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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we'd like to call Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police—I'm sorry—Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave to see Bill 208 at second reading, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to deal with bill—second reading of Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 208—The Royal Canadian
Mounted Police Day Act**

Madam Speaker: It has been determined by the House that the House will deal with second reading of Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), that Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act, be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise to speak to this important bill. The Mountie and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, have become one of Canada's most recognizable symbols. This bill formally establishes a day to acknowledge the services and the

sacrifices that these brave men and women of the RCMP have done and continue to do in Manitoba, as well as in Canada.

February 1st is also the day that the RCMP were formed by merging the Dominion Police and the North West Mounted Police forces. The men and women of the RCMP serve Canadians with distinction and give much in terms of service and sacrifice to our communities.

Bill 208 will establish February 1st as a day of commemoration, respect, thanks and appreciation for the work that the men and women of the RCMP have done to protect and serve this nation and the province of Manitoba.

Some of the background of the RCMP, Madam Speaker, is in order, I believe. In May of 1873, the Parliament of Canada established a police force named the North West Mounted Police to implement law in the newly acquired lands in western Canada. And this was caused by a terrible situation in Manitoba where 100 people were assassinated by a gang of wolf hunters. And so the prime minister of the time commissioned the North West Mounted Police, and they were dispatched to Manitoba in two different groups.

So Sir John A. sent the first group. They came from Lake of the Woods to Lower Fort Garry, and they spent the winter of 1873,1874 there and then moved down to Fort Dufferin where they were also met with a group who had left Toronto, on June 6th, 1874, travelling via Chicago, St. Paul and Fargo. And they arrived at Fort Dufferin June 16th, 1874. A severe lightning storm the next night stampeded the horses. This, along with malfunctioning side arms, delayed their departure heading west until July 8th, 1874.

So, Madam Speaker, to just give you a little bit of background as well, and to the House, there is an organization in southern Manitoba that works with the Fort Dufferin group. It's a post heritage road group, and they have been restoring Fort Dufferin because that's where everyone was to meet and was—and did leave on June 8th, moving west—or July 8th, excuse me.

And so they were—the North West Mounted Police were sent to the frontier to maintain law

and order as settlers arrived and to establish friendly relationships with the First Nations. The North West Mounted Police were instructed to build a series of posts across the west. And, just so that no one is confused, Fort Dufferin was really not a fort that they were building; it was already there and it wasn't used to defend the west.

The North West Mounted Police became—began its famous march west. The Boundary Commission provided them with an established road west and invaluable information on what lay ahead. In a column three kilometres long, the North West Mounted Police marched out of Fort Dufferin on July 8th. It was an impressive sight, the men in their scarlet uniforms and white helmets. Each division had its own colour of horses: "A" Troop had dark beige, "B" had dark browns, "C"s had chestnuts, "D"s had greys and "E"s on the blacks and "F"s on the light beige, and wagons took up the rear.

The North West Mounted Police commander, Colonel George Arthur French, described this—their departure: To a stranger, it would have appeared an astonishing cavalcade, armed men and guns looked as if fighting was to be done. What could ploughs, harrows, moving machines, cows, calves, et cetera be for?

But that little force had a double duty: to perform, to fight, if necessary, but, in any case, to establish posts in the far west and law and order.

* (10:10)

In 1919, the Parliament of Canada voted to form a national police force by merging the North West Mounted Police of western Canada and the Dominion Police of eastern Canada on February 1st, 1920. This newly named police force was named the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. And today—Manitoba's provincial police was absorbed also into the RCMP in 1932, and from 1932 to 1938 the size of the RCMP nearly doubled to 2,350 members.

Today, in 2016, the RCMP's 28,400 employees' scope of services, operations include organized crime, terrorism, illicit drugs, countering economic crimes, helping youth, supporting indigenous communities and offences that threaten the integrity of the Canadian national borders.

The RCMP has continued to grow as a police force, having jurisdiction in eight provinces and three territories, and throughout its national police service offers resources to other Canadian law

enforcement agencies, including the CBSA at the border.

The RCMP also has a proud military history. Since the 19th century, members of the RCMP have supported operations and participated in conflicts such as the South African war from 1899 to 1902, the First World War, the Second World War, and continues to support United Nations' peace operations throughout the world.

So, Madam Speaker, 1874 was the starting point of the great march to the west and the North West Mounted Police and, as I've pointed out, it has now grown from 300—a force of 300 at the time to 28,400 members and/or support staff.

The Post Road Heritage Group, they have a mandate to preserve and promote Fort Dufferin's heritage for visitors to explore and appreciate. Their events help promote the site by setting up hands-on pioneer activities to make history become alive, and their artifacts and displays help visitors imagine life at Fort Dufferin in the 1800s. They have gone through a number of different restoration projects that are ongoing, but the RCMP have been an integral part of their projects there.

So, with this—those few words, Madam Speaker, I would just like to commend all of the members that were able to attend with us today and thank them very much and also give every member in this House the opportunity to thank the RCMP for what they—where they came from and what they have done for us and what they continue to do going forward.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: And I do see the red serge in the gallery, and on behalf of all members here, we would like to welcome you here, and I hope I can just add a comment personally that my stepfather is a retired RCMP and a very proud veteran.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party. This has to be followed by a rotation between the parties. The independent member can ask a question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): And, Madam Speaker, I believe you stole some of my thunder, but that's all right. I was actually going to ask the

member for Emerson if he could introduce the members in the gallery to all members so we can appreciate their attendance today.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I could if I could remember their names. I'm sorry, but I don't have them in front of me, but I will get them before the hour is over. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Any questions for the member?

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Can I ask the member of Emerson why he wanted to bring this bill forward to the House, and why is it important to the people of Manitoba at this particular time?

Mr. Graydon: This Bill 208, it highlights the needs and the importance of recognizing and promoting awareness of the historical and ongoing role of the RCMP in Canada. And I thought it was appropriate because what we have is a lot of young people that do not know the history of the RCMP. And I can recall when I was a young man, speeding and being pulled over. I wasn't interested in their history. It's important that we acknowledge history.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, we know that the RCMP play an important role in many northern communities and many First Nations, and in some cases members are putting themselves in harm's way to protect some of our most vulnerable.

So I'm just wondering if the member from Emerson can comment on the role RCMP play in supporting our isolated and northern communities in Manitoba.

Mr. Graydon: That's a very good question. What we find is in southern Manitoba most communities have their own police force. In the North, in a lot of communities the only people that are visible are the RCMP, and they do a great job of working in all of the communities, not just working to bring law and order, but also to participate in the communities with the young people and help the young people, help guide the people in the communities. I believe that they do and play a very important role.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I was fortunate to spend a 21-year career in health-care security, and I got the great privilege of working with the RCMP from the US border to Mafeking, Saskatchewan border to Treherne. I also worked with a lot of police forces in between with the city police and regional.

I'm wondering if the member from Emerson could tell us why he is singling out the great work of the RCMP.

Mr. Graydon: Why I was thinking of the RCMP, of course, is because of the fact that Fort Dufferin is in our community. I'm also a bit of a history buff, and I'd like to say that the commander in 1874 has the same last name as my mother's maiden name. Thank you.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): In Kewatinook our band constable programs were slashed severely. Our only resource now is to utilize the RCMP, but we have 12-hour response times in certain communities and that's just not right. What can you say to that?

Mr. Graydon: I certainly sympathize with a lot of the communities. Response times are always important if it happens to be your situation or in your riding, as it is in this particular case. It's not something that I have control over and it's—I believe it's something that we should look forward to and to address. But at this time I don't have a solution for the member. Thank you.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): What kind of cultural sensitivity training is available in the RCMP regarding Sikhs and their religious symbols?

Mr. Graydon: As the Speaker knows, I have a bit of a hearing impairment and I wasn't exactly sure what the member asked, so if you could translate that for me.

Mr. Saran: Okay, let me speak Punjabi. What kind of cultural sensitivity training is available in the RCMP regarding Sikhs and religious symbols?

