill addresses phosphorus, but we look at the City of Winnipeg and what the Province of Manitoba is making the City of Winnipeg do. I look at the—it's probably a \$1.5-billion project in terms of upgrading their waste-water treatment facility in the city of Winnipeg.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair.

* (10:30)

The main component, the most expensive part of that \$1.5 billion would actually be eaten up in removing nitrogen from the waste water, Madam Acting Speaker. Now the scientists tell us, and I think the minister admitted yesterday, that phosphorus is the issue when we talk about algae in our lake system, particularly Lake Winnipeg. So why would the Province of Manitoba force the City of Winnipeg to spend at least \$500 million more to remove nitrogen from the water when we know that phosphorus is the issue?

It's fairly easy for the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) to go back and to review his regulations, talk to the experts in the field and see if there is a way around this. One point five billion dollars on a project like that does not happen overnight. So why not address the phosphorus issue, make sure that the money can be allocated up front. We can address the phosphorus issue in the city of Winnipeg quite quickly in the next year or two and have a dramatic reduction in the phosphorus that goes into Lake Winnipeg. But, instead of that, the Province forces the City of Winnipeg to remove the nitrogen at a total cost of who knows where it's going to end up, but probably at least at \$1.5 billion. We just think that that is a real head-in-the-sand attitude.

You know, if we look at other jurisdictions as well, the government should be a leader in terms of looking at technology and how we address waste water. We seem to get caught up in the old school and we continue to do things the way we've done them in the past, and maybe we should be looking at other jurisdictions in how they deal with waste water as well. I think there are some real opportunities for

us there. And there are some real opportunities in how we deal with our garbage as well, and we'll certainly be bringing those issues forward in the future.

We know this government is big on legislation. We know they've hired more water police, if you will, Madam Acting Speaker, and so we will certainly see more of the water police out in the field, and we will certainly see where that takes us down the road. We believe in working with people and seeing if there is some ways to make positive changes without enacting legislation. We think there are opportunities there.

We certainly like what's happening from the federal government in terms of the environmental farm plans which is being administered through the Farm Stewardship Association in Manitoba. It's been a very positive program, and I think it had some very positive results here in Manitoba. So we certainly hope that our government will continue to work with the federal government in terms of developing a plan for the future when that particular plan is set to expire next year.

The other issue that the minister talked about yesterday, too, was recognizing the fact that we do have to work closely with our neighbours. Lake Winnipeg is the drainage basin for four states, four provinces, so we have a very significant drainage area there. And it's important for us to have very positive relationships with our neighbours, not only to the south but to the east and to the west as well. And that, quite frankly, has been something that we were lacking in the past. We will hope that the government will now take a more positive role in terms of enhancing our relationships with our neighbours so that we can all work together in a positive way to have a positive impact on Lake Winnipeg.

I do want to say in closing that we're certainly happy that the industry itself in terms of phosphorus is moving forward, and we're quite happy to see them come onside.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): The honourable member's time has expired.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, I want to thank the members opposite for really putting on the record what the real debate is about water in this province, and I think we're seeing increasingly—the Conservative's position's pretty obvious. When they

are in government, it's do nothing, and when the NDP is in government, urge the NDP government to do less.

Why would I say that? Well, let's look at what we heard just in the last 10 minutes from the Member for Turtle Mountain. But I know he speaks for his caucus, and he does have a previous background in terms of this. In reference to the city of Winnipeg, well, let's put on the record what happened with the city of Winnipeg when the Conservatives were government in the 1990s. They were supposed to go to the Clean Environment Commission hearings in 1992. Didn't. And I won't repeat every year they were in office that they didn't go to the Clean Environment Commission hearings.

Why was it supposed to go to the Clean Environment Commission? For the city of Winnipeg waste-water facilities to be licensed.

Now, when we got into government, we sent this whole issue to the Clean Environment Commission. They held extensive hearings and the Clean Environment Commission came back and brought in recommendations for licensing requirements which we adopted as the government for the three waste-water treatment plants.

Now, what did the Clean Environment Commission say at the time? It said that there should be three things that should happen. First of all, waste water should remove phosphorus. We should have a waste-water treatment plant removing phosphorus. Second is a waste-water treatment plant removing nitrogen. The third is that there should be a phase-out of the combined sewer overflow system.

Now, how did that fit in in terms of, say, the rest of the country and the City's plans? The combined sewer overflow, by the way, the City had a 50-year plan to get rid of them, a 50-year plan. Now, you know, it's a nice long-running plan, but being an economist I like to quote Keynes, who had a great criticism of long-term economic plans. He said, you know, in the long term we're all dead. I mean, 50 years? That didn't withstand the scrutiny of the Clean Environment Commission. They recommended a much more rapid phase-out. But the Clean Environment Commission said that if you're dealing with Lake Winnipeg, if you're dealing with the Red River, you have to look at not only phosphorus, but phosphorus and nitrogen and the combination of phosphorus and nitrogen. So when the Conservatives get up and say, as their leader said in the election, we want to do less, I mean, this is not unusual for the

Conservatives. I mean, it's kind of like their federal government.

Remember climate change? You don't remember Stephen Harper calling the Kyoto Accord a socialist plot? They railed against the Kyoto Accord. Now, when they got into government, what did they do? They said, well, actually we really believe in doing something about climate change, but not the Kyoto Accord. So it's, again, the Conservative approach, right? You know, you attack doing something and then you get your opportunity and you do less.

I'm reminded of the fact, by the way, and I have a hard time keeping a straight face every time the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) gets up and asks questions about climate change in this House, because when the Kyoto Accord was being debated, their leader and their caucus opposed the Kyoto Accord.

There's been this event in Winnipeg that's come back, *Walking with Dinosaurs*. I also noticed there was a Conservative fundraiser at the Convention Centre. I hope people didn't get mixed up between the two events, because when it comes to the environment, they're the dinosaurs of Canadian politics, and if they have their way, we'll end up being like the dinosaurs, Madam Acting Speaker, because we'll be extinct.

Well, let's talk about the nonsense of the members opposite, suggesting we not move ahead on nitrogen. What they're saying is, the heck with the Clean Environment Commission; the heck with the licensing requirements. We know better. Well, doesn't that sound familiar? *[interjection]* Absolutely. Absolutely, says the Member for St. Rose (Mr. Briese).

You know what? I remember on the Kyoto Accord, it was the same thing. The Conservatives can always find one loony scientist, paid for by the oil industry, to say there's no problem with climate change; 99.9 percent of scientists said it was, but, no, the Conservatives, they had their one loony right-wing scientist and that was good enough for them. Forget about the clear consensus.

