

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 8, 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, and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask that you canvass the House for leave to debate bills 208 and 209 at concurrence and third reading at 11:40 this morning.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to do concurrence and third readings of Bill 208 and 209 at 11:40 this morning? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Micklefield: Furthermore, I would like to ask that you canvass the House for leave that bills 208 and 209 be allowed to come to a recorded division today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for bills 208 and 209 to come to a recorded division today? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I'd like to call for debate and second reading of Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act—*[interjection]* Okay. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask if there's agreement in the House to proceed to debate and second reading of Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service).

Madam Speaker: Is there agreement of the House to deal with Bill 213 this morning, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service)? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 213—The Civil Service Amendment Act
(Employment Preference for
Reservists with Active Service)**

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I move, seconded by the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), that Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service), be read now for a second time and referred to the committee of the House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Curry: I'm very happy to rise today in support of Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act. This bill corrects ambiguous language and affirms that veterans can continue to serve as members of the reserves and receive the benefits of preferential hire for being veterans.

Under current legislation, to qualify as a veteran, one must have been on active service in the naval, army or air forces of Canada or any of the allies of our Majesty, either during any period in which a state of war existed between Canada and any other country, or with special service outside of Canada, under the United Nations Charter or the North Atlantic Treaty, and has left the service with an honourable record or has been honourably discharged from that service.

The last line of the paragraph implies that the person who applied for veterans' preference for the civil service must no longer be in service with the Canadian military. This may have applied well in the past, but the current state of service in the Canadian Armed Forces is quite different. Terms have changed over time. Our navy, air forces both have received royal designations, but the spirit of this act is to recognize that veterans hold a distinction in society and ought to be supported by the Province of Manitoba.

Bill 213 will clearly define, in plain language, that an active serving member of the primary Reserve Force can apply for veterans' preferential hiring if they meet the conditions of serving in the military during war or outside of Canada with the UN or NATO. Many members of the Canadian Armed Forces Regular Force, who've served on a

UN or NATO mission often will transfer to the Reserve Force after their term of service with the Regular Force is over. Whether it be for family commitments or the desire to achieve post-secondary education, a full-time soldier moving on to the part-time reserves and has served overseas still is a veteran. These members can choose to continue their service with the Reserve Force and should not be penalized if they wish to apply as veteran preferential hiring when applying to provincial civil service.

Closer to the spirit of Bill 213 are members of the primary reserve, members who are sitting here with us today, who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces on a UN or NATO mission as a reservist, then returned to Canada and continue to serve in the Reserve Force. The language in the current act leaves room to disqualify a person from applying for veteran status if they are an active service reservist. This is unacceptable.

A corporal who had trained me when I was a younger private from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, then transferred to the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, told me IEDs don't care if you're regs or reserves. I've never forgotten the sentiment that bullets and bombs do not care how one service agreement is signed or how one's terms of service are fulfilled. A veteran is a veteran. This bill will recognize the sacrifices of veterans, acknowledge that a reservist can be both disparagingly sometimes called a weekend warrior but also a veteran.

There are members, of course, like James Clark, a master warrant officer and sergeant major of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, served for over 20 years in the Canadian Armed Forces reserve. He also served in Bosnia on a mission promoting peace and supporting the local rebuilding of a war-torn country. He was a tough and disciplined corporal when I joined the infantry reserve; I learned many things about how to tie my boots, how to hold a rifle and, more importantly, much of my leadership was gleaned from this man and his experience, much of which came from his service overseas.

Now, as a postal worker, he serves his country in two dual roles: as a leader in the Canadian Armed Forces reserve and as a civil servant with Canada Post. This is an individual who has given much of his time. In some instances, he will go months on end without a day off, a day off to see his wife, his young

son and another child on the way, because of his dedication in service to this country.

If he were to ever apply to the provincial civil service and indicate that he is a veteran, his application may not be completed because, unfortunately, but fortunately for all of us, he continues to serve as a leader in the Canadian Armed Forces reserve.

Other individuals such as my friend Jon Avey, a corporal who served with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, before he transferred to the Reserve Force in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, he performed two tours of duty in an operation in Afghanistan, serving on the front lines and helping to rebuild that war-torn country.

* (10:10)

After his two operational tours and after his many years of service in the regular force, he took it upon himself, with his family, to move to two different cities to accomplish the goal of doing his undergraduate, then his post-graduate in law. My colleague from Minto may have met this gentleman at Minto Armoury. I hope if he sees him again, he'll tell him the benefits of being a lawyer and express to him the hard work I know it takes.

But this gentleman, if he were to apply to be a lawyer under the employment of the Province of Manitoba, and if he were to indicate on his application that he himself is a veteran, who has seen the front lines of our most recent engagement and peace-building and helping a country from a war-torn state and in defending the lives of those people there in that country of Afghanistan, his application may not be fulfilled as a veteran preferential hire, because he serves in the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves—with many of my friends currently. This is unacceptable.

Now, there are other people at this very moment in operations outside of Canada right now. There are Canadian Forces members in the conflicts, in Iraq, Syria, in that area. There are Canadian Forces members in Poland, Romania. There are Canadian Forces members in Ukraine. The Eastern European theatre, unfortunately, looks very similar to what we experienced during the Cold War. The Cold War, when many reservists joined operations in West Germany and joined the defence of values that we have in the West against oppressive governments

in countries like Russia does now, and their infringement in Ukraine.

We have Canadian soldiers who are standing up for the rights of democracy, the rights of freedoms of press, freedoms from oppression, that the good people of Ukraine are desiring—people like Callum Daulby, who's in operation right now in Eastern Europe. I was able to speak with him over the lovely gift of the Internet and asked him if I could mention his name about my bill, and he casually said: Yes, of course. Well, what's this bill?

Well, I told him, Daulby, when you get back, you'll be a veteran in almost every standard except if you apply for the provincial civil service. And often, with the Internet, communications can go slowly, and his response was slow to that, but, in the end he said: That's horrible. Of course, use my name, and, of course, talk about how this important act will fulfill itself.

Very happy that with the hard work, he will return soon to Canada after having done his tour of standing up for our freedoms and values. And, when Daulby returns to Canada, a corporal, who joined out of high school, just in 2013—very short service but now is working with our allies in Eastern Europe—when he returns from operation, he has earned the right to be called a veteran. He has earned all privileges that therein should be, but, if we do not pass this legislation, there is the chance that the current Civil Service Act will not recognize him as a veteran.

Many members of the Canadian Forces Reserve, who served outside of Canada in UN or NATO missions, often are not recognized as veterans, because they are still in the reserves; they are still working Tuesday nights and weekends, giving up their summers, giving up their Christmas breaks, giving up time to be spent with families. This dual sacrifice of having a full-time career and spending your off-hours training and honing your skills as a soldier is a sacrifice sometimes people don't know about. The Canadian Forces Reserve is perhaps not the most prominent part of our military; perhaps it's not the most well recognized.

Certainly, this week of all weeks, Remembrance Week, we are celebrating the importance of veterans. In my own family, my two great-uncles served on the front lines of the liberation of France, Belgium, the Netherlands—one of them not returning from that conflict.

My two grandfathers braved the icy Atlantic Ocean and the Battle of the Atlantic. These are people who handily are referred to as veterans, and despite many of them now passing on to the great unknown, we know that they have enjoyed their status as veterans. However, the young members of the Canadian Forces Reserve sometimes do not receive the same treatment, the same acknowledgement, the same deference. And this act will enfranchise that, yes, reservists can be recognized as veterans; reservists who have served outside of Canada, with the UN or with NATO or if, unfortunately, in the act of war, those members, if they still serve in the reserves, are and will always be veterans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak on this important issue, and I enjoy the debate we are soon to have on it. Thank you.