Mr. Graydon: There is, I believe, in the RCMP all cultures are represented—if that was part of the question—and I believe they're all represented throughout Canada, not just Manitoba but throughout Canada. All cultures are represented. The training for many are in Regina and the symbols of the RCMP—I should know what the GRC stands for but I don't. Thank you.

* (10:20)

Ms. Klassen: I believe that the government should work to get the answer. Our RCMP officers in our communities are also severely underfunded.

What response do you have to that?

Mr. Graydon: I don't know the funding of the RCMP and I don't know if the funding changes. I do believe it does change from southern Manitoba to northern Manitoba—or northern Canada, if you're doing northern duty. But I do not know the exact

funding, and when the member brings up they're underfunded, perhaps she could be more specific.

Mr. Kinew: Under the previous NDP government, after the federal Conservatives slashed the band constable program, the provincial government stepped in with funding for what is called the First Nations safety officer program.

Does the member from Emerson support his government enhancing this sort of program or providing additional dollars, which of course would lead to a safer and more supportive environment for RCMP officers when they are deployed in the North or in First Nations communities?

Mr. Graydon: I thank the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for that question, and at this point I don't know that that has been explored. But, if he would want to bring this forward at another time, I'm sure that we could have a discussion on it. Thank you.

Ms. Klassen: I was privy to actually attend the apology on behalf of Commissioner Bob Paulson recently at the Assembly of First Nations, and I have really appreciated that apology because he specifically stated that he knows that there are racists in his RCMP task force.

What can be done to address this issue?

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

And I don't know that there is racism within the task force, but I am sure that if there is, that it will be addressed internally. It's not something that we can do externally. But I'm sure that if any of the members are aware of it, that they will address that internally with the proper authorities.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I want to acknowledge Assistant Deputy Commissioner Scott Kolody up in the gallery today, only because he and I were once hockey parents together and so we hung out in a lot of rinks together.

But I want to ask the member if he could tell us about the inspiration for the bill and what he hopes to accomplish by having this pass in the House.

Mr. Graydon: And as I said before, the inspiration comes because of history: that we need to acknowledge history and we need to do that repeatedly so that people don't forget—we don't forget what the RCMP do today but where they came from as well. Not just because it was from the Emerson riding but

their history throughout the years, throughout over 100 and some years now, 140 years, that the history that has built the law enforcement team of men and women who put their lives on the line daily and how they work within our communities. I think that's important that all Manitobans recognize that. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is now open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It is indeed an honour to speak to this bill, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police act, and I think I can take away any of the tension to let the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) know that the NDP opposition caucus will be supporting this bill.

Madam Speaker, I should give full disclosure to you and all other members of the House that the member for Emerson and I actually spent Sunday morning together just this past weekend. We actually spent the morning together pretty much in the shadow of the RCMP Division "D" headquarters watching playoff football. I was there to support a number of fine, young men and women who play for the Valour Patriots, and the member for Emerson was there to support a fine, young man who he calls his grandson, who was playing for the North Winnipeg Nomads. And we were cheering for different teams, but, as I've said, I believe we're on the same team today standing shoulder to shoulder with the men and women of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

I should also give full disclosure, Madam Speaker, that the member for Emerson bought me a hot chocolate which has in no way influenced our decision today to support this. Unfortunately, the member doesn't know the West End very well so he wound up having a lengthy expedition, maybe almost as long as the great march west to find coffee and hot chocolate. Had he asked me, I could have directed him to the nearby Tim Horton's. He could have gone and spoken to the employees who, of course, had their union automatically certified after the employer had made some difficulties.

But I digress, except to say that, of course, is the Tim Horton's where not only the MLAs for Wolseley and Minto go, but you will not be surprised to see certain members of Division "D" heading across Portage Avenue-Dominion to get their coffee fix.

Now, the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) provided a history of the RCMP and its forerunner, the North West Mounted Police. I won't repeat what was said, except to say that I believe that February 1st, which is the day in the bill, seems to be an appropriate day to recognize the RCMP as it was on the day in 1920 that the RCMP was really created by the absorption of the Dominion Police service which served most of eastern Canada into the Royal North West Mounted Police. I'll speak more about the present and the future of the RCMP which is not only the national police service, but our provincial police service as well.

I think it's fair to say, Madam Speaker, that Manitoba is not an easy province to police because of its large physical size, the way that the communities are dispersed across the depth and breadth of this wonderful province. Many communities are located down lengthy stretches of paved or unpaved highways and roads, and as we know there are still many communities that are not connected to the provincial all-weather road network at all.

While some communities like Winnipeg, Brandon, Morden-Winkler, Altona, and Ste. Anne maintain municipal police forces, there are many of our largest Manitoba cities, including Thompson, Steinbach, Portage, Dauphin, The Pas and Flin Flon, and virtually other parts of the province that are policed by the RCMP. And, in fact, the RCMP will tell you they actually have responsibility for policing in 99 per cent of Manitoba.

Even in Winnipeg there's an important role of the RCMP, not only because of Division "D" headquarters at Portage and Dominion, because of their role as the national police force and also their co-operation with the Winnipeg Police Service to protect our citizens. The RCMP contingent is more than 700 officers working in communities, and more out of Division "D" headquarters.

Many—I've had many opportunities to have the chance to understand the work and the training that RCMP members have. That began even before my election to this House when I had the opportunity to meet a number of members in the course of my work as a lawyer. And as I have always told people, police officers are excellent clients because they follow instructions and they take very, very good notes. But in all seriousness, Madam Speaker, I understand from practising family law and having met many police officers, I truly understand the particular stresses that a career in policing puts on families, and

I think that's something that all members of this House have to appreciate and understand.

As some members aware that my wife's brother, David [*phonetic*], is an RCMP officer currently serving in Regina—while in Manitoba, he served in Manitou, Oakbank and Selkirk, as well as various roles at Division "D" headquarters. The RCMP has certainly been the right career for him and we're proud of what he's achieved, just as the families of every single member who's with us today in the gallery are very proud of the work that they do.

Now, as legislative assistant to the Minister of Justice from 2004 until 2008, and then as Minister of Justice from 2009-2014, I had perhaps, an—one of the most excellent chances you can get in this province to learn more about the work of the RCMP.

As MLAs, of course we come here without any particular training for the job that we do. It is the exact opposite for members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The depot in Regina is where every single RCMP member in Canada, wherever they may work, has been trained to a high standard. At the invitation of the former assistant commissioner, Kevin Brosseau, I had the opportunity to attend a depot in Regina, and I was able to receive a really good view—perhaps a crash course—in everything that an RCMP recruit goes through and has gone through in the time that the depot has been in Regina, which is almost 100 years. Of course, recruits receive intensive classroom instruction on the law and on the theories of policing, intensive firearms training, martial arts and self-defence training, daunting physical training, including simulation of entering residences to secure people's safety and even driving and, of course, the seemingly endless preparation of their kit and, in particular, the shining of their boots. And I had a chance to learn more about just how much of a young recruit's life is spent on that important task.

* (10:30)

I don't think former assistant commissioner Brosseau, who's now serving in Ottawa, will mind me telling you that he still shudders every time he sees the swimming pool at Depot in Regina, as it forms part of a very difficult physical challenge with other members here in the gallery today may corroborate.

While in Regina, I was also able to tour the barracks where recruits live and take part in a very moving and very historic graduation ceremony, after

which graduates take up their new assignments in Canada from coast to coast to coast.

The training is standard and at a high level so that Canadians can have confidence in the level of policing they receive. I was proud to work with assistant commissioners Darrell Madill, Bill Robinson, Kevin Brosseau and, of course, Scott Holiday, who served as the CROPS officer in Manitoba for several years before his well-deserved promotion earlier this year.

Sometimes those days were easier than others, including some efforts on road safety, when I spent some frigid days out with RCMP officers, helping to pull over traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway or the Perimeter Highway.

