

First Session – Forty-Third Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Social and Economic Development

Chairperson
Mr. Tyler Blashko
Constituency of Lagimodière

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Forty-Third Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monday, April 15, 2024

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – MLA Mike Moyes (Riel)

ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4

Members of the committee present:

*Mr. Blashko, MLAs Chen, Kennedy, Mr. Khan,
MLAs Lagassé, Moyes*

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

*Bill 207–The Islamic Heritage Month Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act
Amended)*

*Shahina Siddiqui, Islamic Social Services
Association*

Albert El Tassi, Al Hijra Islamic School

*Mian Hameed, Manitoba Muslim Seniors
Association*

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

*Bill 207–The Islamic Heritage Month Act (Com-
memoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act
Amended)*

* * *

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft): Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): I'd like to nominate MLA Blashko.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Blashko has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Blashko, will you please take the Chair.

The Chairperson: Our next item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): I'd like to nominate MLA Moyes.

The Chairperson: MLA Moyes has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, MLA Moyes is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following bill: Bill 207, the Islamic heritage month, commemoration of days, weeks and months act amended.

I would like to inform all in attendance of the provisions in our rules regarding the hour of adjournment. A standing committee meeting to consider a bill must not sit past midnight to hear public presentations or to consider clause by clause of a bill except by unanimous consent of the committee.

Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in a committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations with another five minutes allowed for questions from committee members. Questions shall not exceed 30 seconds in length, with no time limit for answers. Questions may be addressed to presenters in the following rotation: first, the member sponsoring the bill; second, the member of the official opposition; and third, an independent member.

If a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called, they will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the presenters' list.

The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide a verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I first have to say the person's name. This is the signal for the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

I will now call on Auntie Shahina Siddiqui. Auntie Shahina, please proceed with your presentation.

Shahina Siddiqui (Islamic Social Services Association): First, let me greet you all with the greeting of Islam: as-salamu alaykum, peace be with all of you.

I'm chair of the Islamic History Month Canada that was proclaimed in 2007 by the Parliament. And now I stand with you to celebrate that we will be now having a Manitoba Islamic heritage month.

It comes at a time when we really needed this. With the rise of Islamophobia, the lack of information about Islam, Muslims and Islamic civilization and the contributions to the world, of Muslims' contribution. This comes at a time when we can, with the strength of having Islamic heritage month in Manitoba, enhance education, whether it's in schools, whether it's in different sectors.

It also uplifts our children's self-esteem. They are facing a lot of discrimination. I counsel people, youth who are saying things—and as a grandmother with three grandkids born and raised here, I get the everyday reports of what's going on, what's happening.

And having this opportunity, which I hope, once we have this established, that the responsibility will then lie on Manitobans to take advantage of it, to put it in place, and it will not be on the shoulders of the Muslim community to go out and say, here, listen to me. It will be the responsibility of every citizen, as we do for the Black History Month, as we do for the Pride month. We have to recognize our diversity and just not give it lip service. The diversity is our strength.

When you ask someone how, they can't answer you, because we really don't articulate it. Diversity is a strength when we know each other and we respect each other, and we respect the differences as much as we respect the similarities.

So I'm here to say, go ahead, let's do it. I'm very proud of MLA Nellie Kennedy for bringing this forward, for seeing the long-term positive impact of doing this.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much for your presentation.

Are there members of the committee that have questions?

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Also questions—or, comments or just questions, I guess, specifically for this?

The Chairperson: Both are okay.

Mr. Khan: Auntie Shahina, it's an honour to have you here. I believe I have known you since I first moved here in 2006 to play for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, is when I first met you, and you've always been a champion of the community, you've done so much work for not only Muslims in this city, but for everyone, bringing everyone together.

So it's a real pleasure and an honour to have you here today speaking to this bill, and for the continued work you are doing in raising awareness and combating Islamophobia in everything you do.

So I really, sincerely thank you for that, and thank you for, you know, guiding me along in my journey from when I first moved here to play for the Bombers, to entrepreneurship and now in politics.