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 is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I thank the member for Kildonan for his knowledge in this area and for his comments today.

Of course, for the rest of us, we may not be as familiar with terms used in the military. Even as a lawyer, I'm still finding I'm learning some of the terminology.

Can the member just talk a little bit more about what active service means and what would be included in active service needed for a reservist then to receive preference under this bill.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I thank the member for the important question.

The current Civil Service Act identifies that a member must serve with the Canadian Armed Forces or the Canadian military in an act of war or on operation with the special force of, say, the United Nations, north treaty Atlantic organization—or North Atlantic Treaty Organization and any other defence force. This could also comprise perhaps NATO, as long as it is outside of Canada, and so a reservist must still have contributed in those two acts—those

two notes of service before qualifying necessarily as a veteran just as the act currently states, and this bill simply extends that you can continue to serve as a reservist after you've served either during an act of war or outside of Canada with NATO or UN.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, could the member for Kildonan explain to us why he felt this bill needed to come forward, whether it was an issue identified either by himself in his roles as a reservist or is it something that other reservists brought to his attention during their careers?

Mr. Curry: Again, I thank the member for the question.

This is something that has been identified and spoken to me about, especially when I entered politics. Many of us draw our support from our immediate friends and family. I consider reservists my family, and many of them came to me flat out and said, Nic, have you heard about this current act? Have you heard about how this works and how people have not been able to apply as veterans because they're reservists?

I investigated it, and it was from my colleagues, who are still reservists now, that I learned this information and worked with them on this matter, consulting with many reservists throughout Winnipeg.

Mr. Swan: I just want to return to the question I asked about active service. Many of us have friends who served in Afghanistan or in Bosnia, which I think we all would understand would be included. Is it then fair to say that pretty much any service that a reservist would take part in outside of Canada would be seen as active service for the purpose of this bill?

Mr. Curry: So, in terms of active service outside of Canada, this—in the current act that must be with an organization like the United Nations, namely peacekeeping operations, or North Atlantic Treaty Organization, namely operations like Afghanistan, like Bosnia, but many others where we've seen over the years, and the stipulation is that it must be with one of these organizations and outside of Canada. I think a great example would be, of course, relief efforts in Haiti, that again many reservists that I know served in Haiti as part of our support of that country after the terrible catastrophe a few years ago, and a mission like that would also be considered an active service, and quite frankly the images many of them saw were like a war zone, unfortunately.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan for bringing forward this very important bill, Bill 213.

I'd like to ask the member: What other jurisdictions currently offer preferential treatment to veterans when considering the hiring of civil servants?

Mr. Curry: A great example would be the federal government currently has a stipulation for preferential hire for veterans. This is done in a different fashion to what we have in the province of Manitoba. The federal government has a preferential hire before the interview. In the province of Manitoba, the preferential hire for veterans status happens after the interview. Provinces like New Brunswick offer something similar for their civil service, of course, the language being different. However, there are many provinces that do not have any stipulation for preferential hire for veterans, and a bill like this would be another way to encourage our sister provinces to perhaps recognize the importance of veterans when hiring from the civil service.

*(10:20)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to ask the member what measures will be taken to promote awareness of this amendment and ensure that reservists who are in active service are aware that the employment preference under The Civil Service Act is now intended for them.

Mr. Curry: I thank the member for the question. Aside from my own tireless efforts in communicating with people, the first step, of course, is the process we take today. The debate of it will help. Further on, in terms of what, say, the government can do, I have communicated with some of the ministers of this government about what can be done in the future in terms of awareness, in terms of advertising. Those conversations are ongoing, and I will continue to communicate what can be done to demonstrate awareness for this.

And certainly, in a week like Remembrance Week and days like Remembrance Day that come up soon, it's, I think, in many ways, all of our responsibilities as legislatures to indicate to the many reservists who are our neighbours and friends that such provisions exist.

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, can the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) explain to us the—some of the

positive impacts these amendments will have on our veterans who continue to serve in the military?

Mr. Curry: Unfortunately, many veterans experience a tough life when they return home. Unfortunately, many have a mental health illness that goes undiagnosed, and many have the hardest time finding work when they return from their service overseas. Too often, a resumé that says a few years of service and a few tours in Afghanistan, to some employers, it's just that: a few of something; to many, it should be more.

And this kind of legislation will, with luck, give the confidence to many veterans struggling to find work to know that their experience is valued. And this legislation, with any luck, will have a positive impact on private companies to take up, perhaps, similar standards in terms of hiring for veterans.

Mr. Swan: I am aware that a number of reserve units are having difficulty even filling their complement. Is the member hopeful that this bill will be one further step, which will provide, perhaps, for greater recruitment of young people or not so young people who may be interested in the reserves? And is the member hopeful that this will also result in greater participation in operations by people who are in the reserves who may have only thought of it as a weekend or summer obligation and not for an extended period of time?

Mr. Curry: I appreciate my colleague opposite's—for this question. Especially in terms of retention, the military, as the member for Minto knows, is having trouble keeping soldiers in their posts in some ways.

And, with legislation like this, if a reservist must choose between taking up a full-time career and leaving the reserves or doing both, this may give the opportunity of doing both. And anything that we can do to help retain soldiers in service of our country is, I think, helped by this legislation, which will give opportunities for reservists to be able to continue on with their service and also have—pursue full-time careers, especially with the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Martin: The member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), in response to an earlier question, identified some other jurisdictions that have similar, or at least similar-in-concept legislation, although I think the response was that the majority don't. With the potential passage of this legislation, is the member committed to reaching out to reservists in those other jurisdictions to share with them what has occurred or

may occur in Manitoba to help drive similar legislation in those jurisdictions?

Mr. Curry: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question, and, in terms of reaching out to the network of reservists, this is something that I continue do—ongoing. I was able to train in almost every province in this country, and this is something where I communicate with people. And I look forward to, you know, communicating with some of my colleagues across Canada in terms of what they can do to enhance legislation that stands up for veterans.

Madam Speaker: There any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to put some words on the record today about Bill 213, brought forward by the member for Kildonan.

As the member has stated in his comments, we do have provisions now in The Civil Service Act, which provides employment preference to veterans involved in active service, but this bill would extend that preference to include reservists with the Canadian Forces who have been in active service.

And I'm pleased to speak about this bill. Our NDP team is a strong supporter of military members and families in Manitoba. We do support our current members and our veterans and the services they receive, and I think we'll be able to stand as one voice here in the Legislature for our military, for our veterans and, of course, for their families.

And, as you may know, Madam Speaker, I'm very proud to sit on the Regimental Senate of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, which is a unit here in Manitoba which has a very, very proud history going back more than 100 years. And I know within that organization it is a challenge to find people who are prepared to give up their evenings, give up their weekends, perhaps give up their summers, in order to go and serve in a reserve unit. And I believe it is important for this Legislature to continue moving the goalposts and moving our feet on doing what we can in areas of provincial jurisdiction to make that entry into the reserve units, the retention in those reserve units and to take advantage of other opportunities within those reserve units, recognizing the importance that that has to our province.

I'm very proud that one of the things that we did several years ago is we amended the employment standards act. And, of course, it—it's generally—until

then, it was up to reservists to cut their own deal with their employer. And even though employers might be quite prepared to let their employees go on their own time, on evenings and weekends or perhaps even use their holiday time in the summer, it became far more complicated when reservists were called upon to go to various places where the Canadian military is involved.