Course, as I've said, the RCMP works carefully and closely with the Winnipeg Police Service. For example, the Warrant Enforcement Unit is a combined effort of the RCMP and the Winnipeg Police Service to help deal with those who don't follow court orders and don't attend at court. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that following along with this unit for a shift is enough to get anybody's heart rate up. Although they did suggest I stay well back with the supervisor, I still had my feet going. And although it's been a long time since I tackled anybody on the football field, my adrenaline was certainly pumping in case somebody came through the door, which thankfully did not happen.

I've also had the chance to visit northern communities and see some of the challenges that other members, in this House, have asked about today. I'm proud of our efforts to provide the RCMP with more resources. The complement went from fewer than 600 in 1999 to more than 700 by earlier this year, not counting those contract positions with municipalities.

As well, the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund, which is the place where we put the money we take away from the bad guys, can be used to give money to the good guys, like the people sitting up in the gallery, to buy equipment, to pay for specialized training and provide support for initiatives like the DARE program, which help the RCMP to educate young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Through laws passed in this Chamber and by advocating for better laws in Ottawa, we tried to assist the RCMP in carrying out their tasks. Some examples of that are changing the rules on reporting vehicle accidents so that RCMP officers and other

police officers don't have to take reports that people are going to make to MPI anyway. We also, I'm very pleased, that, finally, by a combined effort, we're able to change the law to allow RCMP officers to release patients having mental health issues to appropriate medical personnel. We all look forward to that fully coming into effect, and, of course, to get Manitobans to slow down when passing officers doing their work at roadside.

As to the future, I believe the future of the RCMP in Manitoba is bright. While debate about the cost of policing is fair, especially—even though Manitoba's crime rate has fallen greatly over the past 15 years, calls for service to police have not, due to mental health and addictions concerns. The RCMP is and likely always will be responsible for maintaining law and order in the vast majority of our province.

I hope as members we can use this as an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to make things easier for RCMP officers. It is a great career. And perhaps we can all work in our own communities to encourage more young people to consider a career in policing. A police force should truly reflect the face of the communities that it serves. And I know there's more we can do in Manitoba to make sure that indigenous people and new Canadians also feel they have a place in the RCMP. And certainly I pledge to do my part.

So I thank the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) for bringing forward this bill, and indeed we—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, I'd like to start by thanking the member from Emerson for bringing forward this important bill. This bill, I'm glad to hear that the opposition will be supporting it, because it has, this bill has really nothing to do with funding or with—it's about what the RCMP have done in Manitoba.

This bill formally establishes a day to acknowledge the services and sacrifices that the brave men and women of the RCMP have done and continue to do so in Manitoba, as well as Canada.

The men and women of the RCMP serve Canadians with distinction, give much in terms of service and sacrifice to our communities. Bill 208 will establish February 1st as a day of commemoration, respect, thanks, and appreciation for the

work that the men and women of the RCMP have done to protect and serve this nation and province of Manitoba.

In an ever-changing world, the job of an RCMP officer is not getting any easier. Even though they may be better equipped than they have ever been, the criminal they face today seems to have no respect for authority or life. An officer never knows when someone will open up fire on them, putting their life at risk.

I know several people involved in law enforcement and they do deserve to get recognition for all they have done to protect and serve this nation and the province of Manitoba.

My colleague from Emerson gave a history of the RCMP. I will not repeat it because he did a fine job of doing that, but what I will say, it is important for us to recognize what the RCMP have done and have done in the past. History is something that's extremely important to us and this day that we will recognize them will always stay and it will be a reminder for everybody of the history of the RCMP.

I did get an email with the members' names that are up in the gallery: Commanding Officer Scott Kolody, Inspector Joanne Keeping, Chief Superintendent Mark Fisher, Sergeant Brian Edmonds, Staff Sergeant Major Wayne Foster, Superintendent Darcy Fleury, Photographer Letitia Sherry [*phonetic*].

It's interesting because a number—it is a small world today because we have members from the RCMP who happen to be here today. One of the members used to be an officer in my area of Vita. She was stationed in Emerson, and now is actually the superintendent that looks after Emerson in the southeast.

One of the other officers was—knows my brother very well, so it is a small world, and it's important that we maintain our respect and our, you know, to make sure that we all know what an important job they do.

So I'd like to thank them for being here today because it's an honour to have them here today, and I'm sure there's other members who would like to say a few words put on record in regards to them.

Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So I just wanted to say a couple of words for the record. Of course, I wholeheartedly support this well-deserved

recognition and I just wanted to put on the record that I've had the most amazing opportunities to work with Assistant Commissioner Scott Kolody for many, many years, and I wanted to just put it on the record that in my previous job as the Director of Justice for Southern Chiefs' Organization, a lot of the work that I did was in respect of Aboriginal police relations, and the long-standing relationship of policing in Canada, and that—you know, my job wasn't always the easiest of jobs and it was for me to be able to advocate for indigenous peoples in Manitoba, and I learned very soon in my tenure as that director of justice that we can either continue to fight one another, or we can come to the table in a good way and understand that we have different perspectives, different experiences and come to a better understanding of one another.

* (10:40)

And so very early on I shifted my focus into trying to work with both the Winnipeg city police and the RCMP here in Manitoba, "D" Division, and I just want to say that I have been able and I have been blessed to establish really good working relationships and friendships with policing members in both the WPS and the RCMP, and one of them is Scott Kolody, and I have just an enormous amount of respect for him. And I want to put it on the record that he is respectful and he is humble, and he stands in truth and courage. And any day, I want to just take this opportunity to acknowledge that.

I also just want to very quickly take a moment to acknowledge the very, very emotionally and physically and spiritually difficult work of the task force on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls here in Manitoba that is housed in "D" Division in partnership with the RCMP and the WPS. I just want to officially note that the people that work on these files I know are good people and are committed to finding resolution in respect to the files that they do have housed there. And so, you know, I had the privilege of doing a tour of their office there, and for people that don't know that when you go into the task force space, you know, on their walls, they have pictures of all of the young women and girls that they are trying to find resolution and closure for the families. And, you know, it's something that they look on every day.

And I just want to officially recognize it because I think that in some respects, particularly on the files of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, there's this dichotomy that there's this belief

that not enough work is being done, and there is work being done. At the end of the day, families want closure, but I also just want to take a moment today on this day just to acknowledge that very difficult work. And, again, I just want to say congratulations to everyone, and I love you, Scott, you're just amazing.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I stand proud to say that our—I stand proud today to say that our Liberal team will be supporting Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act. When I think of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, I think of the pride that overflows in us because of the service and sacrifice that they continue to provide to our communities. The RCMP are incredibly noteworthy here in Canada and are known as one of the elite law enforcement agencies around the world.

Our RCMP have an exceptionally positive reputation, and this reputation continues to grow as the number of our RCMP officials do. Their reputation is based off what they undertake towards enforcement against organized crime, terrorism, illicit drugs, economic crimes and offenses that threaten the integrity of Canada's national borders. They are helpful, respectful and courteous.

On top of all this, our RCMP are symbolic. They resonate with tourists; they provide protection and they uphold Canadian values. We will see members of the RCMP on special occasions such as citizenship ceremonies or as security when royalty is nearby or for our national events such as Canada Day and even here in the gallery today. The idea of recognizing and celebrating the RCMP on February 1st each year is an honourable idea.

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending a citizenship ceremony with our federal Minister of Immigration, John McCallum. It was a beautiful ceremony filled with happiness, gratitude and inspiration. Amongst all of this stood two RCMP officers. We've all experienced their presence and the sense of security, calmness and pride that comes with them. This is something very special and something we should all be particularly proud of.

I cannot speak for everyone, but I am—I can happily vouch for the RCMP officers who I have had the privilege of getting to know throughout my life. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly mention a mentor of mine who is a former RCMP officer as well as the former MLA for The Maples, Mr. Gary Kowalski. Gary, as he would insist that I call him, has known me since I was probably two years old.