So with that, you know, just a simple question that I think you alluded to this in your comments, is, you know, how do you think celebrating Islamic heritage month will really affect children, or do you think the children, the Muslim kids, will actually understand the significance of this, and how do you think this will affect them? *[interjection]*

The Chairperson: Sorry, I just have to acknowledge you first, for the recordings.

S. Siddiqui: Now I'm Ms. Shahina Siddiqui, okay. Sorry, take this off the groups.

Of course it will, because any time you recognize somebody for who they are, that's the first empowerment that you give them; that they matter, that they are important, that we are hearing them, that we recognize them and we validate them.

So just like we do these little things on—you know, on a celebration of somebody's culture, we say, okay, today we are going to talk about, and the person can talk about their culture. Well, in the same manner, we want Muslim kids, like every other kid, for their own heritage, to feel proud of it, not apologetic. Not having to explain what they see on media, because that is what—kids don't—we are not born to hate. We are taught to hate. So if we can be taught to hate, we can be taught to not hate. And that's not my code, but Nelson Mandela's.

So I think schools go—reaching out to our youth is very important, so that they don't internalize this othering that is going on right now, and they feel like Canadian Muslims, proud of being Canadian, proud of being Muslim and happy to share their heritage.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Is there any other questions?

So MLA Chen will need leave to ask her question, because she isn't the sponsoring MLA from the government side.

Is there leave for MLA Chen to ask a question?
[Agreed]

Leave being granted. MLA Chen—and just a reminder you have 30 seconds for comments and questions.

MLA Chen: As-salamu alaykum [Peace be upon you], Auntie Shahina.

So as a—just a question, as a mom and an immigrant, I want my kids, who are born in Canada, to feel proud of their heritage. And also served as a school trustee on a school board. Auntie Shahina, you came to speak on the anti-Islamophobia motion that I put forward on the school board.

So in a school setting, could you give some examples how schools can participate in learning Islamic heritage?

* (18:10)

S. Siddiqui: Okay, this is a very good question because people think when we talk about Islamic heritage or Islamic history that it will be some kind of 'proselysizing,' that we'll go up and say: okay, our faith is the best and this is how you should be. Absolutely not, right? There is no compulsion in faith. The kids are not there to 'proselysize'; they are to share, right, and to feel secure in the classroom for being who they are.

So, when I was at the school board, the discussion was about what had happened in Quebec, where the teachers couldn't wear the hijab and many schools were also banning the hijab. And you called that meeting to pass a resolution that that will not happen in the school division here in Winnipeg. That was a proactive stance. This will never come to Winnipeg, hopefully, but at least we have it on record.

And when I went back and told my grandkids about it, they were so happy to know that they don't have to fear. Schools should be a place where children feel safe, no matter where they come from, no matter what the colour of their skin, no matter.

But when there is so much hatred being thrown at them and through social media, especially, these days, right? In my time, there was no social media. We were all good, right; we had to pick up the newspaper or something. But since 9/11, this steady rise of this kind of labelling of our faith and people who belong to their

faith—and I do, you know, hundreds of presentations all across Canada, to teachers and all—and what I hear from them when it's done is, I wish we had this information.

There is—yes, there is a separation—

The Chairperson: I hate to interrupt. The five minutes has passed.

Is there leave for Auntie Shahina to finish her comments? [Agreed]

Leave?

Okay, continue.

Auntie Shahina speaking.

S. Siddiqui: Okay. I'm at an age when I lose my thought. Thank you very much.

Okay, so anyway, so that's the whole thought process behind this. I mean, if we could have passed it in 2007 and, interestingly, by a backbencher who was from Quebec, and I think when he passed it, he could see what was coming, right?

So, you had that vision, Nellie has this vision. It is not for you and I. It is for the next generation. Good?

The Chairperson: Perfect. Thank you so much. We really appreciate it.

With questions concluded, I will now call on Mr. Albert El Tassi from Al Hijra Islamic School.