And some of the recent examples that we talked about already today would be Afghanistan and Bosnia. I do have a good friend who is in the reserves who went and did a tour of duty in Afghanistan. He was actually working full-time within the reserves, but going with him were many other people who perhaps had signed on for the reserves thinking they would only be weekend or holiday participants. We changed the employment standards act to provide the reservists who did sign up to go on a tour of duty for months at a time outside of Canada would have their job protected because the last thing we wanted to see would be someone offering to serve their country then coming back and losing their job. So we made that change, and we thought that was very important. And it is important to note we did have unanimous support of this Legislature to do that, which, again, makes it quite clear that we can certainly speak together with one voice when it comes to supporting our military.

One of the other areas I was very proud to be part of was recognizing qualifications that individuals in the military, whether it's in the regular force or in the reserves, have and can bring to our province when they retire from the force. I know when I was the minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade, I actually spent a lot of time working with the military and meeting with military families. And sometimes when I told them, you know, we really want you to retire here in Manitoba—maybe you're from New Brunswick or maybe you're from British Columbia, you may have travelled all over this country, we want you to stay when you're finished. And for many members of the regular force or the reserves and their families, it might have been the first time that they've heard a provincial politician say, you know, thank you, we want you to stay here. Don't go back to New Brunswick; stay in Manitoba. I think those days are passed, and they can count on provincial politicians of all stripes making those comments and encouraging people to stay.

And one of the things that we did is we worked with our apprenticeship branch to provide that

members of the military, whether it be the reserves or the regular force, who have particular expertise in a trade would be allowed to transition and bring those skills into the workforce. An example of that, Madam Speaker, would be military electricians, you know, necessary not only for doing work on the base but involved in the air force, the navy. Those individuals have very, very specific skills, but they don't automatically have Red Seal qualification that would allow them, when they retire, to go out and do electrical work for you or I. And one of the things that we did is we worked with the apprenticeship branch to provide that they could then prove those skills and obtain their Red Seal certification, making it much easier for people to transition out of their time in the military and transition into our province's economy where, Madam Speaker, if you're like me, it's not always easy to find an electrician or a carpenter or a cabinetmaker or other people with trained skills. And that's one other way.

*(10:30)

And this bill, it goes another step along that way. It's another way that we can show appreciation for our military personnel but also, frankly, grow our province's economy by truly making our military personnel understand they're appreciated by what we do here in the Legislature and they're appreciated by the people of Manitoba.

So there are other things that we have worked on, and other things I know that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), all members of this House will take on.

We know there's been frustration in the past, as the standard for getting driver's licences has raised. Because of security issues, because of our relationship with our friends to the south, MPI, of course, has had to raise the bar on the level of security and the level of information provided, which is fine if you're a Manitoban renewing your driver's licence; not so easy if you've just been transferred in from Cold Lake to work here on the base, and you don't know a single soul in Manitoba, and you have to provide proof, formally, that you knew someone for at least two years.

We changed that to provide that a commanding officer could certify that you are who you say you are, which I don't think is a great stretch in anybody's mind, and that made it easier for military personnel to get their driver's licences here, because when you're moving to a new city, as you do time and time

and time again, the last thing you want to do is worry about whether you're able to drive your vehicle to and from the base.

Another example where there was solid co-operation was on working to make sure that military families have family doctors when they arrive in Manitoba. Of course, we talk about the challenges for military personnel who transfer from place to place to place. We appreciate equally well the challenges for their families, who have to restart, who have to pick up the pieces and take care of all the things that sometimes we take for granted. And I was very pleased that we were able to work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and work with Manitoba Health to provide that any military family that relocates to Manitoba now is able to immediately get the services of a family doctor, because when one military family comes to Manitoba, in most cases there's a military family being transferred out of Manitoba—unless, of course, they're retiring and staying here.

And those were important things that we were able to do by co-operation, by engaging not just other members of this Legislature but engaging the general public to understand the benefit.

So, in this case, we have a bill which would recognize people who join the reserves, but not just any people who join the reserves—those who join the reserves and take the extra step. They say, you know, we could simply serve on evenings and on the odd weekend and do certain things at certain times. We're actually prepared to put the rest of our lives on hold and to go and serve Canada, to serve our country, whether it's in a time of war, which we hope will be few and far between, but a number of different operations.

And I was very pleased the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), in answer to my question, mentioned, for example, the relief efforts in Haiti. Even though it wasn't a war situation, we would hope there wouldn't be physical danger to our reservists. That would be a very, very difficult mission, and I think we can only have the utmost admiration and respect for members of our Regular Force, but also our reserve members who volunteer to go and do their job, to fly the flag for us, to continue to make Canada a respected member of the world stage, but, more importantly, to provide comfort and shelter and assistance to people who need their help.

So, for these reasons, I believe this is the next good step. And, you know, I'm sure we'll be back.

Maybe the member for Kildonan will bring it up. Maybe the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), maybe the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) will come back to this House with further ideas and further steps we can do to make things better for those who join our reserves, or those who are thinking about joining the reserves and, hopefully, will be able to take one step further to joining the reserves, because they know they will have some additional consideration when, and if, they choose employment with the provincial government.

So, Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for the chance to speak to this important bill today. Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand today to discuss Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act, this week being Remembrance Week.

The idea of enhancing legislation for veterans is something that we are happy to support. Reservists are Manitobans that provide service to our province and our country. They give their time for the betterment of the greater community.

Reservists also play a crucial role in ensuring that our national security is not compromised. They take risks when they join the reservists rank in the military, and their dedication deserves recognition.

Reservists are also oftentimes veterans of the Canadian Forces. They join the reservist ranks for a variety of reasons. However, their active service with the Canadian Armed Forces should not go unrecognized.

The current wording of The Civil Service Amendment Act does not allow such members to be given preference for employment in the provincial service—provincial civil service. This change would allow for fair treatment of our veterans who deserve this continued recognition when they join the reservists.

I'd like to thank the member for Kildonan for bringing forth this bill, and we are happy to support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): It's my pleasure to rise today and just put a few comments on the record in relation to Bill 213. As an individual who affectionately and has no qualms referring to themselves as an army brat growing up on military bases and being born on a military base overseas,

the military is something very close to me. My grandfather served in World War II and served in— for our country in both North Africa and Italy where he ultimately was wounded and sent home as a result of those injuries. And so, in that instance, my grandfather, when he returned, not—there was a lot of—times have changed a little bit, but there were some struggles when he came home, obviously, with what he had seen, and the knowledge that we have today in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder is very different than they were back in World War II. Essentially, the motto was, oh, you know, sort of grin and bear it, and this is the things that happen at war and you need to keep those bottled up.

But, obviously, that involvement in the military transcended just not only my grandfather, because my father decided to enlist when he was a young man when he was 19 years old—enlisted and served in a variety of functions in serving overseas in—as part of our military contingent in Germany as well as on peacekeeping missions in Cyprus. And my brother-in-law as well has served on peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, and I know my sister has been fraught with anxiety during those missions.

So I've listened intently to the comments of members opposite, and I acknowledge the work that was done by the previous administration in trying to improve the situation that our military personnel face, especially when they come home or when they're transferred to our province. So I think it's incumbent upon this House—especially in light of Remembrance Day just around the corner—to take every opportunity to acknowledge and show our respect for those that don the uniform that—so that we can have the freedoms to stand in this very Chamber and have the debates, and sometimes civil and sometimes not so civil, but we have that right, thanks to their sacrifice and their willingness to put on that uniform.