He is an admirable man because of his genuine desire to make our community the best that it can be. Through all his careers, efforts and continued volunteerism, Gary fights for the rights of Manitobans. I honestly believe that the majority of RCMP officers are similar to Gary in their activism and that not only enforce laws, but they are some of the best volunteers because of their commitment to wanting to genuinely serve the community.

In closing, it is worth mentioning how all Manitoban governments have come together in supporting the RCMP. Just two short years ago, under the NDP government, on November 28th, 2014, there were amendments made to Enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police Accountability Act, as well as the new Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP. These changes provide RCMP leaders with enhanced authorities to address inappropriate behaviour in a fair, consistent, timely and comprehensive manner.

Now our new government are wanting to recognize February 1st every year as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day. I would like to commend the RCMP for their commitments to Canada, for their excellent work and all their contributions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Madam Speaker, I believe we're almost ready to call a vote, but I would like to put some comments on the record if I may.

My brother serves in the RCMP, and so I'm very honoured to acknowledge that in this House and also to say that there is—I certainly welcome the opportunity for us to honour those members who put their lives on the line, who serve us. And very often, we take these things for granted until something goes wrong. And I think it is the safety, the good things that happen, the things that we—the streets we drive on that are safe and so many other things which we take for granted which must be acknowledged, in part—large part—to their fine work. I'd like to honour them, acknowledge them, not only individually but as a force noted around the world for their good work.

And certainly, I believe there's will in this House. We do not take that for granted and we thank them, and we are very privileged to live in this country and to honour those who secure our

freedoms and safety, is something I'm happy to see all of us getting around. So, I believe you will find leave to call the question.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 208, the royal Canadian mounted day police act.

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): I request a recorded vote.

Madam Speaker: The request for a recorded vote, on Tuesdays, they cannot be done. Those votes are deferred until Thursday.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to rule 33, subsection 11, I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen). The title of this resolution is Recognition of the Importance of Integrated Service Delivery for the Support of Children and Families in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Kewatinook. The title of the resolution is Recognition of the Importance of Integrated Service Delivery for the Support of Children and Families in Manitoba.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave of this House to call it 11 o'clock.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 7—Support for Manitoba Fishers

Madam Speaker: We will now move on to private members' resolutions.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): I move, seconded by the honourable member from Swan River,

WHEREAS the Provincial Government unequivocally believes in the significance of rural economies and the important role of Freshwater Fisheries; and

WHEREAS many marketing opportunities, both domestic and international, are available to Manitoba fishers and their high quality catch; and

WHEREAS these enhanced marketing opportunities for Manitoba fishers will revolutionize the industry and grow the province's economy; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government made a commitment to Manitoba fishers during the last provincial election to support freshwater fishers' freedom to make their own individual marketing decisions; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government will allow Manitoba fishers to voluntarily participate in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize that enhanced marketing opportunities will ultimately grow the province's economy and enhance Manitoba's fishers' incomes, resulting in a net benefit to their families.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli, seconded by the honourable member for the Interlake,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize that the enhanced marketing opportunities will ultimately grow the province's economy and enhance Manitoba fishers' incomes, resulting in a net benefit to their families.

* (10:50)

Mr. Wharton: It is my honour today to rise in the House to support an industry that is so important to Manitoba's economy. We know that many marketing opportunities, both domestic and international, are available to Manitoba fishers, yet due to the controls and restrictions of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, FFMC, local fishers are being denied market access.

During the last provincial election, our party promised Manitobans to open marketing of Manitoba's freshwater fish based on the potential to increase fishers' incomes. After years of consultations and listening to those out of Manitoba's waterways, we are here to support—we are here in support of our fishers. Under the previous administration, the NDP didn't care to consult with their hard-working fishers. Conservation and wildlife management was never a priority under the NDP

government. The 2015 budget saw \$10 million in cuts to what is now the Department of Sustainable Development out of a \$20 million that was cut since 2011 under the NDP.

We recognize that Manitoba's fisheries are an important part of our provincial economy. Creating flexible marketing options will help fishers achieve greater earning potential.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to table some pictures regarding this resolution.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba fisheries are an important part of the provincial economy. Creating flexible marketing options will help fishers achieve greater earning potential. The pictures that I've just tabled for the House show a number of rough fish that we call that are being discarded every year to the tune of millions of pounds of rough fish that aren't suitable for market under the current monopoly of FFMC.

Under the NDP, they—first of all, they raised the fuel by 2.5 cents in 2011, which put more challenges on fishers and basically raised the input costs for doing business for fishers. With limited market and not being able to market their rough fish, this put more stress on fishers and their families. Well, under the NDP, again, they also broadened the PST, which also took more challenges and more—put more pressure on the actual—on the fishers and their families. After broadening it, they raised it by 8 per cent—by 1 per cent to a total of 8 per cent, Madam Speaker. This has put a real burden on our Manitoba fishers.

We have now named a fisheries envoy, Signature Mediation, which will help develop the new process that will allow Manitoba fishers to withdraw from Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The fisheries envoy will assist fishers and communities to take advantage of their new marketing opportunities by aiding fishers in independently marketing their own harvest. Our PC government values the economic benefits of freshwater fisheries. We are allowing fishers to voluntarily—voluntarily participate in FFMC if they believe it is the best market option for their product. Manitoba fishers will now be able to choose where they market their catch.

Madam Speaker, this takes me back to the pictures that I tabled earlier in the House, and I'll draw a comparison to the industry that I come from, and that's the transportation industry, where in the industry we've had to evolve over years as well as

markets changed and different pressures came on to us, whether it be increased taxes, increased fuel costs, input costs were going through the roof. So we had to be very diversified in our business in order to continue to grow because without growth, quite frankly, you end up either losing your business or simply just giving up. So, in drawing the comparison, I talk about a shipment called an LTL shipment, which is less than a trailer load. For years, we were hauling trailer loads of shipments across Canada and the US, and that was kind of the norm, where we would fill up a trailer with a product and take it to market to the end user.

With the fishers' current monopoly situation, I draw the parallel in the sense that what's happening is fishers have a number of species that they can draw from from our lakes across Manitoba. They can draw from saugers, to carp, to tullibee, and to pickerel and whitefish, we have a number of species that are available to us. However, the rough fish are not—they're not able to be marketed appropriately by the current system.

So that system is failing the fishers in the sense that if they want to be diversified, they can't have the opportunity to find and search out those markets that will subsequently help them and their families get a better return on investment. So we are proud of our new government's initiative.

Going back several years that—when we were talking and consulting the fishers and stakeholders, that this would give them an option now to increase revenues, put more money in the pockets of Manitoba fishers and their families as they continue to grow their industry.

It's sad, Madam Speaker, that we actually, we have an industry that has lost a generation. We're hearing from fishers that, quite frankly, fisher's families are not getting involved in it anymore simply because the return on investment and input costs are far too high. With greater market freedom and market choice, this will give our fishers the opportunity now to market their fish to any market in the world, and of course, recognize better return on their investment.

I'd like to just at this point go to a couple of stakeholders' quotes as well if I may, Madam Speaker, and this is fishers that are currently still fishing but have struggled with the current monopoly. And I quote Amanda Stevenson, the economic opportunity for our fishermen in the province being able to sell outside of a monopoly—I

can't overstate it—it's tremendous. And that was Amanda Stevenson back in August 26, 2016.

Another quote here as well from a Fairford fisher, we have a lot of hopes here, but if we are all very careful and work together, we hope that this move will better—will be better for everyone including all our fishers. Madam Speaker, that's just a couple of quotes that I have on record here from fishers that are excited about the change that this government is moving forward with with the fishers and they're looking forward to having that opportunity to do that.

The FFMC rules were created before Canada became 100 years old. As Canada's 150th birthday approaches, I am proud to say we're bringing this initiative into the 21st century, Madam Speaker. This is only one step that our new Progressive Conservative government's plan on rebuilding our economy, fixing our finances and repairing our services.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to bring this resolution forward, and I look forward to any questions as well from the opposition.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence. The first question may be asked by a member from another party. Any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Are there any questions?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): My first question, I guess, is, how does the government plan to ensure that the freshwater fish population won't be depleted?