Mr. El Tassi, please proceed with your presentation.

Albert El Tassi (Al Hijra Islamic School): Peace be with you all. As-salamu alaykum.

My name Abdo El Tassi. I'm being called Albert, but my real name—my father gave me a name, Abdo El Tassi. I've been here for 55 years—almost 55 years.

I'm the chairman of the Islamic school, established in—28 years ago, one of the founders of the Islamic school.

Today I just wanted to thank the government for doing the heritage month for Islamic and especially Nellie, my niece, Nellie.

And Islamic goes back a long time ago, 1,445 years ago, as you all know the history of Islam, and brought a lot of heritage around the earth—around the world in there, where everything was established in the Middle East, is where I come from.

My grandfather landed in here in the late 1800s in New York. And so—and also, very early 1900s, Nellie's

grandfather also landed in here, so we go back a long time to this country, great country, what we call—what we live in, and we very proud to live in this country.

Having the heritage month, it's a great thing for the children of—all the Muslim children in Winnipeg, including our school, which we are very proud and we will deliver that to them and will bring it to their attention there—which they know a lot about the heritage of Islam, goes back to Ibn Sina.

The—Dr. Ibn Sina was—his books are still being delivered into all universities of North America and being taught. And many others, the Zamakhshari [*phonetic*] and many other scholars in there. And those are—we are very proud to go back to that history and liberate on it a little bit, which is—Europe has never seen the medical—'til 400 years later than what happened in Ibn Sina and Islamic—in Islamic history.

So, again, we're very proud of our heritage and especially when we were in Spain for 814 years ago, we left a lot of heritage in Spain. So, in here in Canada, we love what we see in here. We appreciate the country, and we appreciate having the—we had an Islamic month and now we have the heritage month also. So we are grateful for the government, for this government, for all the—all other government and the federal government and all—in all their colours in there because we live in a peaceful country, and we hope that country to remain peaceful as it is right now. And we see lots around the world, and we hope peace will prevail everywhere around the world.

And that's my statement.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have any questions?

We played it loose with the time restrictions with the first presenter. I will try and ask everyone to keep it to 30 seconds for questions and comments.

Mr. Khan: I want to just thank Uncle El Tassi for all the work he has done in this province, as well in the city, 55 years plus, one of the pioneers here. I think a lot of the foundation and the roots that are in the community due to you and to Shahina and various others who are here in this province.

So I, myself, as a first-generation Muslim, Canadian born, cannot thank you enough for the effort that you've made, for the sacrifices you have made and for the pride that you have that I get to carry around and walk—

The Chairperson: The member's time has expired.

Is there leave for the member to finish his question? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Khan: Apologize, Chair. I thought it was five minutes on the timer; I was looking at that. But it—30 seconds.

Quickly for you, similar to the lines—and you mentioned this. What does this mean to the students at Al Hijra Islamic School? How will they respond to this? What will there be—reaction and will there be a big party at Al Hijra Islamic School in celebrating this?

Floor Comment: Islamic school means a lot to me—

The Chairperson: Mr. El Tassi.

A. El Tassi: Okay, go ahead? Okay.

I always had—I come from an education. I was a school teacher and principal back home in Lebanon. So the school, Islamic school, any school, is in my mind there, I don't only support this school; I support many schools across Canada and across the Middle East in there. Education is very important. Without education we cannot get nowhere. Education is the light in the front of us, and therefore all civilization, there. Without education they can't get nowhere. So it's very important for me.

Since I came in here I was teaching also weekends in the University of Manitoba. I got a room in there, and I was teaching in the University of Manitoba for some kids. And it's in my head and my heart and in my mind, 'til 1996 where we established that—the school we live in, we have 207 children, and we're going to grow now. We're going to build more onto the school; going to get a gym into the school, and thanks to all the help we're getting from our government, the previous and the current government.

So the school is—means a lot to me, and I hope that we'll continue on; it'll be a found—endowment for that school to continue and to remain after we departure, me and the rest of the board, which is—we're getting all old.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia): *Arabic spoken. Translation unavailable.*

Shukran [*thank you*] for being here today. [*interjection*] Can you hear me now?