So I thank my colleague, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry). I think the idea of ensuring that reservists with active service receive that preferential treatment, I think, puts Manitoba at the forefront of other jurisdictions, and hopefully we'll, again, as I indicated in my questions to the member for Kildonan, hopefully we'll spur on other jurisdictions to look at what's going on in Manitoba, and I think it was New Brunswick and federally as well, and make sure that they have the same provisions so that there's a continuity across this country so that those individuals that are serving as reservists or in any capacity in the military know that

we, their elected officials, have nothing but the utmost respect for that service.

And so, with those few comments, I thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Like to also put a few words on the record regarding this important bill by the member for Kildonan. As we know, the—currently, under The Civil Service Act, employment preference is given to veterans. This bill extends the preference to include reservists with the Canadian Forces who are in active service.

Now I wanted to point out that our NDP team is a strong supporter of the military in Manitoba and supports its current members and our veterans and the services they receive. We will stand with one voice here in the Legislature for our military, our veterans and their services, and we do support this bill.

* (10:40)

In fact, I have a son who's now 30 who actually spent probably 10 years in the reservists at Minto, Minto Armoury, and while he was in the reserves those years, he did do a nine-month stint in Afghanistan. And certainly he would then be considered activist—active for this particular bill. He's since gone on to joining the actual army itself for three—I think three years. And he's now switched to the air force, where he's in Comox, BC, actually, fixing radar, and is in Germany right now, actually, learning more on the Airbus radar system. So it goes to show you that—how important the reservist system is, because that, for him, was the in thing, where joining at Minto, spending time in the reservist units, actually going to, I think, North Carolina and Arizona to jump out of airplanes—it didn't make me too happy—but based on that experience with the reserves and then the nine months in Afghanistan, he, at that point, made a decision to join the military, the army portion, on a full-time basis. And, as I'd indicated, after a few years there, decided now to go to the air force.

So, with those words, I want to say that we support this bill and that we're prepared to vote on it now. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 213, The Civil Service

Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service).

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

Recorded Vote

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

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having—*[interjection]* Oh.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Maloway: I request leave to have a recorded vote on this bill.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have a recorded vote on this bill?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no. *[interjection]*

We'll—the House can take a two-minute recess while they're—the House leaders have a conversation.

The House recessed at 10:42 a.m.

The House resumed at 10:44 a.m.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we are okay to grant leave for a recorded vote on this bill but would like to do so at 11:35, just five minutes ahead of our previously agreed 11:40 vote for 208 and 209.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for a recorded vote on this bill to take place at 11:35 this morning? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I'd like to seek leave of the House to see if we can call it 11 o'clock.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—The Potato's Significant Impact on Manitoba's Heritage and Economy

Madam Speaker: The hour now being 11 a.m., the time for private members' resolutions is before us. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on The Potato's Significant Impact on

Manitoba's Heritage and Economy, brought forward by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski)—the honourable member for Riding Mountain, sorry.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I move, seconded by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson),

WHEREAS Manitoba has a long history of commercial potato farming dating back to 1908; and

WHEREAS Manitoba harvests thousands of acres of potatoes today, as new markets have been developed across Canada and into the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS currently there are over 24 varieties of potatoes grown in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS this industry is directly responsible for a significant portion of agricultural production in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba has large areas of land suitable for potato production and the potential for expanding the processing industry; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's potato industry is growing and could soon become the perennial largest potato producer in Canada.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to acknowledge the important role of Manitoba's potato industry in the provincial economy.

Motion presented.

Mr. Nesbitt: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to introduce Resolution 13 recognizing the potato and its importance to Manitoba.

I drive past potato fields all the time. Many of you probably do, as well. There are 64,000 acres planted in this province, so they aren't hard to find. My drive home to the Riding Mountain constituency takes me past the Simplot potato processing plant in Portage la Prairie. That's a huge facility, one that produces hundreds of millions of pounds of french fries every year for the American market.

So, if you spend any time in rural Manitoba, it's pretty easy to grasp the importance of the potato to our economy. Since the early 1990s, potato production has soared as the world develops more of a taste for french fries and potato chips. Today, the

potato accounts for fully one third of all vegetable-farm cash receipts in Canada. Potatoes account for about 36 per cent of all fresh and processed vegetables consumed in this country. Potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium. They are also a good source of vitamin B6 and contain no fat, sodium or cholesterol.

We all associate the potato with Prince Edward Island, and indeed, they are the largest producer in the country. However, potatoes have been grown in Manitoba for at least 100 years, and what you may not know is that Manitoba is the second province in Canada in both potato production and acreage planted.

The value of Manitoba's potato crop has been consistently increasing since 2011, and in 2015 it stood at approximately \$275 million. In total, the Manitoba potato industry, that is to say the farming, shipping and processing of potatoes grown in this province, is responsible for over \$1.4 billion in output, with \$1 billion of that in Manitoba. An industry study found that potatoes added \$287 million to the Manitoba gross domestic product. The province's expanding potato industry employs over 1,500 full-time and casual farm workers, and the processors account for another 1,000 jobs.

So, as you can see, this is an extremely important crop, Madam Speaker, for the Manitoba economy.

The most popular variety of potato in Manitoba by far is the Russet Burbank, however, there are over 24 varieties produced here. Manitoba's yields have increased significantly over the past few years, from around 275 hundredweight per acre to 315 hundredweight per acre. This has driven an increase in production.

The increase in yield is mainly due to improvements in irrigation and water management practices. However, we need to do much more to improve our yield. American producers in the Pacific Northwest have a much longer growing season and, therefore, higher yields and can sell their product for less money. They are also closer to Asia, which has become the No. 1 market for potato products. That puts significant competitive pressure on Manitoba potato farmers.

Now the fact that the Canadian dollar is low right now is a positive for us as it makes our potatoes comparatively cheaper, but we also need to maintain

a technological edge. To that end there are a variety of research initiatives under way involving both the industry and government to improve potato yields in Manitoba.

* (10:50)

A lot of this work is being 'co-ordinated' by the Manitoba Potato Research Committee, which involves both industry and government. The committee is focusing on four key areas: optimizing nutrient and pesticide inputs; lessening the impact of soil salinity and imperfect drainage on tuber yield; optimizing water management; and preventing soil-borne potato diseases.

There is also an initiative under way, led by Peak of the Market, to develop a sweet potato suitable for cultivation here in Manitoba. We all know that sweet potatoes have surged in popularity over the last few years. At the moment, we import almost all of them from the southern US, but, if we could grow our own, that could be a major boost to the Manitoba economy. Potatoes produced in Manitoba are of a high quality and are sought after by food producers. In 2006-7, Canada shipped 970,000 tons of frozen french fries to foreign markets, making it the second largest french fry exporter in the world after the Netherlands. And fully half of Canada's French fries are produced in Manitoba.

The processing sector accounts for nearly 80 per cent of potato usage in Manitoba. The rest is split between seed potatoes and table potatoes. This 80 per cent is the highest percentage of potatoes going to processing of any province in Canada, and, as we all know, processed goods create a lot more jobs and bring in a lot more revenue than we would get from simply exporting truckloads of raw potatoes. It's always better to have value added in your exports, and Manitoba's potato sector is a very good example of that.

Simplot Canada, in Portage la Prairie, and McCain Foods, in both Portage and Carberry, process Manitoba's potatoes into french fries. Manitoba produces 19 per cent of Canada's potatoes, which is an impressive number, but we produce 50 per cent of Canada's french fries. It's a great industry which brings a lot of value added to this province. McCain is McDonald's sole potato supplier in Canada, and McDonald's sells more fries than anyone else. Next time you enjoy some McDonald's

fries, there's a good chance they will have been produced right here in Manitoba.