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): I thank the member from Flin Flon for the question.

As far as Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, we are giving the fishers an opportunity to market their catch, specifically—thank you—when it comes to all species of fish at their own will. They can choose a market that's going to best benefit them and their families. Freshwater Fish Marketing board will be an option for them going forward.

* (11:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I'd like to follow up on the question asked by the member for Flin Flon. It's been known that the Lake Winnipegosis pickerel fishery has been in terrible shape for decades, and this has resulted in millions and millions of dollars of losses to fishermen because there are not as many fish to catch because of the poor management of the fishery on Lake Winnipegosis. And there is a concern that, whatever happens, that we need to make sure that the fishery, the pickerel fishery on Lake Winnipegosis is restored to health.

What are—what is the plans to ensure that that is part of whatever happens to the future of fisheries in lake—in Manitoba?

Mr. Wharton: I thank the member from River Heights for the question. We have, as of yesterday, announced that we do—we have hired a fisheries envoy that will lead us in the negotiations with the federal government during the transition of opening the market and consult with our fishers, our processors and our stakeholders on related issues over the next several months. During the negotiations, the envoy will work to protect the financial and fisheries' interest for the Province of Manitoba. We feel that the envoy will be addressing those issues that the member from River Heights has addressed today.

Mr. Lindsey: What ongoing supports will the government be offering to fishers who could very well be losing their livelihoods because of this change?

Mr. Wharton: Actually, on the contrary, this will give fishers the opportunity, especially in our North, where unemployment is ranging anywhere from 22 to 33 per cent, to actually get back into an industry that they're so familiar with, where there are families and generations of fishers working for years that have gotten away from it simply for the fact that there was no return on investment. So we're excited about it. And I know our fishers in the North are very excited about the potential for new jobs and steady growth as they go forward.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I'd like to ask: When will Manitoba fishers begin or be able to sell their product to other buyers?

Mr. Wharton: I'd like to thank the member from Swan River for the question. And on August 16th, the Province of Manitoba provided notice to the federal government, of course, that we would be

withdrawing our participation from the arrangement with Freshwater Fish Marketing Act, and this transition is expected to take approximately one year to implement. We'll be working with, in collaboration with, our federal counterparts to ensure that we have a smooth transition with the help of the envoy as well.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): In the Island Lake area, where I'm from, after the subsidy was cut, the fishermen now had to pay for the transportation to market. They then only made \$1.25 per pound, if that.

How is this government going to support these fishermen to ensure that profits are realized for the Island Lake area?

Mr. Wharton: I'd like to thank the member for the question as well. As I mentioned earlier, this is going to give the fishers, specifically in the North, a wonderful opportunity to recognize all species of fish and to ensure that the costs of transportation—and as I mentioned in my opening remarks, by raising the PST and raising fuel by 2.5 cents a litre back in 2012, those costs became prohibitive for fishers in the North to get their fish and their catch down to market. So we know that they can go ahead now with the opportunity to get those fish, rough fish and other species to market and recognize a profit.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I can appreciate that the member opposite, maybe by just by virtue of his constituency—I apologize, I don't know much about his own background—I can appreciate, though, that he does have quite a bit of knowledge with regards to freshwater fish marketing with regards to those fishers on Lake Winnipeg.

I'm just wondering, in terms of consultation, I noticed that this was a campaign announcement, a campaign platform announcement, and I'm wondering what consultation was done before that announcement was made, before the election, to reach out to all fishers in this province?

Mr. Wharton: I thank the member opposite for the question as well. Over the last several years, we've had a number of discussions with stakeholders, fishers, along likes of all of Manitoba, as we've been out on the waterways, we've been actually, quite frankly, at the doors, speaking with fishers during, not only the campaign of this past April, but the campaign during 2011 where we had the opportunity to get to the doors and speak to all Manitobans. And I can tell you that in the Interlake, specifically

northern Manitoba, there are some challenges with the fishery. And the fisheries—the fishers are telling us that, quite frankly, having an opportunity to get their fish to market, in a market of their choice, will be a benefit to all fishers and their families.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Why is the Province hiring a fisheries envoy?

Mr. Wharton: And I thank the member from Interlake for the question. The envoy is hired basically to help with the transition, to obviously consult with the stakeholders throughout the process.

As I mentioned again previously in my opening comments, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has been around for almost 50 years, and it's going to be a transition for not only the fishers but their families. They're excited about that transition, Madam Speaker, and, with the assistance of the envoy, they'll be able to make sure that those challengers are kept to a minimum.

Mr. Lindsey: Could you point out what steps the government has done to ensure that Winnipeg won't lose the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation head office and all the jobs that are supported through that?

Mr. Wharton: As I mentioned earlier, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation will be an option for fishers as we move forward through this process, so we anticipate that if FFMC is a choice for the fishers to take their catch to freshwater, then that will be their choice, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: I wonder, in the task that the envoy has got, whether there will be a look at whether there are critical needs of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to be competitive.

I would also ask whether the ability of fishers to market within their home community right now, for instance, in a northern community like St. Theresa Point. I don't believe you can market to the North West Company or the local hospital or personal care home, if there is a personal care home. I wonder whether this is going to be possible and whether the envoy will be looking at steps other than just opening up the market that would be needed to make that possible.

Mr. Wharton: And I apologize. I missed the first part of your question, but certainly the second part will be an opportunity. Right now fishers have to rely on a special dealer's licence or an export dealer's licence in order to reach out to markets, and, quite

frankly, that export dealer licence and special dealer licences, with the amount of hoops and hurdles they have to go through, made it very challenging for them to even get started, let alone see it through fruition.

So we're confident, of course, that with the envoy's assistance in guiding us through that, that little stage, is that there will be opportunities for the fishers.

Mr. Johnson: Who will be responsible for food safety in the new marketing regime?

Mr. Wharton: And food safety is important, of course, under CFIA, naturally. That's a corporation jointly with the Province of Manitoba that oversees that, so shared by everyone, including fishers, processors, transporters and retailers. The production and processing of food will continue to be carefully regulated by the Province and federal government to ensure Manitoba's fisheries continue to produce food that is safe to eat, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Lindsey: What studies has this government done to see what impact this will have on Manitoba's economy and the economic outlook for fishers, particularly in the North?

Mr. Wharton: Quite frankly, the fact that we are literally throwing out millions and millions of pounds of fish every year without getting it to market. We know that once that opportunity's there for fishers, Madam Speaker, that's going to make sure that the economy grows, fishers have jobs and sustainability for the long haul.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has ended.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is now open.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity this morning to speak on this very important resolution here before the House, and I think it is important because the health of our lakes and our rivers and all of our waterways in Manitoba are so very, very important.

* (11:10)

As many members across the way may know by this point already, that I have a special connection to Lake Winnipeg in that not only spending a lot of my youth recreationally there and appreciating the benefits that it offers in terms of recreation to our province, but also now I have a cottage at Grand Beach Provincial Park, which is a very beautiful

provincial park. I think it's a gem in Manitoba and something we should all be very proud of. But because of that, I feel an extra connection now to appreciating the health of Lake Winnipeg and understanding the role that we all have in being stewards of the lake.

And I mention this simply because I think that it's important to appreciate that, you know, when we look at this issue—we certainly have talked very much about the health of the industry and the fishers and their families, and I think that's very important, but to also broaden the conversation to appreciate that there are a number of people in this province, whether they be cottage owners or recreational users, whether they be folks who have environmental concerns about the health of our lake or, again, the fishers themselves, that there's a number of people who are—who form a coalition of folks who are concerned about the health of our lakes and the sustainability of our lakes in a holistic way.

And, again, that extends to the fishers and to their very important livelihood and what they bring to our province, not only in terms of being stewards of the lake, which I believe that they are. I would imagine there isn't a fisher in this province who isn't acutely attuned to what is important in terms of the health and sustainability of our lakes and our rivers. They know it better than anyone, Madam Speaker, because their livelihoods depend on it.