But you know what, Madam Acting Speaker? Now we're a few years down the line on the Kyoto debate, what is more scary, having people opposing the Kyoto Accord or—when I was minister at the Kyoto Accord discussions, along with Tim Sale, the former Minister of Energy, I'll never forget sitting there before the beginning of the discussions. We

know it's going to be pretty intense, but one of the Alberta ministers looked to the other one and said, where are the commies sitting? He was actually talking about the federal Liberal government. You know, that's how intense it was. But I don't know what's more scary, that kind of mentality or having Conservatives do the, oh, well, we really do care about Kyoto nowadays or, yeah, we're really concerned about water quality.

Well, just in case people think that I'm being unfair with the Tories, reminding them of the 1990s, a decade that they'd much rather forget, let's talk about what they've done since we brought into place a Lake Winnipeg action plan. Did they, sort of, see the error of their ways? Well, you know what? Right from day one their position on anything and everything that we have brought in related to the Lake Winnipeg action plan has to be one of criticism.

Let's start with the water quality management zones. They opposed it right from day one. They led an attack throughout the province. They opposed it. Now, you have to be careful sometimes, by the way, because the Tories are very sneaky when it comes to these kinds of issues, because what they'll do is sometimes they'll talk against it, but when the vote comes they'll chuck it out. Take the planning amendments that I brought in. I want to credit the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) for pointing out a clear loophole in the law, which actually the Agriculture critic for the opposition did acknowledge. So what did they do there? They railed against the bill and I watched how they were going to vote, and you know what? Nothing. Not a word. This is the new Conservative strategy. It's the same thing—mind you, this one they did vote against. You know what they voted against? They voted against having more people out there making sure that our drainage laws and our licensing system works.

* (10:40)

Now, I was just at the AMM convention, and I met with many municipalities. I'll tell you who asked for it. It was the municipalities. Who asked for it? The conservation districts. By the way, we've expanded them; we've doubled them since we came into office. You know what? They get up and they make these snide comments about the water police. I remember the former member for Emerson talking about Conservation employees being the Gestapo. This is the year 2007. You know we have a licensing system, and I say anybody that doesn't follow it

deserves to get a fine, and if members opposite want to align themselves with the 0.1 percent that are flaunting our laws, not the 99.9 percent of law-abiding citizens, let them do so. But they do a disservice to rural Manitoba and to the farm community because, I tell you, the farm community does follow the laws.

They're stuck in another era if they think that this is the water police. The water police.

So, where do we come now in terms of this particular bill from the Liberals? Well, I hate to say it about the Liberals. I know it's tough for Liberals nowadays with only two members because they need that third member sometimes to break the ties. Okay? You know, Madam Acting Speaker, on the water quality management zone, and by the way, I have a bit of a soft spot for the Liberals at times. I realize it's difficult, I've been in third party. But what has their position been on issues like the water quality management zones? Well, the Liberal leader in rural Manitoba went around saying, well, we don't support what the government's doing. It's not as if we're against what the principle is, but we're against the way they're doing it.

Have you ever heard that from Liberals on other things before? It's like, you know, we're firmly on the fence. So, we're on the one side and we're on the other side, but one thing you can be guaranteed with the Liberals is, they are firmly—like, impaled—on the fence. It must be pretty painful, I can tell you. But painful for the people of Manitoba to hear that, Madam Acting Speaker. They couldn't even take a clear position on the water quality management zones, and I think that is unfortunate.

Now, there's nothing like a convert. Liberals are the best converts you'll ever find. Whether it's medicare nationally brought in by the CCF, NDP, but they'll run around and they'll say, well, you know, we brought it in nationally. They like nothing like a good idea brought in by somebody else that they will grab a hold of. So now they want to be born-again believers in water quality in this province. Except there's one problem. The Leader of the Liberal Party has been listening to the Conservatives, because now he is saying do less. Work on phosphorus but not on nitrogen.

Well, I want to give you a bit of a quick tour of western Canada to see where we should be. Do you think we should have less water treatment than Calgary or Edmonton or Moose Jaw or Prince Albert? They all have state-of-the-art nutrient

reduction in their waste-water system. If the Leader of the Liberal Party wanted to contribute to this debate, I think he would separate himself from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and say very clearly that, yes, phosphorus is a major concern, and we can do things on it in terms of detergents and other issues, but nitrogen's also part of the mix. Well, when we come to this particular bill, I think it's also important again to understand that we need a comprehensive approach and that is what our Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) has been talking about.

By the way, you can use dishwasher detergents and other cleaners that are phosphorus-free. I do that. I can tell you the stores you can buy them from. They're increasingly available, not just in some of the stores that have a reputation for doing things in terms of the environment. They're available in my own community in Thompson. You can make a difference. If you go back to the '70s, a huge difference was made at that time in terms of detergents and the phosphates in detergents which were killing lakes, rivers and streams.

But the key thing here, what we have said is we want to lead in this province but we want national reductions because that is what works. National reductions. So I say to the Liberals and the Conservatives, if you want to argue doing less, it doesn't cut it with the people of Manitoba. They want us to do more, not the do-nothing style of the Conservatives and Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): Order.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I am pleased to speak on this bill because it's an important topic. I think there's a bit of a misconception that this topic might only be of interest to people who make their livelihood on Lake Winnipeg or have cottages on Lake Winnipeg or who are maybe concerned about boating in the Red River, fishing in the Red River, but I think this is really important to all Manitobans. We really shouldn't think in terms of political boundaries and political jurisdictions. We really should think in terms of a watershed and, as we've heard, the Lake Winnipeg basin watershed actually includes parts of Ontario and a couple of U.S. states and Saskatchewan and Alberta, so we need to think in terms of an ecosystem, not just of a lake or a province.

I was asked a couple of weeks ago to be on a panel at the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. The topic was influencing government policy and legislation.

One of the things that I suggested was to buttonhole elected people when you have the opportunity and that you don't need to spend half an hour. Sometimes just one word is sufficient. For example, this morning on CBC Radio, there was a very interesting story about plastics, and they quoted a movie, a famous movie, whose title I can't remember right now—

An Honourable Member: *The Graduate*.

Mr. Martindale: *The Graduate*. And the one word was "plastics." So that's a memorable scene, it was only one word, but people who saw the movie will remember that.

Similarly, I was at a barbecue. I believe I was in the beautiful constituency of Seine River a number of years ago at a friend's house. A friend from Brandon West constituency said to me one word. She said, water. Doug, the issue is water. I got it. She got it and this was three or four years ago. Our government got it. I think we're the first government in Canada to have a Minister of Water Stewardship, and we're making it a priority for our government. I'm pleased that we're doing that. I think everyone on this side of the House is pleased that we're doing it.

Now, some of us here are old enough to remember when phosphates were a concern, or phosphorus was a concern and contributing to the death of Lake Erie. At that time, there were a lot of municipalities that didn't have sewage treatment facilities. There were many, many things that the government of Ontario and the states bordering Lake Erie were able to do, and the result was that they cleaned up the quality of Lake Erie and brought the lake back to life. We think that we can do the same with Lake Winnipeg.