In addition to the three french-fry plants, we also have the Old Dutch chip factory here in Winnipeg, which uses Manitoba potatoes, as well as several other businesses that produce starch products. So, all told, the potato industry in Manitoba is probably much larger than any of us realized.

With our competitive hydro rates and our government's open-door policy for business expansion, our government believes that Manitoba has the potential to expand processing capacity. And our potato farmers have, Madam Speaker, the capacity to increase their production. Manitoba has the ability to meet increased demand through increase in irrigated acres and infrastructure support.

To realize our full potential as a potato exporter, we need to find new customers. Currently, 80 per cent of Manitoba's potato exports are to the US. We know that the fluctuation in the area under cultivation is linked in part to the changing exchange rate. There is a risk in relying too much on a single customer, and opening new export markets will help us lower the risk. The signing of the competitive economic and trade agreement, CETA, with the European Union last week presents a significant opportunity for us to boost our exports.

Our new Progressive Conservative government is supportive of bilateral trade agreements, as market access is critical for Manitoba's export sectors to be competitive. We are excited to see Canada and the EU significantly liberalize trade flows in a manner that generates economic benefits for both jurisdictions and enhanced access for beef, pork, wheat, canola, potatoes and agri-food products.

Officials in Growth, Enterprise and Trade estimate that CETA will increase Manitoba's overall exports of goods and services to the EU by approximately 24 per cent or over \$200 million. CETA will help Canada transform and diversify our economy and our trade in the long run. Ninety-eight per cent of tariff lines will be duty free upon implementation of the agreement, and 99 per cent will be duty free seven years after implementation. Currently, only 25 per cent of EU tariff lines are duty free. And I'm pleased to note, Madam Speaker, that the EU will immediately remove tariffs on frozen potato products once this agreement comes into force.

Past precedent would indicate that this deal will lead to an expansion in our exports of potato products. When the Canada-South Korea free-trade deal came into force, our exports of potato products increased dramatically. Seoul eliminated its 'tarrinse' on January 1st, 2015, and the next year, Canada's potato exports to Korea jumped 136 per cent; they increased from 4.4 to 13 million dollars. That's a very substantial benefit to Canada and especially to Manitoba, given our share of the potato industry.

Increased market access to the EU coupled with the potential for expanding our potato industry would have a positive impact on Manitoba's economy. It is important that we acknowledge the significant role that the potato continues to play in Manitoba. It is also important to acknowledge the future possibilities of Manitoba's potatoes, both within the province and worldwide.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the members opposite can get on board and support this resolution. Quite simply, everyone likes potatoes.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, can you please canvass the House to see if there is leave for the House not to rise for the noon recess until the three votes on bills 208, 209, and 213 could be completed.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not recess at noon until the votes on bills 208, 209, and 213 are concluded? *[Agreed]*

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will now be held on the resolution, 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.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Is this government currently engaging with their federal counterparts to make investments in a green agricultural sector?

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Thank you for the question, Madam Speaker. Yes. Our provincial agricultural officials are always consulting with the federal government and always looking for

new ways to be innovative in agriculture here in Manitoba.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): It's common knowledge that the NDP flip-flop on free trade and don't recognize its true value. The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA, has recently been signed and, as we know, will benefit Manitoba agriculture.

Could the member please inform the House of the potential benefits of this trade agreement?

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you very much for the question. We know that agriculture is one of the most significant sectors of the Manitoba economy. One in eight jobs depends on the agriculture industry, and farm receipts in Manitoba are almost \$6 billion a year, so anything we can do to trade further within the world will certainly boost this Manitoba economy, and we believe that the CETA agreement is one step forward to ensuring a very healthy future for Manitoba ag producers.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): How much is a bag of potatoes in the North?

Mr. Nesbitt: That's a very good question. I haven't been up in the north country in the last few years, so I couldn't tell you, but I would hesitate to guess it's too much, and this government will certainly do everything they can with their northern policy to lower the cost of food for all residents of northern Manitoba and ensure there's a healthy supply.

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): And I'd like to ask the member to talk a little bit further about the economic benefits of the four processing plants that we have in Manitoba, that being the two McCain's plants—one at Carberry, one at Portage; the Simplot plant; and the Old Dutch plant here in Winnipeg.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you very much for the question. As the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) knows, those plants are very important to his region and very important to the whole province.

There's a thousand jobs in processing here in Manitoba, so it contributes greatly to the economy. Like I said, half of Canada's french fries are made here in—right in Manitoba and exported, so those plants create a great employment for Manitoba, but also the spinoff to the communities that they're in of Carberry and Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Saran: Will this government commit to investing in healthy eating programs and subsidies for northern communities in Manitoba?

* (11:00)

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you very much for the question. Our government fully believes in working to ensure that all Manitobans have good access to food and eat healthy food, and as the member knows, potatoes are one of the most healthy foods they can eat and a very staple on everyone's plate every night, so our government will certainly do everything they can to ensure that young people and adults have access to good, healthy food.

Mr. Johnson: I'm getting a little hungry talking about all these potatoes and french fries and potato chips here.

Can the member discuss the need to diversify our potato export markets? Diversification is very important. Can you elaborate on that, please?

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you very much for the question. Well, certainly, like I said, a lot of our export is to the United States, and, you know, a couple years ago we started exporting much more to the Asian market with the deal with South Korea. And the European market will certainly grow now that CETA is in place, and once it's signed I think we can look forward to further exports to Europe. And in turn, though, we need to—we certainly need to support our producers here in Manitoba to ensure that they have all the tools they need to increase their production.

Madam Speaker: I would just like to indicate for the independent member that each independent member is only allowed one question, sorry.

Mr. Saran: How do unions help to protect the rights of agricultural workers in precarious work situations?

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, thank you very much for the question. Unions play a large role here in Manitoba in many industries besides agriculture, and this government is fully supportive of unions. We're fully supportive of the democratic rights of unions to organize and to have a secret ballot when they want to organize.

As far as health and safety goes, union or private employers, health and safety is very important, and our government, you know, takes very seriously the health of all of our workers.

Mr. Johnson: Can the member explain how we can help farmers increase production of potatoes? Is there something we can do to help the farmers and grow this market even further?

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you very much for the question. Yes, our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), our Agriculture Department, is working with the Keystone Potato Producers Association on innovative projects to help them with their yields. Like I said in my speech there, there's some key points to growing more potatoes, working with pesticides, and so, again, I think our Agriculture Department is truly supportive and knows the value of the potato industry and consults with the association regularly.

Mr. Saran: What new supports for migrant workers will this government provide?

Mr. Nesbitt: Every worker in Manitoba is important, whether they be migrant or permanent workers here in Manitoba, so we take all their concerns seriously. They're all covered by the employment law here in Manitoba, health and safety regulations. So we know the value of the migrant workers in the vegetable industry especially, and we'll do everything in our power to ensure that they're treated as fairly as any other worker in Manitoba.

Mr. Johnson: We all know how important jobs are in the rural 'areu'-area. Can you elaborate and just put on the record again how many full-time and casual workers are in the potato industry?

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you to the member for the question. And I guess, indeed, it's one of the points I've been trying to make here, that it's a bigger industry than most people realize. So let's just go through some of the facts again.