I just wanted to say thank you so much for being here today to present on what The Islamic Heritage

Month Act means to you in your capacity. I also want to thank, of course, Auntie Shahina, for being here as well.

I think what's really important, you were a very foundational person for me growing up, being Muslim and—

The Chairperson: Sorry, the member's time has expired.

Is there leave for the member to finish her question? *[Agreed]*

* (18:20)

MLA Kennedy: So, as I was saying, what I would like to say is, you know, I remember sitting in your living room, you know, many, many years ago, as you were talking about the Islamic social services agency coming together and you founding that, which was really incredible. It was just a seed, and now to see what it is is pretty remarkable.

As well, I remember the first mosque being built on Hazelwood and us, you know, knowing that, our families being some of the first founding families in Manitoba as Muslims. And so I just really want to put on record and thank you for your contributions in the Islamic community and for your leadership. It's greatly appreciated.

And Auntie Shahina as well, of course; both of you have been advocates and true champions, educating the public and the people about the rich Islamic heritage that we have here in Manitoba. So thank you very much to both of you.

The Chairperson: Mr. El Tassi.

A. El Tassi: Yes.

The Chairperson: You're welcome to respond if you'd like—if you'd like.

A. El Tassi: I didn't hear. Yes. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much for your presentation.

Next we will have Mr. Mian Hameed, from the Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association.

Mian Hameed (Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association): As-salamu alaykum, peace be on you.

I've been here in Canada for the last 50 years, and for the last 15 years I have been chair of Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association. And I want my community, the seniors of my community, to be positive, to be healthy. So I do some activities for them, arrange

activities for them to get out of their isolation and be involved with the community.

That's all I would say.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much.

Are there any questions from the committee?

Mr. Khan: I'll keep it—thank you, Honourable Speaker. I'll keep my comments short.

Uncle, thank you so much for coming today. It's always good to see you.

Again, the—looking at the three of them, you—the three were the first people I almost met here when I moved here in 2006. And to stay involved in the community and your family and to know everyone really feels the—an amazing accomplishment for the entire community, and that's owed a lot to you.

Within the seniors—Muslim Seniors Association, how will this feel to take this news back to them—I'm sure they've heard about this now, but how will everyone feel about this?

The Chairperson: Apologies, I was talking with our clerk.

Mr. Hameed.

M. Hameed: I feel that seniors in my community—when I say my community, Muslim seniors—when they get old, they are not that much socialize, and I felt that it is my responsibility, not quiet. But I—because I know a lot of people who are seniors now, and most of them are not active. They like to stay home, do nothing. So when I arrange some activities for them, I feel happy that, you know, people come out and they meet other people and stay healthy.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much.

Are there any other questions?

Well, thank you so much for your presentation.

We now have Mr. Tariq Jaleel, from the Islamic Circle of North America Canada, Winnipeg Chapter. Is there a Mr. Tariq Jaleel?

Seeing as he's not here, that concludes our presenters.

* * *

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with clause by clause of Bill 207.

Does the bill's—MLA for—Lagassé?

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Yes, I believe it's traditional in these committees to at least allow

opening remarks by the opposition critic and the individual who brought forward the bill?

The Chairperson: Yes, that was the next thing on the list.

Does the bill's sponsor, the honourable member for Assiniboia, have an opening statement?

MLA Kennedy: Just want to make sure everyone can hear me okay.

So this evening is a very special one, as we gather to discuss establishing October as Islamic heritage month in Manitoba. This initiative aims to honour and recognize the invaluable contributions of Muslim communities to the fabric of our province's diverse tapestry.

Manitoba's rich history is shaped by the diverse cultures and traditions of its people. Today, we pay tribute to the enduring legacy of Muslim individuals and communities who have played a pivotal role in shaping our province. From early immigrants who arrived in Manitoba in the early 1900s, to present-day citizens, Muslims have made meaningful contributions to every aspect of Manitoba society, be it in education, business, health care, arts or politics.