Now, I come originally from Thornhill, Ontario. Probably, I don't know, 15 years ago, quite awhile ago now, there was a student in grade 8 who was concerned about Thornhill Pond. It has a different name now because it's part of a park, but that's where we used to go skating in the winter. He was concerned because of the algae growth, and why was that happening? Well, it was because of people fertilizing their lawns in Thornhill, a very affluent community. So he embarked on a one-person crusade to educate people to not fertilize their lawns. He also went to golf courses in Thornhill, of which there are three or four, and persuaded them not to use so much fertilizer on the golf courses. He got a lot of national publicity from *Maclean's* and CBC and elsewhere. So we know that there have been

individuals who have been concerned for a long, long time. We commend anyone who is concerned about this important issue.

Some of us in our caucus had the privilege of taking a tour on the ship *Namao* in Gimli harbour. We met with the head of the research consortium. It was very interesting to find out what they're doing out on the lake. In fact, we're invited to go out on the lake on one of their research trips, and I would like to take advantage of that opportunity. I think it would be very educational. We did get a short seminar class on the causes of the growth of the algae bloom and what we can do to prevent that in the future. We know that there are lots of things that we can do.

I would just like to reinforce what the former Minister of Water Stewardship was saying about the opposition. This has come up in Question Period with their opposition environment critic, and that is they're saying, we're doing too much; you should do less. Which I think is kind of ironic. Usually, oppositions push the government to do more, but in this case, they're pushing us to do less. They're saying, just take out the nitrogen, save a lot of money, just do phosphorus. Well, I know that they don't want us to spend money. I suppose that's the main motivation: save money.

But, I think if we have the opportunity to provide the maximum protection for the environment, we should do that. I commend our current Minister of Water Stewardship for bringing in our legislation, Bill 8, The Phosphorus Reduction Act. You know, we didn't really want to do this. There is a better alternative. The better alternative is that the federal government would legislate for all Canadians so that provinces don't have to legislate, and it would be much better, but, you know, I wouldn't really expect the federal government to do this. They don't have a stellar record on protecting the environment. But there are many occasions when we need national standards and national programs.

* (10:50)

In the past we've talked about this with regard to social programs, that we didn't want a patchwork quilt of social programs so that, for example, we had a great day-care program in one province like Manitoba and almost nothing in another province like Alberta, that we need national programs and national funding.

In fact, we used to have this in the social area under the Canada Assistance Plan which came in about 1966 and was abolished by the federal Liberal government in 1996. During that time, programs like health care but also child care and welfare were funded 50-50 by the federal government and the provincial government. That's all gone, thanks to Paul Martin and the Chrétien government.

Here's another example and it's not in the social welfare field, it's in the field of the environment where it doesn't make sense to have some provinces taking an initiative and others not, but we felt that we just couldn't wait, that there had to be legislation in Manitoba. If we had to wait for the federal government—[interjection] Well, Madam Acting Speaker, the previous speaker was talking about 50 years from now, and he had a good quote there about, if we wait too long, we'll all be dead.

Well, if we had to wait for the federal government, we'd probably all be dead. So we need to take action now, be concerned about the environment now because it's going to take a long time to undo the harmful effects on Lake Winnipeg. We need the co-operation of all jurisdictions, especially those that are upstream, like the American states and Saskatchewan and Alberta and Ontario.

It's good that Manitoba can lead the way and that we can take an initiative and hope that other provinces, and maybe even the federal government, will follow us. We can hope. Hope springs eternal. You never know, they might see the light. You know when they came into office they were opposed to Kyoto and they had an Environment Minister who had to defend the indefensible. She got replaced, and all of a sudden the light went on. They discovered, oh, maybe Canadians are concerned about the environment. We better do something.

So they appointed one of their strongest ministers as the Minister of the Environment and he got a lot of publicity. I don't know what's happened lately. He kind of off fell off the radar screen. They decided it was an issue, but then they brought in their plans which aren't nearly enough and aren't going far enough. They sort of got it, but they didn't get it completely. They didn't get it right. We've asked them to bring in national legislation on limiting phosphates, but we're not having any effect there that I know of.

So what we would do, Madam Acting Speaker, is restrict phosphorus content in household automatic dishwasher detergents sold in Manitoba to no more

than 0.5 percent, effective July 2010. It would virtually eliminate the phosphate content in all household automatic dishwasher detergents.

The timing of the effective date coincides with the voluntary guidelines being brought in by industry in several jurisdictions in the United States that plan to enact or have proposed similar legislation. The coinciding effective date of Bill 8 with these other initiatives will bring increased protection for consumers by ensuring that automatic dishwasher detergent will be available to them at competitive prices.

So with those few comments, I will conclude and let one of my colleagues speak. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yesterday, I was afforded the opportunity to address the government's bill. Members can peruse *Hansard* from yesterday, and they'll get a fairly good insight in terms of the position that I had taken then.

I look to the government to show more leadership on the whole issue of Lake Winnipeg, and it's somewhat disappointing. Even listening to the comments from the government members this morning, one could say it's somewhat discouraging when they don't recognize a bill that could do more for Lake Winnipeg. As opposed to standing and supporting the bill, they've taken this jaded opinion that their bill is a better bill and, as a result, that this private members' bill should not pass.

Madam Acting Speaker, it's interesting that we had the one minister comment about accessibility of the product, saying that the product was, in fact, accessible. The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I believe, is correct that the product is accessible, that the market would be fed enough product if, in fact, we were to pass this bill, that there wouldn't be a shortage of supply, which contradicts what the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) was saying yesterday, Madam Acting Speaker, where she was trying to imply that it was questionable whether or not there would be enough product. I agree with the Member for Thompson that there would indeed be enough product.

I'm discouraged by the government's line that, well, their bill is more comprehensive. Madam Acting Speaker, the government's bill leaves question marks in terms of commercial use of dishwasher detergent. Therefore, we have no idea whether or not there are going to be put—what sort of restrictions will be put in. That is not any more

comprehensive than what the Liberal bill is proposing to do. We have to look at the origins of the private member's bill, that the Leader of the Liberal Party has brought forward, and we see that it was to lead and show leadership on doing something tangible.

Some of the other products that the minister or the government has brought to the floor, cleaning products, are very positive. We wouldn't oppose that. In fact, we would suggest that the minister can do one of two things. Madam Acting Speaker, she can either accept Liberal amendments to her bill to make it more comprehensive, her legislation, or bring in amendments to the Liberal bill and make it more comprehensive. Manitobans could win if the government chose to have an open mind. The government needs to have an open mind in terms of being able to see this bill or their bill pass so that Lake Winnipeg would be a cleaner lake at the end of the day. And I'm somewhat doubtful, and this is based on the comments that I hear. You know, on the one side we see opposition members talking about doing the right thing. I've heard in the past where we say, well, no one owns a good idea. You know, I could talk about the Good Samaritan legislation which the Leader of the Liberal Party brought in, and at the end of the day we ended up having to withdraw ours so that we could support the government's private member's bill on Good Samaritan, Madam Acting Speaker.