The potato was worth \$275 million in farm cash receipts in 2015. It adds approximately \$287 million to Manitoba's GDP and employs about 2,500 workers in this province—1,500 of them in the potato growing industry and 1,000 in processing. And potatoes are certainly a product that increasing in importance in the world as the world develops more of a taste for french fries. So that's what my resolution is about: recognizing the importance of potatoes in our economy.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): What can be done to help northern communities grow potatoes?

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you for the question. That's a very good question. With climate change here, we

certainly know that crops are being grown much further north. Even in my region, there's crops that's being grown there that weren't considered 10 or 15 years ago. So our government is fully open to supporting the North, and our Agriculture Department can work with producers in the North to see what we can do about growing vegetables such as potatoes.

Madam Speaker: [*inaudible*] like to indicate that the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) can seek leave to ask a question if she so chooses to do so, but she would need the leave of the House to ask a second question.

Mr. Saran: What supports is this government making to encourage producers and industry to meet environmental standards?

Mr. Nesbitt: I think farmers have always been great environmental stewards here in Manitoba, and they will continue to do so moving forward. Farmers respect their land and know that if they hurt their land, they're not going to be able to produce what they want the next year. So our government is fully supportive of all programs that will help the environment here in Manitoba now and moving forward.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The debate is now open.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I congratulate the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) bringing this PMR regarding the significance of potatoes in the economy of Manitoba.

Our NDP team recognizes the importance of the Manitoba potato industry to this province's economy and the efforts of Manitoba's potato growers in maintaining and building the—building a strong, vibrant potato sector in our province.

Agriculture is an important part of our rural economy, providing good jobs in our local communities. Manitoba currently produces roughly 20 per cent of Canada's potato crop and is western Canada's largest potato producer. We are home to four potato processing plants: Midwest Food Products in Carberry, Manitoba; McCain Foods in Carberry; Old Dutch Foods in Winnipeg; Simplot Canada, Portage la Prairie.

In 2016, our NDP team announced an investment of nearly 380,000 under-dollars under the Manitoba's Growing Forward 2 Growing Value program in McCain's potato processing plant in Carberry to reduce waste and promote sustainable growth of Manitoba's potato industry.

We made steady progress on what matters most to Manitoba farm families: steady economic growth and good jobs. Agriculture is an important part of our rural economy and our provincial economy, providing good jobs in our local communities.

We have heard clearly from farmers; they need us to invest in the future of their industry to continue to grow the economy. Manitoba farmers provide healthy, local food for all of us. Agriculture and agri-food industries provide good jobs in Manitoba: 34,000 direct jobs and tens of thousands of indirect jobs. Agriculture and agri-food industries make up 41 per cent of all Manitoba exports. Last year, in 2015, was one of the best years on record for total net farm cash income and a record year for soybean acres.

The best way to keep growing our economy and creating new jobs in agriculture is to make smart, strategic investments in innovation and research targeted on farm infrastructure.

* (11:10)

We extended health coverage to seasonal agriculture workers. We waived wait times for eligibility for nearly 400 workers. Our NDP team invested more than \$120,000 in new equipment to help a hemp processor in Gilbert Plains transform hemp straw into absorbent pellets for kitty litter. This kitty litter will be natural, dust free and environmentally friendly. This investment is in support of Manitoba Bio-products Strategy and its goal of donating \$2 billion in annual revenue by 2018.

Our NDP team installed 50 new automated weather stations all around Manitoba, bringing our total to 61. These stations provide timely, detailed, free information to farmers. These stations are solar powered and can help make decisions surrounding soil conditions, crop diseases and insects, crop residue burning as well as flood protecting and drought forecasting.

Our Growing Forward 2 partnership with the federal government has the flexibility to create new jobs and grow Manitoba's economy. This agreement will allow us to meet challenges in Manitoba's

agriculture industry and ensure our farmers and their families are protected. The investments such as the beef forage platform provide our partners with innovative programming and important research.

The Farmland School Tax Rebate started by our NDP team makes life more affordable for farm families, allowing them to grow their operations, build up their farms and stay working in Manitoba. When we came into office, the rebate was at zero. Today, that rebate is now 80 per cent. When our NDP team created the tax credit, it was 33 per cent in 2004, and we have made steady progress and increased it to 80 per cent, saving farmland owners \$35 million annually. It has saved farm families a grand total of over \$300 million since we put it in place.

Our NDP team put reasonable measures in place to ensure this rebate remains financially sustainable into the future: limiting the rebate to only Manitoba residents, capping the annual rebate at \$5,000 per farm and reducing the time to apply for the rebate from three years to one. It was our NDP government that brought in the Farmland School Tax Rebate to help our farm families. This program did not exist when the Conservatives were last in government.

Our NDP team brought in the best crop insurance program in Canada with over 90 per cent of seeded acres covered, far beyond the level of any other jurisdiction. We brought in an Excess Moisture Insurance program to help our farmers during the times of flooding and heavy rainfall. We protected beef and pork producers through the Western Livestock Price Insurance Program and the new forage insurance program.

Our former NDP government passed important legislation to better protect livestock and poultry from animal diseases such as PED and avian influenza. Conservatives tried to stall it even though all of Manitoba's farm organizations supported this important work.

Our NDP team introduced The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act, which brought in tough biosecurity measures to help protect Manitoba families. PCs should come clean with Manitobans as to whether or not they will put the health of Manitobans first and retain Manitoba's Noxious Weeds Amendment Act.

We preserved the community pastures program after the federal Conservative government abandoned it. This protects huge tracts of Manitoba grassland.

Agriculture accounts for 31 per cent of all greenhouse emission in Manitoba, but Manitoba farmers are on the forefront of progressive environmental change and have been adopting practices to increase efficiencies, including the use of enhanced efficiency fertilizers and precision agriculture technology.

Our NDP team is committed to promoting sustainable agricultural practice that lead to greater resiliency to climate change, reduced emissions and a growing green economy.

We will continue to promote organic farming systems to reduce energy use and GHG emissions.

Our NDP team—government worked closely with industry and academia to support the expansions of soybean and pulse acres to reduce consumption of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and the resulting nitrous oxide emissions.

Our Growing Forward 2 initiative included the Environmental Farm Plan, which helps farm managers identify the agriculture environmental assets and risks of their operations and create a plan to reduce this risk.

This program helped both farmers and—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): It certainly is a pleasure to rise in the House today in support of this resolution.

All we have to think about is Manitoba pork, Manitoba beef, a nice cob of Manitoba corn with mashed potatoes and gravy. It's just about lunchtime, so I thought I would mention it because now we don't have long to wait so that we can go eat and just imagine what we're eating.

But the resolution before us today from the member from Riding Mountain recognizes the significance of the potato, of agriculture in Manitoba, talks about the history, and it brings certainly forward a very strong future for agriculture in this province.

I want to look back just a little bit to the Scottish and Irish settlers who, back in 1812, produced a very high-quality of potato product from the soils right here in Manitoba. We have a lot of history that I could certainly go on and on and on about history on the potato and on agriculture in Manitoba.

I'm a city boy who had the opportunity of working on farms for the summer on relatives' farms.

But, when I look at 1812 and the work of the potato, all we need to do is look 96 years later when we had the first record of Manitoba production in the commercial potato industry.

Today, Manitoba accounts to be the second largest province in Canada in the production of the potato next to PEI. I know we are getting very, very close. We do have, as previously mentioned, over 24 varieties of potatoes produced in Manitoba that are very high quality for protest—processing, pardon me, and there are over 120 producers under contract to produce processing potatoes.