But, again, everybody in Manitoba, I think, has an interest in this, and we all see the value in seeing that this is a sustainable exercise, that it contributes to the health of the lakes and rivers, especially because they are so threatened that this is something that we can all come together, we can all appreciate.

So this is my perspective. I am very much a layman in regards to fishing in commercial fisheries in Manitoba. This is something that I have an interest in, as I said, from a personal standpoint and from the economic benefits that I see are played out here in Manitoba. It's an important industry for our province, but I also understand that the health of our lakes and our rivers are important not only from the perspective of me being, you know, being part of the Lake Winnipeg ecosystem, but also looking at the—sort of all of the fishers in Manitoba.

And this is where I think, you know, perhaps more work could be done with regards to this particular resolution. You know, and—I—in my—in the question-and-answer period, I specifically asked about smaller fishers because I think this is where I

think we need to put a lot of our emphasis in terms of making sure that they have equal access.

You know, we know that the fishers across Manitoba are under pressure, that the industry itself is under pressure, that individual fishers are under pressure, but, you know, to simply say that we're going to not listen to the small fishers and giving them the equal opportunity to reach market, I think, you know, really shows where this government's head is at. And, as I said, this is a campaign promise. There weren't many campaign promises, you know; there were very few and far between, but this was one that I believe, you know, is ideologically driven. It was—it came out very early in the campaign to say this is a priority for us without giving the proper attention, I think, that it deserves in ensuring that this affects—that this doesn't negatively affect all fishers in Manitoba and particularly smaller fishers.

So we know how important it's been in terms of having the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation giving those small farm—small producers a leg up and an equal footing, and that's why we feel that it's important that Manitoba stay in this and support the marketing corporation as much as possible. Seventeen hundred commercial fishers in Manitoba, Alberta and the Northwest Territories are involved in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and they process their catch right here in Winnipeg, in Transcona. And I know a lot of constituents of mine—and I would imagine of members across the way will know constituents who are employed, good jobs, well-paying jobs, and serve the citizens of Manitoba by processing fish right here in our province. So it's a really positive thing, and it would be a loss to our community to say that a large chunk of the processing that that plant does will now be potentially going elsewhere.

Now, you know, I understand that there's always the opt-in, and we can appreciate that, but it's only when we all come together, when all fishers across western Canada are a part of this that I think it becomes especially viable and especially positive to allow individuals to have these good jobs and to work there. So we're concerned that, you know, when the marketing corporation doesn't exist in the form that it does today, that that participation in Manitoba will—by pulling out, will threaten those jobs, will threaten the viability of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation across the board.

So, as I said, Madam Speaker, small or isolated fishing communities, they just don't have the

resources or the background needed to reach out to the complex foreign markets. And I mention that it's complex in the sense that I believe that the world is changing in terms of how we understand where our food comes from and the importance of knowing exactly where it comes from, knowing that it's sustainable, that it's healthy, that it's ecologically viable. And this is where I think there have been important steps in eco-certification here in Manitoba, which will help open up new markets, which would enable fishers to successfully market their fish in a new way, in a way that I think the world is right now is asking for.

So the government, through the department of Conservation and Water Stewardship under TomorrowNow, was committed to working towards achieving that eco-certification status for some of the province's fishery resources. The department invested over \$550,000 in resources, which is finance—financial support and staff, to support the eco-certification efforts in Manitoba. The department undertook over 50 consultation meetings. As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, these consultations, I think, are key in understanding who were—who are the players, and not just the big players or the ones who have access to a lot of resources but the ones who are marginal players in terms of their ability to market across the world. They—the department reached out to associations, to industry representatives, and asked them to share information that they had on eco-certification and the benefits that it could have in expanding the market here in Manitoba.

As I said, Madam Speaker, the fisheries are a vital source of economic development and jobs across our great province, and this is key not just here in, you know, as I said, in Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg, but beyond and especially in the North, where it's so very important that we have access.

You know, I think the bottom line here is is that all Manitobans can appreciate how important our lakes and rivers and the health of those are. We also appreciate how important it is to have a strong, sustainable commercial fishery in Manitoba, how it impacts our economy, how individual families rely on the industry to be strong. We want to support them. I think all Manitobans want to support them. But we want to do it in a way that gives everybody equal footing, that gives even the smallest producer the same opportunity to access those world markets, to be competitive and to make Manitoba as strong of a player as possible in the world market.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I'd like to take a few minutes to put some words on the record in regards to the FFMC monopoly on fish in Manitoba.

* (11:20)

I'm not sure if many of the members in this House are aware where the Interlake riding is located, but it's massive not only in size but in cultural diversity.

Where I grew up and the member of—from Gimli, and, obviously, the member from Kewatinook as well, fishing is a part of our heritage. St. Laurent has an abundance of fishers, Metis fishers. While I was on a few week break between an underground mining contract and a pipeline contract, I took a job as a fisher's helper. I did not start at the beginning of freeze-up but quite a few weeks into the season. It was the point in the season where they are done walking out on the extremely thin ice where they pull a sleigh with a boat strapped onto it. Some might question, why is there a boat tied on to a sleigh? Pulling all that extra weight, surely, they can afford a proper sleigh with sides, a nice light sleigh.

So to be clear, Madam Speaker, to enable all the members to envision this properly there is a man, woman or quite often a teen child with a rope over their shoulder and cleats tied to their boots, so they can get traction on the fresh ice, fresh ice that is often as smooth as a freshly clean hockey rink immediately after the Zamboni has gone over it polished from the blowing snow. They have a long rope over their shoulder as not to be too close to the load that they are pulling on foot. The sleighs are full of nets, not like the nets that we think attach to the end of a stick as we refer to a dip net, but a net that is roughly 100 yards in length and has a multitude of either lead or concrete anchors, or we call them sinkers, and a series of floats to stretch them out after they are under the ice. These nets, I would guess, weigh about 50 pounds apiece, and they haul dozens of them out in a sleigh-boat combination, pulling it with a rope over their shoulder.

They also carry a needle bar, draw line and a jigger. The fisher takes the bar—needle bar, and chips a hole in the ice. After the hole is chipped through the ice, the jigger is inserted. For those members who don't know what a jigger is, it's a long plank about eight feet in length and it is painted a bright red. It has a line—a draw line attached to a little mechanism with a small pick that floats up against the bottom.

So when they pull the line, the pick goes back and forth and it propels the jigger further away from the fisher. Once the jigger is about 100 yards away, the fisher has to walk around on the ice in the rough direction that they have sent it; hence, why it's painted red and they find it through the ice.

They now chip another hole large enough to retrieve their apparatus, or the jigger. They use the line that is attached to the end of the jigger to pull a net under the ice. They have to repeat this process for every single net that they want to set.

Now, Madam Speaker, back to the sleigh and boat. Why would a person, who put a rope over their shoulder, pull over a half a ton of gear, want to pull a boat along with the rest of their load? Well, the boat is their lifeline. To make any amount of money in the fishing industry the fisher must put their life on the line every day they go out.

The ice they started on in the fall is a mere few inches thick. If the ice breaks, the fisher can jump in the boat. Remember what they are towing the boat with a rope. If they are unfortunate enough to have the ice break from under their feet, they will be soaking wet sitting in a boat, miles from shore.

I don't know about you, Madam Speaker, but I sure would not want this person earning a living—would not want to be this person earning a living that way.

Now, there are cellphones that are kept in zip-locked bags, but back in the day, there was no concern until the fisher did not return home after dark.

So, Madam Speaker, as I had mentioned, I was young and eager to earn money and take on a job with the commercial fisher. So, the first day on the job, it was a little later in the season; by that, I mean we were able to use a snow machine to tow the boat and the sleigh, but not to the point where the ice was thick enough for a truck or a bombardier. Now, the boat was tied on with a light string, the same string they used for their draw line. It's a fairly small string. I inquired as to why they don't use a nice strap to tie their boats on. Why don't you use that nice new snowmobile with the nice suspension, I tried to explain, it would be much easier on the fishers ailing back.