They came as labourers who worked the land or as students looking for a brighter future. These new Manitobans would come together and form the Manitoba Islamic Association, creating a space for those Muslims who called our province home and a place of belonging for newcomers of the Islamic faith.

What's important to highlight is the vast diversity amongst people who follow the tenets of Islam. People from Middle Eastern backgrounds, Asia and Africa, these folks come together under a common set of principals and have formed a community that contributes to Manitoba's cultural tapestry.

Manitoba is now home to over 20,000 Muslims, and as the population continues to grow, so do community gatherings for Friday prayers and projects, with the province's first mosque on Hazelwood being established in 1975.

Embracing Islamic heritage month is a celebration of diversity and inclusivity. It serves as a reminder of the importance of fostering understanding, respect and harmony among all Manitobans, regardless of their background or faith.

By commemorating Islamic heritage month, we reaffirm our commitment to building a society where

every individual feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute to the common good.

This bill also emphasizes the importance of education and awareness regarding Islamic heritage and culture. It provides an opportunity for Manitobans to learn about the rich tapestry of Islamic civilization, its contributions to human progress and its shared values of compassion, tolerance and social justice.

Through educational initiatives, public events and cultural exchanges, we can foster greater understanding and appreciation for the diverse perspectives that enrich our collective identity.

In conclusion, I encourage all of us to come together to honour the past, celebrate the present and build a future where diversity is embraced and inclusivity thrives. Together we can ensure Manitoba remains a welcoming and inclusive home for all its residents, regardless of their background or beliefs.

The Chairperson: We thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 207?

MLA Lagassé: So I would like to start out by thanking you for bringing forward this important bill. It is great any time we can acknowledge anyone's cultures and the inclusiveness of all this, and it—awareness is always a fantastic thing. Thank you for coming out and presenting tonight.

I can only speak to personal experiences, because that's what we are as MLAs, is a group of personal experiences, and I think back to my first foster child that I had in my home. And I had never really been exposed to the Muslim culture in any form or fashion, and they moved a little Muslim boy in with me. Being from a Métis background, it was a unique experience, and I had to learn a lot about the faith and the culture and know what was appropriate and what was not when dealing with this child.

So that was my first real exposure, and it—really, I can say it was a positive exposure, and I learned a lot from that.

I also have a niece and a nephew who are Muslim, and they've grown up—it—that way, so we've had that experience in our family as well.

I'm proud to call my colleague here beside me a friend, and he's also taught me a lot, and I really appreciate the member from Fort Whyte, so I will leave a little bit of time for him to speak, because this is near and dear to him.

The Chairperson: Do any other members have an opening statement?

Mr. Khan: Thank you to my colleague for his kind words, for his friendship over the years that I've been here and for all the work you've done, knowing or unknown, to the Muslim-Islamic community.

To the MLA across the way from Assiniboia, thank you for bringing this forward. It is very important that you brought this forward, and I'm really honoured that, you know, for all the, you know, I guess conflict or arguments we have in the House, that this can be unanimously supported by everyone. And that's really nice to see us, as legislators, come together for something important like this.

* (18:30)

And for the presenters in the room and that aren't in the room, thank you for all the work that you do in making this province better.

I'll keep my comments relatively short, and I'll speak more from a personal comment, as opposed to the historical that the MLA for Assiniboia did; a great job of explaining that, you know, I'm MLA and how it started and the pioneers, and he's with a mosque.

But when I first moved here in 2006, I was drafted by the Winnipeg Blue Bombers to come here, and there was a big article; I was No. 2 in the draft. I was never good enough to be No. 1, but No. 2, I guess. That's fine. Twice No. 2. Still a little bitter, but that's okay.

So I came to Winnipeg and I had no idea what to expect when this article released before. And I was very, and I am very proud, you know. Someone said yes, I'm a Muslim, I'm moving there. I don't know anybody. I don't know where to get halal food from. I don't know where to pray. I don't know anybody.