Manitoba has the ability to meet increased demand through increase in irrigated acres and infrastructure support. And I do want to go back, Madam Speaker, to November the 20th, 2015, Stats Canada reported that more potatoes are being grown in Canada than in previous years. I will note that because of that, though, it was the efforts of Manitoba, as we were very largely responsible for that increase. The agency goes on to report that production in Canada was up 4.1 per cent in 2015, 57.2 per cent of that increase came from right here in Manitoba.

So we can certainly get on board with our ag producers in the potato industry to see that there is a great future, and one day soon Manitoba may well be the No. 1 producer of potato in Canada.

As we've heard before, as well, the potato crop value has been consistently increasing over the past few years to approximately \$275 million. The one thing, though, the Manitoba potato industry adds approximately 403 million to the Canadian GDP.

So we can see that the potato industry is not just limited to only growing the raw product, but also the processing sector and, as we heard mainly French fries, which account for 75 per cent of potato use in Manitoba.

* (11:20)

As with other areas in the ag sector, value adding is important to maintain market share and to insulate from market fluctuations. We know we certainly have the capacity in Manitoba in the producers of potato to certainly expand even more and more.

We just need to look at the Keystone Potato Producers Association. They are the organization for Manitoba that all of the producers of the processing

potato belong to. We just have to look at their active role with the Canadian horticulture council, the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Potato Marketing Association of North America and United Potato Growers of Canada.

So the organization is fairly active; it's fairly inclusive throughout Manitoba, and we're certainly on a Canadian stage if not a world stage. So there is certainly more to it than just producing a potato.

Madam Speaker, we certainly look at ensuring that we have the ability to produce not just in Manitoba but—not just in the United States as well but throughout the world. Signing agreements like CETA and other trade agreements will provide additional markets for the potato producers right here in Manitoba.

I know the member of Flin Flon had stated on June 1st, 2016, and I quote: as this government wishes to pursue its agenda with TPP, once again, workers' jobs will be under attack. We can't have that. End of quote.

Well, I know my life in business, I ran a business with two other partners, my son and my brother-in-law, and I know the more that we imported, we did that because we sold more. And the more we sold, the more we imported, the busier we got, which meant we had to—we increased our clientele but we also created employment. So, when we look at things like TPP or in this case CETA, we certainly have the opportunity to increase and create employment in Manitoba.

I do—and I know the member from Riding Mountain did briefly mention the market overseas but, again, a free trade agreement with Korea recently came into force, Madam Speaker. Canada's exports of prepared potatoes went from 5.5 million in 2014 to over 13 million in 2015. So we can see by having an elimination of some tariffs, 18 per cent tariff with Korea in January 1st, 2015, it opened up a market, and that's what we need to do.

When we look at agreements like CETA, like the TPP, these are opportunities that we will jump on, that our producers will jump on, to enhance their livelihoods. So, when we look at the potato industry, you know, we look at—to us, to me, it's eating potatoes, it's eating fries with my burger or whatever the case might be. To thousands and thousands of people in this province, it's about their livelihood, it's about putting a crop in the ground, it's about

harvesting that crop and processing it so that they too can feed their families, so that they can have a shelter over their heads.

I know the members opposite have a long record, recorded history of opposing new opportunities to expand the agriculture industry, especially in the free trade agreements. It's proven.

Manitoba's major interests with the European Union are reducing barriers to our agriculture and agrifood products. The negotiation of CETA involved proper consultations with meaningful stakeholders. And CETA will help Canada transform and diversify both our economy and our trade in the long term. And we just need to expand on that.

Your new Progressive Conservative government is supported of—supportive, pardon me—of bilateral trade agreements, as marketing access is critical for Manitoba's exports, depending sectors to be competitive.

Madam Speaker, the economic importance of Manitoba potato industry came to light in a study that I want to refer to here. It was prepared in 2013 by Informa Economics and titled, *The Economic Contributions of the Manitoba Potato Complex*. Facts are: it nationally created 4,594 full-time jobs with 3,143 in Manitoba. Manitoba potato industry contributed \$1 billion to Manitoba's economic output. We already heard that it added 287 million to the provincial GDP and 403 million to the Canadian GDP. And it contributed to a total Canadian economic output of \$1.438 billion.

Madam Speaker, we are excited that the Canada-European Union significantly liberalizes trade flows in a manner that allows us to expand again, not just locally, but around the world.

These development initiatives are enabling and enhancing the opportunity of agricultural producers in Manitoba, especially when we look at the potato, to really create more agricultural sector opportunities within CETA and because of CETA.

So, again, we look at a great opportunity for all of us in this House to work together in support of this resolution that supports an industry within Manitoba's rich agricultural sector. It produces jobs, it creates wide opportunity and truly recognized the many efforts of our producers who work extremely hard to put food on our tables, not just theirs.

With that, Madam Speaker, I hope everybody comes on board with this resolution. Agriculture is

what we rely on in Manitoba, and again I will end with that, and thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It's a pleasure to speak about the potato's significant impact on Manitoba's heritage and economy. I know we didn't hear too much about the heritage side of it, but that's all right. But I think it's fair to say that Manitoba is indeed a melting pot of potato eaters. We have a proud tradition, from wherever our families came from, of bringing potato recipes along, and that has continued to today.

I do want to speak just a little bit about the things that you learn as a member of this Legislature. I've said a couple of times that one of the great things of this job is that you get to learn things that you never thought you'd learn in the first place. You get to meet people you might not have met other than your role in this Legislature, and the potato comes into that area in a very, very particular way for me.

I had the chance, when I was the Trade minister responsible for Competitiveness, Training and Trade, I had the chance to go out to Carberry and meet the folks at Manitoba starch company. And I'd like to talk a little bit about that because I think it shows how Manitoba innovation and support from the government and the hard work of Manitobans has literally created something out of nothing.

We know, and the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) I think put on the record, some of the facts about how important potato is to our economy, the number of processing plants here in Manitoba that provide potatoes for restaurants like McDonald's, but also for Safeway, and have helped to promote Manitoba as the leading grower of potatoes in Manitoba.

But there's more to it than that, and of course if you know a company like Simplot or a company like McCain, when they make french fries, of course there are waste products. The best parts, the nice delicious fries that we're all thinking about as we're close to lunch, are certainly the product that comes out of that plant. There's also a number of by-products, and those by-products actually would—but for the inventiveness of Manitobans, would actually have to go into the sewer system. And communities like Portage la Prairie, communities like Carberry, would then have to spend more money on waste water treatment.

Well, we need to know that Manitoba starch is a company that operates in Carberry that has actually been successful at helping those communities and those plants deal with their waste products, but to take those waste products and turn them into made-in-Manitoba products that are themselves exported and used across the world.

If you ever buy a container of Planters Peanuts, take a look at the ingredients. Of course, peanuts are the No. 1 ingredient. Sometimes sugar might be, but there in the No. 3 or 4 spot would be potato starch, and it is a virtual certainty wherever you buy peanuts in the world, the potato starch that's in that can is going to be potato starch that is generated from the by-products of potatoes right here in Manitoba.

And I had the chance to go out to visit Earl McLaren, who's the president of Manitoba starch company, and that company came about because of the creativeness of Manitobans, and I'm very proud to talk about that a little bit. Earl and his brother Derek were potato farmers. They were farmers, started in the early '80s, and they were actually recognized by McDonald's, as a big purchaser, as some of the best potato farmers in the country. An individual named Roger Moore—not the actor, as far as I know—started the company called Manitoba Starch Products in 1987, and Roger saw an opportunity. He actually effectively invented starch drying equipment to take this waste product and to turn it into something useful, and at that time in 1987 he started with a single contract but was able to expand.