You know, we recognize that the government has 36 members that were elected, 35 of which participate in the votes. We would be prepared, I would ultimately suggest, to incorporate in the form of amendments some of the Liberal ideas to make the government bill better in anticipation that the government would, in fact, Madam Acting Speaker, accept those amendments. And the reason being, is the Liberal Party is more interested in helping Lake Winnipeg and doing the right thing even if it means allowing the NDP to assume more credit on the issue because our interest is Lake Winnipeg, not trying to get political credit.

So I look to the Minister of Water Stewardship and appeal to her to do the right thing in terms of accepting amendments, and if she doesn't want to accept amendments, make amendments to this bill. Ultimately, I would love to see this bill pass, and that's the reason why I'll sit down in hopes that the bill will, in fact, pass so we can actually have committee meeting hearings.

Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It's a pleasure to speak to this bill, but before I begin my comments on this legislation, Madam Acting Speaker, I just want to recognize the Lord Selkirk Royals high school girls' volleyball team who, last night, won for the fourth straight year the provincial high school volleyball championships. And I know that the whole community, whether you live in Selkirk, St. Andrews, St. Clements, perhaps even Springfield, the whole community is very proud of our volleyball program in Selkirk.

* (11:00)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): Order. The time being 11 o'clock—[*interjection*]

Order. The honourable member will have nine minutes remaining when we resume debate on this issue.

RESOLUTION

Res. 1—Women Minorities and Aboriginal People in the Legislature

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): We will now move on to private members' resolutions.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino),

WHEREAS in 2001—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): Order. I am having a little bit of trouble hearing the member. I'm sure we all want to hear the resolution she's putting forward.

Ms. Blady: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington,

WHEREAS in 2001 there were 585,125 women in Manitoba making up 51% of the provincial population; and

WHEREAS in 2001 there were over 150,000 Aboriginal people living in the province of Manitoba, making up in excess of 14% of the total population; and

WHEREAS as a result of the 2007 election there are now 13 women in the government caucus and 5 women in the official opposition caucus; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Legislative Assembly has more elected women as a proportion than any other Legislature in Canada; and

WHEREAS having women in politics is important to ensure that young women have role models who serve as living testimonials that they too can be elected officials; and

WHEREAS 2007 was the first time a woman from an ethnic minority was elected to the Manitoba Legislature; and

WHEREAS there are three Aboriginal members of the Legislative Assembly in government caucus;

WHEREAS the Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly is the first Inuit Speaker in any province in Canada; and

WHEREAS electing women, visible minorities and Aboriginal people is critical to ensuring that the makeup of our elected Assembly is reflective of the electorate; and

WHEREAS the legislative process is aided greatly by having citizens from all cross sections of society with their diversity of experiences involved in the decision-making process.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba continue to promote women, ethnic minorities and Aboriginal people's involvement in the political and electoral process.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick): I'm just asking leave from all members. One of the words was switched. It was read as on the fourth WHEREAS, that it would now say: "WHEREAS the Manitoba Legislative Assembly of Manitoba has more elected women as a proportion than any other Legislature in Canada."

Is there leave to have it as read? Leave has—excuse me. Is there leave to have it as printed? [*Agreed*]

It has been moved by the honourable Member for—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick) Dispense.

WHEREAS in 2001 there were 585,125 women in Manitoba making up 51% of the provincial population; and

WHEREAS in 2001 there were over 150,000 Aboriginal people living in the province of Manitoba, making up in excess of 14% of the total population; and

WHEREAS as a result of the 2007 election there are now 13 women in the government caucus and 5 women in the official opposition caucus; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Legislative Assembly has more women elected as a proportion than any other Legislature in Canada; and

WHEREAS having women in politics is important to ensure that young women have role models who serve as living testimonials that they too can be elected officials; and

WHEREAS 2007 was the first time a woman from an ethnic minority was elected to the Manitoba Legislature; and

WHEREAS there are three Aboriginal members of the Legislative Assembly in government caucus;

WHEREAS the Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly is the first Inuit Speaker in any province in Canada; and

WHEREAS electing women, visible minorities and Aboriginal people is critical to ensuring that the makeup of our elected Assembly is reflective of the electorate; and

WHEREAS the legislative process is aided greatly by having citizens from all cross sections of society with their diversity of experiences involved in the decision-making process.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba continue to promote women, ethnic minorities and Aboriginal people's involvement in the political and electoral process.

Ms. Blady: It's an honour to bring forth this resolution because it means a great deal to me personally as a newly elected female MLA, as a mother and as an educator who has taught in the field of gender in women's studies and Native studies.

One thing that this resolution does is it promotes the participation of women of ethnic minorities and of Aboriginal people within the electoral and the political process. I am a firm believer, as are the members of this caucus, that the more we better represent the population, the better we are able to, as representatives, work for the population and reflect

the needs, in the legislative process, of the population.

It's very straightforward. This has been demonstrated historically going back to such pieces of legislation like the fact that Manitoba was the first province to give women the right to vote, things like the Persons Case. We know that as women became more involved, laws changed to better reflect the participation of women. We know that as more ethnic representatives from more ethnic populations, more diversity was reflected, we see that reflected in the laws that are passed and how society evolves and changes to meet the needs of everyone within the province.

Again, this is one of these things where, with 50 percent of the population, 51 percent actually being women, that we should strive to the point that 51 percent of our Legislature is women. We should have the ethnic diversity of our population reflected in this House so that we can better meet the needs of the people of our province. I think that is one thing that I am proud, as a member of this caucus, to stand up here and be able to see that I have sisters who have led the way before me as women, that we have the ethnic diversity that we have on this side of the House, and that I think that we need to keep striving to do that until we do get to 51 percent, until we do better reflect the population.

The other thing, too, that we need to remember is that, really, this is about role models. This is really about modelling behaviour for our youth, both men and women and of all ethnic backgrounds. As a mother and an educator, that is something that I have tried to do. I have been lucky that, in my own life, I always had the backing of various family members and of my educators, that they all said, you can do whatever it is that you set your mind to, but not every young person has that. Many people, when they don't have the support of family, often have to look to role models. I think that is one thing we do in this House, is show that we can go forward and make change by doing things instead of sitting back and waiting. You go forward and you make change.

I want my students to know, I want my children to know, I want members of my community to know that you can start off from a working class background of many different ethnic diversities, of speaking. My first language was not English. I was raised in a household with French. So I go forward as someone of two languages now and as someone of a mixed ethnic background and also as a single mother

and as an educated woman with a Ph.D. that I can now sit there and provide that role model to other young women as, again, my colleagues here can. For that I thank my family. I thank my father who ran in the provincial election in 1986. I thank the cousin who I was named after, Sharon King Little, who ran for the Oregon legislature in the 1990s. I thank the women that came before me, such as Gail Roberts [*phonetic*], a high school teacher from Silver Heights, and Dr. Jill Oakes and Dr. Celia Haig-Brown again, women who led the way for me and gave me a foundation. So, I know how important role models are.