And when I got off the airplane people were in the old airport, come down the escalator and said welcome to Winnipeg, Obby. And there was a few Muslim brothers there. And today I'm still friends with them, and they said hey, we read the article. We want to greet you. Let's get you to some halal food. Let's get you to the mosque.

And from then I've been best friends with these fellows since, and that's a really warm feeling to know that we have that community everywhere, whether it be Uncle Abdo El Tassi or Auntie Shahina, or Uncle Mian Hameed, who I've had, you know, a thousand dinners at all their houses when I was a professional

football player; maybe not so much as a politician now, but more in community roles.

But that community, and I think this act coming forward by recognizing Islamic Heritage Month really does that, and it gives that on a level that all Muslims can be proud of, but also all Manitobans could be proud of.

For myself, my father, immigrants to Ottawa at— you know, in the early '70s, and, sadly, he's passed away. May he rest in peace.

Arabic spoken. Translation unavailable.

—that my father will look down and be very proud of how far we've come, although from Ontario and Manitoba, that we can recognize this in the Legislature as an inclusive diverse community where we are all celebrated together.

So I give my salam to my father and I hope he's looking down, you know, with a smile on his face. You know, it is really nice to see that now we have two Muslims in the Legislature that can bring forward very important things, because you have to have representation at the table if we're going to represent all of Manitoba. The diversity that we see across the Chamber is absolutely amazing and it gives me hope, even on sitting on this side of the line, that we can work together for a more inclusive Manitoba.

You know, in closing, I will say eid mubarak to everyone. It kind of came at the right time, the right time of the month that this could be done. In Ramadan there's a lot of barakatuh [*blessings*] in that, I think. I think Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala looks down at us and puts his blessings, that's what we barakatuh means, the Lord's blessings on this.

And, you know, it's a real opportunity for education as legislatures, as part of our role, to hear from our constituents and take messages forward. And I think having this discussion so fulsome in the Legislature really opened people's eyes to what Islam is really all about.

I'm kind of blown away that a lot of people didn't even know what Ramadan was, that I wasn't allowed to drink water, that we don't eat from sunrise to sunset. This brings education to the forefront, like Uncle Abdo El Tassi spoke about, and the more we speak about it, the more we are inclusive and diverse, the more people will know. The more education you have, the less stigma you have. You'll be able to combat Islamophobia, be able to combat misunderstandings.

So, again, thank you so much to the MLA from Assiniboia for bringing this forward, because education's going to get us out of whatever mess we're in together and not just when it comes to, you know, religion or whatever it may be. That's going to move us forward.

Lastly, I will say that it's been an honour for me to be an MLA to represent, you know, to work with the Muslim community. Previously Uncle Abdo El Tassi had acknowledged that, you know, previously under the government, when I was the minister of sport, culture and heritage, it was an honour, for the first time in the province's history, that money could flow to organizations where their mandate was different than what the money was being used for. And under that grant I think \$1.2 million went to the Al Hijra Islamic School to expand the community centre or the gymnasium to make it inclusive for everyone to play there, not just Muslims.

To the Waverley mosque—\$800,000 to again expand that community so that everyone from the community could come. I've seen, you know, the MLA from Fort Richmond there numerous times. Next time when the gym is done we'll play a game of basketball. And that's what you do by bringing community together.

Hazelwood Pioneer Mosque—the very, very first mosque in Manitoba. It was an honour for me, as the

previous minister, to—almost \$300,000 to upgrade that community kitchen.

These are type of commitments that I was honoured to be part of, in the previous government. I hope that the new government will take that forward, and it sounds like they may, with this first step in the right direction. And I really look forward to actions from this government in supporting the diversity in this province.

So on that note, I will say thank you all very much for coming, and that's it. It's a great day, and thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Do any other members have opening statements?

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The hour being 6:36, this committee is—[interjection]

Oh, sorry; what is the will of the committee? Is it the will of the committee to rise? [Agreed]

Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 6:36 p.m.

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