He built a second plant in 2000, perhaps buoyed by the excitement of an NDP government in Manitoba, and he incorporated a lot more improvements in design and increased its capacity and more than doubled its employees in the early 2000s. And it was then that Earl and Derek McLean [*phonetic*], already award-winning potato farmers, saw the opportunity. They know potatoes, and they saw that, you know, we can grow potatoes; we can sell our potatoes to be used for french fries and for hash browns, but we can also get on board and we can keep selling this product.

* (11:30)

And when the McLarens came on, they—in January 2002, they had big plans. And the McLarens in 2004 completed a food-grade expansion with the addition of food-grade-quality processing, packaging and monitoring equipment, and they were able to expand the market reach of Manitoba Starch Products to include food and food ingredient

manufacturers. And after 2004, Manitoba Starch Products continually improved its facilities through the addition of new packaging systems, improved raw material handling, various certifications, additional lab capabilities, and most recently in 2010, shortly after I was able to visit them, a new dryer with increased capacity and improved controls.

So what a great success story. Here's Manitobans who know the product, who then were able to leverage their knowledge into taking something that would have been flushed into the waste-water systems and then have-be processed by those communities. Well, now Manitoba Starch Products buys that waste product, which is an additional value for the province, and they turn it into something even better. And, for me, that's really what our agricultural producers are all about. And I was very proud when I was the Trade minister to stand shoulder to shoulder with our producers and our manufacturing producers and people like Manitoba Starch Products who added value to our tremendous products and want to sell it abroad.

And the day that I visited Earl McLaren in Carberry, his brother actually wasn't around. We actually got him on the phone because his brother was in Europe at that time seeking out new markets for his products, new markets that, of course, as a government, we were proud to support, and I don't expect that to change. I am hopeful this new government will be equally supportive of helping our producers, helping our processors, helping our manufacturers to continue to find new sources abroad to sell our products, because we know that that benefits Manitobans.

So I just wanted to speak a little bit about the McLaren brothers because I think it's a great example of what Manitobans can do; they can use their inventiveness. I know that for 17 years, Conservatives moaned and complained and told us the sky was falling. Well, at the same time, agricultural producers were going around doing their thing, creating new products, coming up with new ideas supported by the government. I hope that the Progressive Conservative members can put aside their partisan nature and appreciate that just as we will be supportive of this new government when and if they are supportive of producers, when they're supportive of exporters and when they truly commit to helping value be added to Manitoba agricultural products.

So, with those comments, I know that I've got other colleagues of mine who are very happy to stand up and talk about the potato, so I'm going to give them a chance to do so. So, I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the chance, and I thank the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) for the chance to put some words on the record today about Manitoba agriculture.

Thank you.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I just wanted to put on record that when I left my community, an apple that I tried to sell in my laundromat would cost \$1.65; a banana would cost \$1.75; a potato would cost \$1.65. And that was just for one of everything. And so, I just wanted to bring that back to the table here—to the House.

We should make Manitoba the No. 1 in potato production by including the North. It was part of our history that the old post area where the missionaries first came, the Black Robes, they started potato production in—on some islands, and so my father actually grew up harvesting, helping harvest, and during times of great struggle, being trapped in the one area, it helped that there was cellars dug throughout the islands and there was potatoes stored for those harsh seasons. And so I just wanted to put on record that we would gladly support this resolution.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Thanks for giving me the opportunity to say a few words about the potato and all the great work that is Manitoba agriculture.

Agriculture is, as many people know, the foundation of our economy, the lifeblood of our economy, and—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The time being 11:35, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin will have nine minutes remaining.

In accordance with the agreement made by the House, I am interrupting the debate for a recorded vote on second reading of Bill 213, after which the sponsors for bills 208 and 209 must move the concurrence and third reading motions for those bills before the House can proceed to recorded votes of those bills.

As was agreed by the House, the House will not rise for the noon recess until these three votes have been concluded.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

(Continued)

Bill 213—The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service)

(Continued)

Recorded Vote

Madam Speaker: So a recorded vote having been called on second reading, Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service), call in the members.

* (11:50)

The question before the House is Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service).

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Chief, Clarke, Cox, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Friesen, Gerrard, Graydon, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 46, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 208—The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move into concurrence and third reading of Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), that Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day

Act, be reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for the third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: I would just appreciate the support that I've had in the past in this House and in committee on this particular bill. I think it's important that we recognize the men and women that do the law—or look after the law in the province of Manitoba but also recognize where they came from and how long they've been there, and it's very, very important that the RCMP did start in Manitoba, and it's important that we remember that and pass on that memory to the next generation but honour them for what they do today.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): It's nice to stand for the third reading of Bill 208 and reiterate the support that we all share for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The RCMP are incredibly respected for their services and sacrifice that they continue to provide to our communities. They are especially noteworthy here in Manitoba as they are recognized as an elite law enforcement here in Canada. The positive reputation of the RCMP continues to grow as does the number of our officials do. With our world constantly changing, the jobs of the RCMP are not getting any easier. They deserve the utmost respect, which is why we are happy to support Bill 208 and to say thank you for the admirable work that all RCMP officers do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I can say on behalf of our NDP caucus we certainly support this bill. We do truly respect the history and the heritage of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and we absolutely respect the work that RCMP officers do representing or policing 99 per cent of the geographical size of Manitoba. It's not easy policing in Manitoba, and it's certainly not easy policing the vast geography of our province. We think they do a very, very good job. They are deserving of our support. And I believe this bill being passed by the Legislature today will be one more thing we can do to tell our Mounties that we respect them and that we have faith in them.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act.

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

Recorded Vote

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

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 208, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Day Act.

* (12:00)

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Chief, Clarke, Cox, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Friesen, Gerrard, Graydon, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 46, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 209—The Childhood Cancer Awareness Month Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move into concurrence and third reading of Bill 209, The Childhood Cancer Awareness Month Act.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I move, seconded by the member from the Interlake, that Bill 209, The Childhood Cancer Awareness Month Act; Loi sur le Mois de la sensibilisation au cancer chez l'enfant, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ewasko: I'll just put a—just a couple words on the record.

I would like to thank all of those families who showed up here in the gallery for second reading and then also to committee for sharing their stories; to those families who have lost their kids due to cancer and they continue to move on to bring awareness to all Manitobans on this unbelievable, tough disease, Madam Speaker; and to those families who continue to battle cancer each and every day—I'd like to absolutely dedicate this bill to all those families because I know that here in the province of Manitoba and including throughout Canada, there's about a 16th degree of separation from all of us, and all of us are touched by that—by cancer in one way, shape or form.

So I'd like to thank also all the members of this House for supporting this bill, moving it forward. And just remember the gold ribbon for this coming September 2017, and let's paint the province gold.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): We from this side of the House, we thank the member from Lac du Bonnet for bringing this very important bill. And we wholeheartedly support this bill, and we do hope that our government will find ways to provide support and resources to CancerCare Manitoba and all the health facilities that treat cancer.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'd like to thank the member for introducing this bill, and I'm glad it'll—there will now be a whole month dedicated to creating awareness for childhood cancer.

A child is a blessed gift, and at times for no rhyme or reason cancer strikes, and so we need to honour these children and support their families.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 209, The Childhood Cancer Awareness Month Act.

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

Also, as a recorded vote was requested earlier, call in the members.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 209, The Childhood Cancer Awareness Month Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Chief, Clarke, Cox, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Graydon, Helwer, Isleifson,

Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 48, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

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