That is the other thing, that as an educator, I listen to my students talk about the importance of role models. So I listened to my Aboriginal students when they sought out role models, and I tried to find examples for them of women and of Aboriginal people working in various fields so that they knew that it was something that they could do, despite the societal norms that had told them that they were not allowed to do those things, that society wasn't made for them. Again, this Legislature represents the fact that Aboriginal people can be legislators, will be legislators and bring great things to this House when they are legislators.

Again, when we do something progressive like this, we always do it on the shoulders of giants, on those that came before us. So I am thankful for those women like Nellie McClung, like Muriel Smith, like Judy Wasylicia-Leis and the women of this caucus that came before me. I thank them for laying the foundations that made it possible for me to be here.

And yes, I do thank Sharon Carstairs, because again, she worked with my father and also wondered why I wasn't running for another party in this election, but I knew that if I wanted to be a part of the government and I wanted to effect change, I needed to be here with a party, with a progressive party that was getting things done. She understood my choice and wished me luck.

So I want to be able to now give back to my students, give back to the youth in my community, to the people that I have taught and to future generations by putting forward a resolution like this so that we can see that there is strength in diversity, that all of our voices need to be heard and that we do things that model, really what I consider some of the best legislative models in the world that come from traditional societies. One of the best legislative models is that of the six nations of the *Hau de no sau*

nee population where it is the women that represent the true voice and it is the clan mothers. As an educator from the field of native studies, the one thing I have seen repeatedly is when you look at indigenous cultures and when you look at traditional cultures, the best representative ones are the ones where the mothers, the grandmas and the aunties had a strong voice.

* (11:10)

So I thank the kookums that taught me. I thank my mentors and the grandmothers of the Métis community that taught me because they are also women that taught me that, again, you must represent all of the voices. You must represent the women, the children, the families. What that does is it gives you a society where everyone is looked after, and I do believe that is one of the goals that we are achieving and we need to push farther on within this government because we do see change. We have seen change since this government has come into power into a much more family-friendly Legislature. If it's family-friendly, then we know that it's good for all members, male and female, because we can be not just better legislators, we can be better parents, we can be better community members. So that's the change that is effected by greater diversity in representation.

We are also able to do things that are a better reflective of the consultation process. Mothers always listen. So now, as a government, in going forward to redo the Women's Hospital at the Health Sciences Centre, what is the first thing that we are doing? We are listening to women, so that we are renovating a hospital that was designed on the model of being centred around the allopathic caregivers. Where women merely came in to be treated, we are now going to be moving forward on a health centre that is women-centred, child-centred, family-centred, so that it can better meet the needs of not just those in care, but of those families that are involved in care.

Most importantly, we create a supportive environment. I have to say that, personally, I am amazed by the support that this caucus has provided to me as an individual and it provides to all of its members, so that by being a better representative of the population we also create a supportive environment for legislative members to go forward to be the best that they can as legislators, as citizens and as role models.

Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I'm pleased to stand and speak to this resolution on looking at women, Aboriginal people and ethnic minorities in our legislatures. We were very proud in the last election to run 17 female candidates, several Aboriginal candidates and candidates from ethnic minorities. We certainly agree that diversity strengthens our Legislature, and certainly our party has worked hard towards ensuring that we have a good mix of individuals running for us in our elections.

I would also note that two of the three women speakers that Manitoba has had came from the Progressive Conservative Party, including the first woman Speaker, Thelma Forbes, in 1963. Thelma Forbes was one of the first women ever elected to the Manitoba Legislature and also the first woman to ever serve in Cabinet, serving as Minister of Urban Development, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Public Works, from 1966 to 1969.

I would also note that Rosemary Vodrey was the first female Justice Minister in Canada.

I would also like to indicate that the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) was chosen as our interim leader of our party when we were in need of an interim leader. Certainly, we've had a lot of, you know, women hold challenging roles within our caucus over the past many, many years. We do look forward to the day when the full participation of women, minorities and Aboriginal peoples in Canada's political sphere is not noteworthy at all, but simply the norm. I think that is what we are all striving for.

I would like to indicate that there are many policies that the Progressive Conservatives have brought forward in Manitoba. In fact, we have a significant legacy in this province in terms of what we have brought forward and, while there are many, I'm just going to highlight a few of them. These have been major concerns, not only of the women in our caucus, but of the men in our caucus and of our whole party.

The PC legacy includes: social allowance; medical insurance, contrary to what the members opposite might like to take claim to, it was the Tories that brought in medical insurance into Manitoba; low-cost rental housing is another legacy of the Progressive Conservatives; the student loan program; services for the deaf; crop insurance; income assistance; Workers Compensation; Taking Charge!, the employment program; zero tolerance on domestic

violence; john school; women and infant nutrition; Child and Youth Secretariat; and the Provincial Nominee Program right now which accounts for many, many newcomers coming to Manitoba. That was a Progressive Conservative initiative in this province.

So the legacy of our party in looking at services for women, for families, for ethnic minorities is certainly a strong legacy and one that we will continue to work very, very hard in furthering, in strengthening those initiatives and looking at others.

I would also like to indicate that we had some wonderful women candidates in the last election, and we have stayed in touch with them. We are continually looking for advice and the energy that they have brought to our party: Kenny Daodu is one, the candidate for Minto; Kelly de Groot from Assiniboia; Alexa Rosentreter for Point Douglas; Trudy Turner for Riel. All of these women have been exceptional candidates, exceptionally talented women.

We've had a number of Aboriginal candidates, too, and again we have found that they have brought so much to the table, and there have been many discussions brought forward because of their great vision and their commitment to looking at what we as a Progressive Conservative Party can contribute in this province: Kristine McGhee for St. James; George Muswaggon for The Pas; David Harper for Rupertsland. Certainly all of these individuals have had great contributions and continue to have great contributions within our party. And we as a caucus learned from them.

What I would like to indicate, too, is that there have been a number of issues brought forward by us in terms of recognizing women's issues most recently. And I was very fortunate to be part of bringing forward The Nellie McClung Foundation Act in 2003 in this Legislature, and I would like to indicate that with all-party support that particular piece of legislation was passed which established a foundation that is now working to promote the memory of Nellie McClung by having a statue in her honour erected on the legislative grounds.

I was very pleased and, again, in working with all members of this House to successfully bring forward date rape legislation after I had heard from a number of women that had been date raped. And we were very thankful that the government did not block this legislation and did in fact work with us to amend The Liquor Control Act, which allows patrons to

take their drinks into washrooms in licensed establishments rather than leaving their drinks unattended. It was interesting, after that legislation passed, the number of people I heard from across Canada where something like this has actually happened to them or to somebody they knew.