Madam Speaker, I was going to revolutionize commercial fishing in one day. How can they function without this foresight? I was baffled.

To understand how this was not obvious to the experienced fisher, well, I was informed that if the snow machine and sleigh were to plunge through the ice, the boat needs to break away from the sinking snowmobile, and quite obvious at that point did not want to lose their new snowmobile; hence, he was using the old one. My new snowmobile, I also must put on the record, estimating it to be over a couple decades old at this point, I would not have hazard a guess to the age of the old snowmobile that we are actually using to fish.

I will be honest, Madam Speaker, this new information did not put my mind at ease, but I was young, and, yes, this was before affordable cellphones. And I was full of energy to make a hard-earned day of wages, learn the trade that I have watched from the shores of Lake Manitoba for many years.

I was put in charge of the gas-powered ice auger. I was to drill holes for my boss to launch the jigger. The first hole, Madam Speaker, I had not gotten my hand off the pull chord from starting the auger, and it had plunged through the ice successfully drilling the hole. I'll be honest, this was unnerving.

We set a few nets, and now it was time to pull one. I drilled a hole near a set net that was, that the boss had started the pulling procedure. As he makes the line taut, he gets this worried look on his face, probably to match the look that had been on my face all morning. He yelled to me, we've got to go. At this point my curiosity should not have been on the top of the list, but it was. I asked why. He showed me that the drawstring that he had pulled taut attached to the net was being pulled underneath the ice. My first thought, Manipogo is real. Not the case, Madam Speaker, we were moving.

A strong south wind had broken us free from the shore, and as most of you know the lakes freeze from the outside to the centre and the lake had not completely frozen over.

As we start up this antique snow machine, we head for shore. As we get near, there's about a 15-foot gap from the drifting ice to the shore. I have faith in old equipment, Madam Speaker, but not enough faith that this old timer we are riding could skip across that gap in the water. The fisher, also the driver, had my life in his hands. He turned and pointed, he pointed in the direction of the land ajutment that projected out into the lake. As our drifting ice passed by this point that pointed out into the lake, we were able to drive to shore as the two

pieces of ice momentarily touched. This was my first day and last day commercial fishing. The fisher I was with lost thousands of dollars of equipment.

Madam Speaker, with everything that the commercial fisher must endure, including putting his life on the line, I feel they should have the right to have the freedom of marketing their product. This PMR recognizes the benefit of dual marketing for Manitoba and for all fishermen alike. I hope the House supports this PMR, along with myself.

Also, I'd like to mention FFMC has debt. Like many other corporations, this debt was incurred with start-up and renovation throughout the years. The federal corporation held all the fishers responsible for this debt that sold fish, and, as they sold fish, the debt was paid off. As the provinces left FFMC, other provinces, the debt was left with the remaining fishermen. It is now to the point where 85 per cent of the debt is now left with Manitobans, Manitoba fishers in particular. As I am sure the member of, from Kewatinook can attest to, this is not fair for the fishers of Manitoba.

If they choose to sell their fish to FFMC great, but after risking their life daily, they should have the right to choose where they sell their harvest. This will create—I feel this will create jobs in rural Manitoba, and they are needed in all areas, especially right where the fish are caught at the source. and I'm sure the member from Kewatinook would appreciate some jobs in her area.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: In the order of rotation it does indicate that an official opposition member has the opportunity to speak now, and, if not, then we can go to the honourable member for River Heights.

The honourable member for—

An Honourable Member: I'm prepared to let it go.

Madam Speaker: Oh, the honourable member for River Heights.

* (11:30)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I'd like to put a few words on the record about the importance of fishing to Manitoba and the importance of fish as a vital component of optimum nutrition, as well as to talk a little bit about the future of the fishery in our province.

Manitoba's fishery has long been of considerable importance. We have three great lakes: Lake

Winnipeg, Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba. And, in addition, we have a very large number of other lakes of very varied sizes, from very small to very large, like Reindeer Lake, which is part in Manitoba and much in Saskatchewan.

Fishery has been important historically. I think it's important to begin with noting that the original fishers in Manitoba were people in the indigenous communities, that the fish was a very important food for people in indigenous communities historically, before Europeans arrived here, and that they paid particular attention to, you know, certain uses of fish. It was very important to have fish soups for women who were pregnant and who were breastfeeding, for example. And it's interesting that this tradition which existed has been now supported by evidence, right, scientific evidence, from a nutritional perspective as well.

It's also important, of course, to recognize the role that the Icelandic community has played in the fishery in Manitoba, particularly that on Lake Winnipeg. The Icelandic community and members of the Icelandic community have had a major role in the development of the fishery on Lake Winnipeg and in the use of various approaches, including the jigger, so that they have made, over the years, many, many contributions and been very important toward this fishery.

The indigenous community continues to have many fishermen who work commercially and who do well. And all over the province there are many fishermen still working; for example, out of Norway House. And I was there not too long ago, and they were talking about the importance of the fishery to their community. But it is but one of many where there are fishermen who work hard and who make a living in various indigenous communities all the way around Lake Winnipeg and in many other lakes around Manitoba.

The catching of fish for sale and for export developed in a major way starting in the late 1800s and continuing to today. For many decades, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has played a vital role in the processing and in the sale of fish. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has provided stability in the market as opposed to what happened previously, which was a great deal of volatility.

It has served many fishers well, although, as we have seen in recent years, there are a significant number of issues who have raised concern about

difficulties in selling fish other than the pickerel, pike, sauger, whitefish and perch, which are the main fish sold by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and also the difficulties of selling fish competitively from northern parts of Manitoba where there are higher transportation costs, and that includes the Island Lake's area as an example.

Great thanks are owed to the many who worked in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to help make it a success. This would include individuals like Robert Kristjanson [*phonetic*] and Bob Buckles who've long been strong supporters of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. It would include individuals like Chief Jim Bear of Brokenhead First Nation who served for many years as chair of the board of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

I want to say a few words about the importance of fish in our diet. There's been an increased understanding of the critical importance of dietary fish in recent years. Fish contains a number of important nutrients, including among them vitamin D and the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, DHA and EPA. Vitamin D is, of course, available through exposure to sunlight, but, in Manitoba's climate, most Manitobans don't get enough sunlight in the winter so that dietary Vitamin D becomes critically important, and fish is one of the major dietary sources, with the exception, of course, of some foods like milk, which are often artificially supplemented. Vitamin D is important for overall health and particularly for brain health.

DHA and EPA are long chain fatty acids which are essential fatty acids. That is, humans have very little ability to synthesize them from shorter chain omega-3 fatty acids like alpha-linolenic acid. DHA is an important fatty acid. It makes up about half, by weight—that's excluding water—of the lipid membrane of nerve cells and, as such, there's a large and growing body of evidence which now speaks to the vital importance of DHA in nerve and brain function.

Because fish are the primary source of DHA and EPA in our diets, many Canadians who do not eat fish are deficient in DHA, and this deficiency in DHA may contribute in some circumstances to lessen optimum brain health. Recently, in our forum on brain health in River Heights, we learned much about the importance of DHA and EPA, and it was recommended by an expert in this area that individuals should probably have about three meals of fish a week to ensure sufficient DHA and EPA to keep our brains healthy.

With this said, ensuring the strength of our fishery and the opportunities for fishing to make a living and the opportunities of Manitobans to eat fish and stay healthy are all important. We can and do better to market fish within our own province.

I want to mention now that the fish and fishery are very important to my colleague the MLA for Kewatinook and the people in her constituency. She's consulted them. Those in the south of her constituency want to keep the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Those in the north feel that they should have other options.

While we do not know precisely the changes that are being brought in by the Conservatives—we'll have to wait for the envoy's report, we want to make one important point: For all communities there should be much better ability to sell fish within the community. Today fishers from St. Theresa Point are not permitted to sell fish to stores like the North West Company or the hospitals or personal care homes or to retailers in their communities. There should be an ability of fishers to market their fish in their own community to retail stores and to institutions like hospitals and personal care homes so that all people in each community can have better access to fish and fish products and so that people in local hospitals and personal care homes can have the health benefits from eating local fish.