One other area that we have been pushing this government hard on is the issue of midwifery, and we would really like to see more action and activity from the government on this issue. It was a PC government that introduced The Midwifery Act in 1997 governing the practise of midwifery in Manitoba. Unfortunately, under this government it seems to have stalled. There is a lot of struggle for midwifery to receive the supports from this government. We only have 31 midwives in Canada, and many of them are turning away nearly 50 percent of the clients who need their services. So, what we see from this government, in this instance definitely, is more talk and very little action in terms of what they have an opportunity to do in taking midwifery forward.

Cervical cancer immunization, another issue that this government has an opportunity to do something about to protect women from cervical cancer, the first vaccine that can actually protect women, and this government refuses to introduce it, contrary to other governments across Canada that have actually introduced it. Again, a government that is more talk about their commitment to women's issues than action.

Extending maternity leave to one year. In 2000, it was the PC caucus that was the first one to call on this provincial government to match federal legislation and introduce legislation to extend maternity leave from six months to one year in Manitoba. I would indicate also that with maternity care, in February of this year we called on the government to release its report on the Manitoba Health Ministerial Working Group on maternal and newborn care that was completed more than two years ago and never made public. Under pressure, the NDP pledged to commission a new review to look at the old review and we're still waiting to hear what has happened in terms of this.

* (11:20)

What we have seen with this government is more lip service when it comes to standing in their seats or standing out in the public. There's more talk than action from this government. They fail women many, many times, and one particular instance we're

seeing right now is women and families in Child and Family Services. This government is horribly failing women, families and children, and it is very offensive to see what this government has allowed to happen in eight years of their watch when, in fact, in the early 2000s, they had a chance to do something about this issue. They refused to listen and do what they should have done as a government.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, I think that actions do speak louder than words, and if we want to look at legacies, it is certainly in what we see with a Progressive Conservative government that there have actually been more good initiatives happen in this province under a Progressive Conservative government than under an NDP government. Thank you.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Wellington): I'm so happy and proud to be a member of this caucus, of this government, because this is the government that has not only in words but in action has shown that indeed women are valued in our society. It's not, as I've said, only in words, but in actions. There's real intent to get women actively involved in the governance of this province and this, happily, came into fruition during the last election with 13 elected female members of the Legislative Assembly.

As my sister here has mentioned, 13 plus 5 women from the opposition, the 18 women in our Legislative Assembly today represents the largest percentage of elected female representatives in all of Canada, and Manitoba should be very proud of that accomplishment.

I am going by being an old person. I'm going by history. I see the value of women in all discussions related to life. I would not only guess, but I think there's some evidence here that if only we had women leaders of governments during the years of the First World War and Second World War, maybe there would be no wars at all. Even in the ages of the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, the conflicts that had arisen in the world at that time, if only women were in governance at that time, maybe conflicts would have been resolved in a more productive and peaceful way rather than waging war and losing precious lives in the process.

As a woman, I could speak with certainty that we bring temperance, we bring understanding, we bring a much, much needed perspective on the discussion table especially in moments of conflict. I think the caring and nurturing nature of women makes it so. We women see things differently than

men although I would admit there are aggressive women, belligerent women, but—[interjection] Yes, true. But, for the most part, I think women would see things differently. Women would consider so many options and would exhaust all of the available options before doing something drastic or something violent. I'm speaking for myself and speaking on behalf of many women that I know who have resolved very serious problems with diplomacy and have looked at the problem with an eye that has love and care in it.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I also would really be very pleased if this resolution passes because I believe in the capacity of women in making decisions, in handling problems in life and in handling very serious important issues, policy issues, governance issues. The hands-on capability of women in dealing with day-to-day issues of life would be very helpful and valuable in such discussions.

The role that most women are so very good at which is taking care and raising of family, would be very beneficial in the discussions of important matters in governance, be it in crafting legislation that involves justice issues, family services issues, even economic issues.

I'm very proud to mention that in our caucus we have the distinction of having the first female Speaker of the House, which was Myrna Phillips; the first female Deputy Premier, which was Muriel Smith; and the first female Minister of Labour who was Mary Beth Dolin.

I hope everyone will realize the value, the blessings, the joy of including women in this Legislature. I hope this private member's bill will encourage all of the women in the province, those who believe they have a mission and a calling to serve the community, to serve their country, to serve their province, to come out and seek nomination and seek full participation in the political parties of their choice. Hopefully, the parties of their choice will recognize them and nominate them or accept them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I, too, would like to put some thoughts on the record today regarding this resolution.

As one of the 18 MLAs that are serving in this Legislature, I also want to recognize, I guess, the historical accomplishment that the 18 women have been able to put on the record as being the largest

number of women representing within a provincial legislature.

I was recently in Ottawa and was able to participate in some discussions regarding this significant accomplishment for Manitoba. I felt quite proud of what all of us have been able to accomplish. I'm not saying all of us, just the 18 women within this Legislature, but I think every Manitoban has to be commended for taking an interest in what all of us, within this Legislature, have said during the campaigns and have contributed to, not only to this Legislature during our period of time being here, but all of us have a history of being involved in our communities, of being people that will speak up and speak for people within our communities. This is just one step or one level in our accomplishments as legislators.

* (11:30)

The recent election saw a diversity of candidates and I think that that speaks volumes for not only our province but our country. I think that as we become a more diverse community or province, we will continue to see increases in the representation of all sectors including Aboriginal, ethnic minorities, people of colour, women and men. I'm very proud to be a member of the Legislature and representing a community such as the Minnedosa constituency. So I think all of us should take pride in that and continue to work in the best ways possible for our communities.

I've always been a firm believer that you are elected on your abilities first and foremost. I believe that in the last two sessions or last two terms in office, I'm learning more about my communities; I'm learning more about representation. I'm learning a lot about the different issues that reflect my community within the constituency of Minnedosa. I think that as we continue to learn and grow in our role as legislators, we can only be stronger in the legislation and the debates that we put forward on behalf of not only our constituents but the province as a whole.

I want to congratulate all of the candidates that put their names on a ballot, Mr. Speaker, in the last election. I believe that when you do put your name on a ballot, you are putting yourself in a very personable and open position. You're giving up a lot in your personal lives when you run and even more so when you're elected. But I think that each and every one of the individuals who put their name on a ballot provided special and important attributes to the process.

I believe that each party did present several candidates from different groups and different organizations and different ethnic minorities and cultural backgrounds. I believe that in our campaign, we had several individuals who presented strong leadership, not only that they presented in Canada but even from the countries that they came from.

Kenny Daodu came from Nigeria and prior to relocating to Canada, she was a school teacher in both Nigeria and Jamaica. I think that upon her arrival, she understood the importance of a hand up instead of a handout and has done great things in her community. She's been a realtor; she's been a home support worker and a youth facilitator. She's done great things to show her two daughters what life in Canada can mean for a new immigrant.

Kristine McGhee, a candidate in the St. James area, has a proud Métis background. She's devoted to Aboriginal economic development, work force capacity building and career counselling and has been an advocate for over 22 years for the Aboriginal community, Mr. Speaker.

Lou Fernandez, a candidate that we had run for us, had provided great insight and support for new immigrants and talked about a lot of the programming that is currently available outside of Manitoba, how we can enhance and promote what we're doing in Manitoba, and to ensure that there would be greater significance on providing supports for new immigrants who often find it challenging and frightening to be in a new country without family and friends.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reflect back on some of the reasons why I became an elected official. The fondest and earliest memories for me are definitely related to the women in my family and in my community. My mother has been an advocate for her community and her area of the province for a number of years. My mother worked all the years that I was growing up. My grandmothers assisted in the child care. My mother was a community leader. She ran a business and she taught me that you can have both and do it well. I think that the confidence in being able to go out there and do what you want to do in life has come from my mother and my grandmothers, Mr. Speaker.

My grandmother, Mary Semochko, was one of five daughters born to Pauline and Mykta Kawka, and having five daughters, my great-grandfather obviously realized that he had a great challenge, but he also understood the significance of raising strong

women. When my great-grandfather Kawka passed away, he willed his land to the five daughters, and that land was put in their names. Mr. Speaker, in those days, in the early '30s or late '40s, to have women owning, having willed that land to the women, and my grandmother and her sisters were told to keep that land in their names, that they were deserving of it and it is their land, I guess speaks to my great-grandfather and the wisdom that he had in ensuring that these women would be taken care of and be leaders in the decision making of their own land and their own farms.

Mr. Speaker, my grandmother, Margaret Kostiuk, Grandma Kostiuk was a Wyshka, and at the age of 50 when my grandfather died at an early age, she had minimal schooling but was adamant that she was going to be taking care of herself. So, at that age, she moved into Winnipeg, took her LPN training and worked in a hospital in Russell till she was 75 years of age. So, again, there's another woman that has shown strong perseverance and devotion to doing what she wanted to do in life.

I believe that, in my critic role in Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, I've had the opportunity to meet several Aboriginal women who have held important roles in their communities and their families, and one of the important roles of being a leader is to preserve your cultural heritage and to pass that wisdom and knowledge on to the next generation.

In Thompson, I recently met a Charlene Lafreniere, who is the Director of Devolution of Community Correctional Services for MKO. She's also a councillor on the City of Thompson, Mr. Speaker, and I see that this generation, because she's younger than I am, I see her generation as being strong leaders and advocates for the north and for the communities that they represent. She ties in her cultural heritage and significance of that and will move that into the next generation.

We've met with the Mothers of Red Nations and have learned about the importance of the well-being of women and children in Manitoba who are Aboriginal, Mr. Speaker. I believe that issues like child care, grandparents' rights, cervical cancer immunization, and immunization, my daughter just recently completed. These are all important initiatives that I believe that women can provide an extra voice to and move forward. I do believe that issues such as social allowance, medical insurance, student loan program, crop insurance, the children

and youth secretariat were all programs that were strongly supported by the PC caucus, and I believe that we will simply move forward in a lot of these—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): It is indeed my pleasure to rise today to speak to this resolution. I want to thank the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) who just spoke. I always find it interesting to hear about the journeys that we each take to get to this House and what inspires us to put our names forward to be elected.

I think this resolution is very important because I think role models make it possible to dream. If you don't see yourself reflected in whatever role, in whatever profession it is, then it's hard for you to believe that it's possible to get there. I think of you, Mr. Speaker, as the first Inuit Speaker in Canada, and I know that there are many, many Inuit young people who have looked to you for leadership and to know that it is possible to go from wrestling whales in one's life to wrestling politicians.

* (11:40)

I also want to reflect on the strong Aboriginal and Métis representation that we're privileged to have within our caucus. I know the Minister of Culture (Mr. Robinson), the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin) and the MLA for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) each bring leadership to their communities, but also make us able to make much better decisions as a caucus because we know that we have many, many voices represented in many, many backgrounds.

I also want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the MLA for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) who, I believe, I haven't done the research, but may be the longest currently serving female MLA in Canada. I would encourage her caucus to perhaps check that out. *[interjection]* It might be something—well, you know, the win is what's important at the end of the day.

I also want to, of course, pay tribute to some of my personal role models. One of those being Muriel Smith, who was the first, I believe, female Deputy Premier in Manitoba, and recently, in Canada, and was recently awarded the Persons day medal by the Governor General. Mr. Speaker, this is a medal that commemorates the Persons day case. I'm sure all honourable members know that it is only not even 100 years that women have been considered people in Canada. So when we talk about the progress that

we've made, it's important to remember that that progress has been made in a relatively short period of time.

I look to Muriel Smith as inspirational because she had a long, hard road to get elected. I think once you're elected, perhaps all of the nominations and elections lost tend to fade from memory, but the reality is that for women it's very, very difficult to get elected and it's difficult to win a nomination in order to get elected. We've heard much today about all the candidates from many different backgrounds who ran in the last election. I also pay tribute to them because I know how difficult it is to run.

The point though, however, is to get elected. I think when we look at the progress that we've made within our own caucus, we've made that progress because of a very strong commitment to run women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and other underrepresented groups in constituencies where they can win. I think that's why we've had some success in that regard.

Recently, I was part of a group of female MLAs, along with the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) and the Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), that met with interns who were here from Ottawa, parliamentary interns. It was a very interesting discussion that we had with them about the challenges and realities of being a female politician. It was also, I think, a great opportunity for us, as women who may come from different parties to share our experiences and know that there is much, much in common in those experiences.

Before I was elected, and still, I played a role in trying to get women to run for our party. It's interesting that whenever you sit down and talk to a woman about running, she comes up pretty much with the same objections, and I call these the three Fs.

Women are concerned about raising enough money to run, fundraising. I think that is reflected across parties. I think the work that we have done in government to limit the influence of business and unions in terms of fundraising to make sure that there is a more level playing field for those who want to run, I think that that is good news for women who want to run.

Another objection that we often hear from women when they're thinking about running, and, increasingly, from men who have young children, is

the toll that it takes on family life when you are elected. I do think that some of the more progressive family policies that we've put into place: increasing maternity leave; making it possible for people to take leave from their jobs to look after sick children or sick family members; investing in child care in unprecedented ways, despite the withdrawal and abandonment of a national child-care system by the federal government and the fact that we've stayed in with our money, I know that that does make it more possible for women and men who have families to participate in elected life.

The other thing that women often talk about as a reason why they might not want to run is that they have fears. They have fears that they won't know enough to be in this Chamber. They have fears that politics is a dirty, nasty business and they don't see themselves reflected there. I think that all of us who are elected have a challenge to put forward an example that helps to take care of those fears. That it is possible to be elected and to do good work for your community, that it is possible to be elected and to elevate the debate in this Chamber and I think we all have to do our best to do that.

Electing people from various backgrounds is important for our democracy. I think we can only function as elected people, as a government and as an opposition, if we reflect all the voices of our province. Without doing that, we make poor decisions and I think we know from the past that, especially, having women elected federally and provincially has made a huge difference in public policy in this country.