Achieving this for each community may need attention to a variety of factors as well as changing market regulations. We hope the Conservative government will look at factors to ensure that it's possible to market fresh fish locally produced by fishers in a community within their own community, and this may, of course, look at things like CFIA and provincial regulations. Surely, there needs to be a way that fishers can sell fresh fish locally that is not so tied up in regulations so that—to make this impossible, and I hope that the envoy will look at this aspect and not just at the price aspect.

We await the details of the Conservative plan, so I hope they'll include plans to make sure all fisheries are sustainable. We're all too familiar with the problems of the pickerel fishery of Lake Winnipegosis, which has been in serious trouble for many decades, and the pickerel fishery of Lake Manitoba, which also has had some difficulties. It's time these were corrected.

It's not well known that there were at one point 38 lodges around Lake Winnipegosis—major tourism activity, but what happened was that the catch, which

historically was the second highest in North America of any lake and was drastically reduced because of poor management in about 1960, and the stocks, for example, in the mid-1990s were at one-fortieth of historic production levels of pickerel. Compare that to farming, a farmer going from 40 bushels to the acre down to one bushel to the acre. It's hardly viable, and you can understand why all those fishing lodges disappeared and are no more on Lake Winnipegosis.

I won't provide further comment now until these details of the Conservative plans are outlined in greater detail. I want to thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci and miigwech.

*(11:40)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, I'm surprised there aren't any other members of the PC caucus who want to speak to this resolution from the member for Gimli (Mr. Wharton).

You know, as I said in my speech earlier on this morning, I had a—the experience of the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) coming into my constituency, and we certainly had a good time even though we were cheering for different teams. The member for Gimli knows that I spend a fair amount of time in his constituency every chance I get, so I will pay it forward, and I'm sure I can buy the member a coffee sometime in Gimli or Winnipeg Beach. We can discuss a number of things. There are many things we may well agree upon. I don't think we'll agree upon the resolution that the member has brought forward.

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation buys, processes, markets and exports most of the fish caught in Manitoba's waterways. The corporation purchases fish from more than 1,700 commercial fishers, some large, some small, across Manitoba, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation processes their catch at a plant in Transcona, which provides a stable marketing method and stable incomes for many fishers and has done so over a number of years.

And the move now being brought forward by this government will undermine and eventually privatize an important Crown corporation. And there's certainly echoes in what is happening with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation as we've seen from right-wing governments federally and across Canada. And there's strong echoes of what

happened when the Harper government, with being aided and abetted by the then-PC opposition here in Manitoba, destroyed the Canadian Wheat Board, which was one of the greatest Crown corporations for the benefit not only of providing stable and solid incomes to farmers but also allowing Winnipeg and Manitoba to really become the epicentre of research, development and expertise in cereal grains.

And, at that time, of course, there was a vote that was held, and despite the fact that 60 per cent of all producers said they wanted to keep the Wheat Board, that was seen as a signal by the Harper government to go ahead and do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. And we fought hard as the government of Manitoba. We received absolutely no assistance from the Progressive Conservative opposition. And, ultimately, of course, the Canadian Wheat Board is now done. Some 2,000 jobs in the province of Manitoba were lost, 400 directly at the Canadian Wheat Board and another 1,600 or so in the related trade.

So why, ideologically, is the PC government now moving ahead with this? Well, it fits their ideology. And I will say at the outset that if the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation no longer has a monopoly, there will be some winners. There will be some fishers who may be close to markets, who may have large plants at their disposal, who may have easy access to markets, who may be able to be winners. And I don't think anyone can deny that. What we are worried about, as New Democrats, is the many, many producers who stand to lose, because, quite bluntly, Madam Speaker, a small fisher in an isolated community, far away from markets, does not have the ability to contract with a purchaser in Korea or China or Japan to send their fish in any way that's going to allow any kind of profit or even subsistence for those fishers.

And that was very much the way it was in the debate over the Canadian Wheat Board. There were a large number of farmers who supported it. And, if you were to gauge where that support was coming from, who was supporting it? It was largely farmers south of the Trans-Canada Highway and, certainly, those farmers, the closer they got to the American border, the more supportive that they were of doing away with the Wheat Board and putting every farmer on their own when it came to marketing their grain. And, certainly, I suppose if I was a large producer and had 1,000 acres of land close to the US border, if I thought I could get a nickel more by shipping my grain across the border to Cavalier, well, maybe I

would do it. But who lost? Well, all the producers in areas like Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, Interlake, Gimli and other areas that didn't have and don't have the same kind of access to transportation to markets.

And it is very, very similar to the challenges now being thrown on producers by destroying a monopoly of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

And I know there will be some members who will say, well, no, we're not doing away with the corporation; we're still keeping the corporation. Well, what do we think's going to happen? Those producers that have the most capacity, that have the most valuable fish, that have the largest catch will find a way to process it themselves. And those remaining will then work with the corporation.

What do we think is going to happen to the corporation's bottom line if it loses a big chunk of its market? Well, of course, it'll lose money and next year we'll have the Premier standing up or whoever—and whoever's responsible for fisheries on that side, standing up and saying, well, the corporation's losing money, we're going to shut it down. And not only are those producers going to be put at a disadvantage, they're going to be left without any means to sell their fish on the international market or even within Canada.

And that is the way of the Progressive Conservatives. They want to—they want there to be winners and losers, and as long as they can point to a couple of winners, they, frankly, don't care how many losers—how many people get hurt on the other side.

And, you know, we hear echoes of that elsewhere. I know that the Conservatives, at least for now, have backed off their threat to privatize MPI, but I still hear that from people who say they are very proud to support the Progressive Conservative Party, and even though they are told year after year after year that MPI provides the best service and the lowest rates for Manitoba drivers, they refuse to accept it, and they say, well, I could do better if I insured my vehicle in Alberta. Well, of course, every year, at least for now, it is required by law. Deloitte has gone through and has compared those rates across the country and shows year after year after year that Manitoba has the lowest rates. You'll always find someone who says, oh, but I went online and I could get insurance cheaper in Alberta.

Well, MPI, of course, they provide insurance to every single Manitoban who has a driver's licence who wants to register a vehicle. They don't cherry-pick. They don't pick here and there. Over time MPI has taken steps to improve the way you can earn merits and demerits. I'm very proud to have 15 merits, which means that my insurance is 33 per cent less than someone with no merits, someone who may choose to speed through our school zones.

Well, of course, MPI provides the lowest rates to all Manitobans. There's no winners and losers, we all gain by having MPI here. And I know that may be upsetting to some members and I wouldn't be surprised if at some point we see them trying to privatize MPI and they will certainly trot out and cherry-pick examples where somebody claims that they may have a lower rate, but we know that the way you get the best deal for Manitobans is to have universality to allow everybody, whether they're large, whether they're small, to participate.

And that's what the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has been about, and it's not a perfect system and, frankly, there can be improvements. And I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) mentioned some of those things. Perhaps we can agree that in a remote community there should be an easier way for individuals to sell fish within the community.

But that's not what this is all about, this is about getting rid of a Crown corporation that has served fishers large and small well over many, many years.

Robert Kristjanson [*phonetic*] is a Gimli-based fisher whose family has been in the fishing industry since 1891. Fishing is in his family's blood, and he said the following about the withdrawal: he said it is so sad that I can't even put words to it. I'm not saying it's been true blue. And there he was talking about the performance not the political colour of the party destroying it—but to add more fish companies to this is not the answer.

Even fishers themselves, even large commercial fishers in a place like Gimli, which is close to market and has transportation alternatives, has major concerns about what this government is doing on strictly ideological grounds.

Are there other ways to help fishers? Yes, of course, we want to promote—

Madam Speaker: Please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have one minute remaining.

The hour being 11:49 a.m., this House is—the hour being 12 p.m., this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

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