In our own province it led to huge shifts in family law. There was a time, I am told, where every divorce had to come to this Chamber to be debated and passed. I can imagine that those were some interesting debates. But I think that women and men of conscience that were elected saw that we needed to modernize family law, and that has happened.

I think also—and I think it's important especially this week as we commemorate the anniversary of the Montréal massacre—that we reflect on a time not that long ago, I think it was 1980 when Margaret Mitchell who was an NDP Member of Parliament rose to speak in the House about violence against women and was greeted by laughter. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that reaction would be unthinkable today. That is because women and men have worked very hard to make violence against women unacceptable in our society, to enact positive public

policy and laws and programs which deal with that issue. That I think is one example of what it means to have more women elected.

This weekend, Mr. Speaker, I had the great opportunity of attending the Kenyan Association of Manitoba's celebration of independence along with my colleagues from St. Norbert and Riel. One of the comments from the president stuck with me. He was talking about the role of women in society and how we have to do a better job to elect more women in Canada, but also Kenya was having its elections. He said it's important to elect women because women are the ones that make sure children eat.

I think there's no better reason to support this resolution than that. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to stand and rise and speak on this resolution. In fact, I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for Sharon Carstairs. We can all talk about the positive impact that women have had in Manitoba society that go far beyond even this Legislature.

When I was elected back in 1988 there was Gwen Charles, Avis Gray, Iva Yeo and, of course, Sharon Carstairs back then, which made up 20 percent of our caucus. These individuals played prominent roles within our caucus, second to no other members whether it was right from the leadership issue to what was happening within our party organization to those individuals that sat on our election readiness committee.

I like to think that all parties contribute in whatever ways that they can in terms of making sure that society is better through more equity, which includes women, which includes minorities. Political parties can all take credit, Mr. Speaker. We could talk about Nancy McClung and her party origins and how she was—I'm sorry, Nellie McClung and her party origins and the contributions that she made here, not only in Manitoba but Alberta, indeed in Canada. It was with great pleasure, Sharon Carstairs I believe being the first woman elected to leader of a political party, of a major political party in Canada, and then to become the first woman to be elected as the official opposition leader in Canada.

I like to believe that we should be recognizing all political parties in the way in which they contribute. My current leader, Jon Gerrard, has recruited many outstanding women. I'm sorry, the Leader of the Liberal Party has recruited many outstanding women. One of the speakers prior to me

made reference to some of the Conservative candidates. No doubt the New Democratic Party—all political parties engage. I have had the privilege of running in elections with individuals like Linda Cantiveros, Naty Yankech, and many other women that have been from minority groups, Mr. Speaker. I think that we need to recognize that it's more than just getting elected, that there's public policy or there are issues that you can address by just putting your name on the ballot, and I believe that all political parties have contributed immensely to it.

* (11:50)

Mr. Speaker, the resolution talks about the issue of minorities. You know, yesterday I raised the question in terms of what it is that you do with the people that you do have? That's one of the reasons why I posed the question yesterday to the Premier (Mr. Doer) after being Premier for eight years. The caucus talks about the minorities. Why not bring in some of those minorities? You know, we've had three members of the Filipino community; we've had two members of the East Indian community represented in the NDP caucus. Why have we not yet seen one of them made a minister?

We need to look at how political parties—because it is a party resolution; it's reflecting on the Legislature—we need to look at what parties and their leadership are actually doing within and throughout the community, not just inside the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. It goes beyond that. I'm not too sure, right offhand, in terms of the percentage of women candidates that we had in the last provincial election, but I am sure that if you look at the performance of the Liberal Party over the last number of years, you will find that we have opened our arms and welcomed members of minorities, of all people, to participate in the political process. We currently have a president of the Manitoba Liberal Party today and in the past that were female, that have contributed immensely to our party. I make reference to committees such as election readiness. We can talk about policy development. There are many different roles that women can play in terms of the overall political structure of a party. The Legislative Chamber is just one of those roles.

So the challenge that I would put or even want to see incorporated into the resolution itself is to broaden it, because Manitobans need to know that it goes beyond this Legislature. There's politics, as we know, that goes well beyond this Legislature. It's the

individuals that you put around you, especially leaders of political parties. The individuals that are around you, that you're meeting with, that are influencing the types of things that you are doing. I look at individuals like Val Thompson, who has been a very prominent individual within the Manitoba Liberal Party, who has served in many different roles under our current leadership within the Liberal Party and has offered so much in terms of opportunities for candidates, for individuals looking to become party members, to policy development. These are the types of individuals that we do need to make reference to, because they're in the background doing what they can to ensure that the democratic process is working.

I believe that Val Thompson is likely one of the best presidents in the last 30-plus years that the Manitoba Liberal Party has had in terms of what it is that it was able to accomplish in her short time as president. I look at the number of candidates that she was able to assist in attracting, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that if we asked other members of this Legislature to comment on some of the other women and the leading role that they've played within their political organizations and structures, we would hear a lot of great stories, stories such as Val Thompson.

So the resolution is a resolution worthy of supporting, but I think that we need to broaden it to include what the makeup of Manitoba politics is all about and how we've been able to move so much forward in the whole area of ensuring that women play a much stronger role in policy and the development of our political infrastructure.

We look forward, Mr. Speaker, to ongoing progress. I know from the Liberal Party's perspective and the discussions that I've had with the current Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party, that this is an issue that we're always looking to be more aggressive on. We want to show leadership and you will see leadership on this issue from the Manitoba Liberal Party. Thank you.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I feel honoured to speak on this resolution. It's a great resolution and everybody's trying to be champion of the woman, champion of the visible minorities and champion of the Aborigines.

I want to touch a different perspective, but I don't think I have enough time to go into it. I think having experience in government services since 1982, I have gone through different kinds of hurdles which face the minorities. Sometimes even affirmative action is just so wishy-washy. The real

people who should be under affirmative action are lost, and who benefits under affirmative action, it doesn't matter how you count, the same major culture benefit out of that.

Look at the affirmative action, how they apply it. They want so many people, a percentage of visible minorities, women and Aboriginals. What happens, those people who are running the departments, they sneakily apply it in such a way that visible minorities are left out. Who benefits? Again, the main cultural group. That's what we have to recognize and have to correct. There's good intention always from all the government sides, but there's not good intention by the bureaucrats, and that's where we have to be vigilant.

Therefore I think this is a great resolution but we have to go forward and do more. To do more, we have to recognize, consider how many people we are

getting from the different countries. We have to see how those different criteria are applied, and we have to improve on those ones. I really think that this government really intends to do that, but I will have my input into it so that we can improve those visible minorities' status in the government.

As far as our immigration system, sometimes the federal government does not co-operate the way it should and blames some of the countries or some of the people, that they are not honest enough, therefore their people cannot come. So to look into the federal government's intention—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have six minutes remaining.

The time being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

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