



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

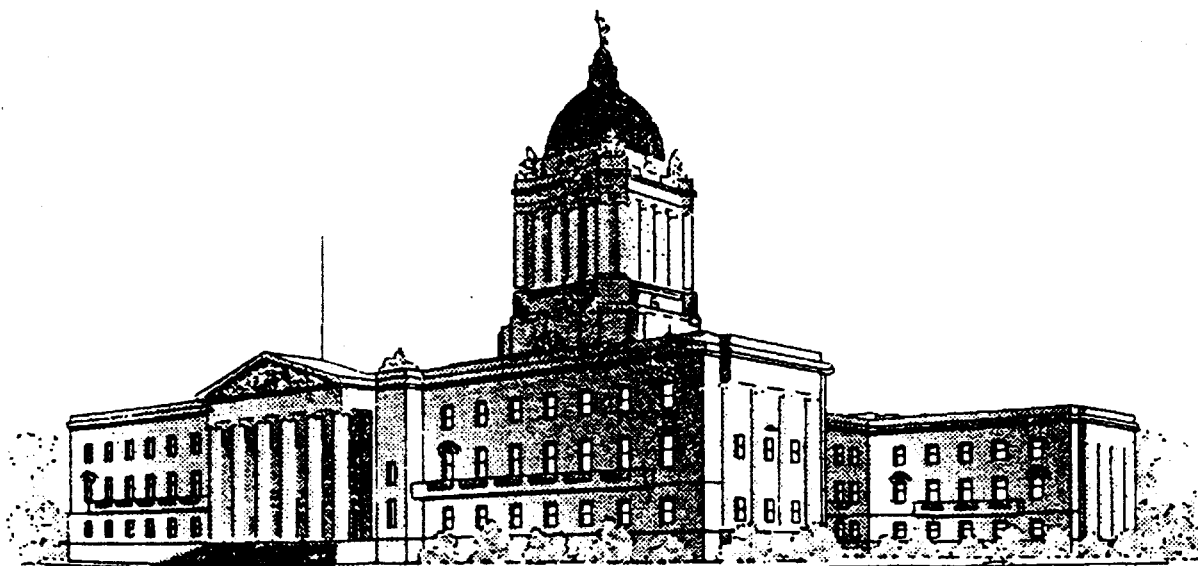
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
Vacant	Charleswood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 19, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kevin Solinsky, Chad Smith, Fred Pennell and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Urban Shared Services Corporation (USSC) has announced plans to privatize laundry, food services and purchasing for the Winnipeg hospitals; and

THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

THAT under the terms of the contract, Ontario businesses will profit at the expense of Manitoba's health care system; and

THAT after construction of a food assembly warehouse in Winnipeg, chilled, prepared food will be shipped in from Ontario, then assembled and heated before being shipped to the hospitals; and

THAT people who are in the hospital require nutritious and appetizing food; and

THAT the announced savings as a result of the contract have been disputed, and one study by Wintemute Randle Kilimnik indicated that, "A considerable number of studies have compared costs of service delivery in health care between self-operation (public sector) and privatization. Invariably, privatization is more expensive."; and

THAT no one in Manitoba seems to benefit from this contract, especially patients.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to revert to Presenting Petitions? [agreed]

I had reverted to Presenting Petitions, and I am not sure if that is the one that was submitted.

An Honourable Member: Probably it is reading and receiving. Sorry, wrong one.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas did not read his petition into the record. May I ask him to do so now, please.

Mr. George Hikes (Point Douglas): It would be a pleasure to read it.

Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Dana Myrowich, Mark Myrowich, Tannis Drysdale and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Urban Shared Services Corporation (USSC) has announced plans to privatize laundry, food services and purchasing for the Winnipeg hospitals; and

THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

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THAT no one in Manitoba seems to benefit from this contract, especially patients.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would like to table today the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for 1998-99 of the Department of Health, as well as the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for '98-99 for the department for Seniors Directorate, also for the Manitoba Housing and also for Manitoba Urban Affairs.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the '96-97 Annual Report for the Department of Highways and Transportation, previously circulated.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 201—The Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 201, The Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la déclaration des droits des victimes d'actes criminels et modifications corrélatives, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

This bill gives victims their right not only to full information about the case that so affects them but to participate in the case, whether regarding the staying of charges, plea bargaining, victim impact statements—and for goodness' sake, we certainly have to catch up with the other provinces there—and restitution, for example, and notably provides for enforcement of these rights. It is the strongest victims' bill of rights introduced in Canada and sets a new standard for respect for victims of crime.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Johns, seconded by the honourable member for Rupertsland, that leave be given to introduce Bill 201, The Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la

déclaration des droits des victimes d'actes criminels et modifications corrélatives, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon twenty-three Grades 5 and 6 students from Maple Leaf School under the direction of Mrs. Sally Metcalfe. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson).

We also have five Grade 12 students from Upward Bound Adult Education under the direction of Ms. Bonnie Clarke. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

Also, ten Grade 10 students from Transcona Collegiate under the direction of Mrs. Colleen Maindonald, Mrs. Linda Wagner, and Mr. Phil Rehberg. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Hospital Authority Interfaith Agreement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday, in answers to questions dealing with the breach of agreement with the interfaith hospitals here in Manitoba and in Winnipeg, the Minister of Health indicated that the WHA would have to be the employing authority for staff. Yet, on page 4 of the agreement that the government signed on October 18, 1996, 18 months ago, the government gave the responsibility for hiring and dealing with human resources to the faith-based institutions. I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): why did he mislead the faith-based institutions 18 months ago when he authorized his former Minister of Health to sign that agreement that articulates those rights?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): First of all, within the faith-based agreement, even with the consolidation of employing authority under the WHA, the ability to designate responsibility for hiring, firing and management of staff in facilities certainly exists. That is the way the plan has evolved and one that, I think, will be able to do the things that have to be done and respect the principles of the faith-based agreement. Surely to goodness, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would want us to take the steps that are necessary to ensure that when we have significant staff changes, such as we will have at the Misericordia Hospital, that we can move those acute care nurses to jobs we have in the system where we need them rather than lay them off and re-post positions in other facilities.

Mr. Doer: On June 2, 1997, the present Minister of Health said: the deficit issue will have to be dealt with, but is not going to be used to the facilities as part of an agreement to sign and evolve into the WHA. We will not pick up your deficit; I say that, clearly today, will not be our position.

In a letter of February 5, 1998, the Department of Health states that approval has been received to provide for deficit support subject to entering into an acceptable agreement with the WHA. Again, why did you mislead this House last June, and why do you continue to mislead the faith-based institutions?

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is inappropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that there has been any misleading going on. The implication in the question is that this misleading of the House was deliberate, and that being the implication, the honourable member ought to use different language.

Mr. Doer: On the same point of order, yes, this is not a dispute of the facts. The minister said in Hansard on June 2 that the deficit issue would not be used as part of the evolution to the WHA for the faith-based institutions. The letter that we tabled in this House, which is available to the Clerk and to the Speaker, says that it is condition one of evolving into the WHA. So, clearly, this government has either misled the House on

June 2—this minister has either misled the House on June 2, or the letter that they are sending to facilities now is inaccurate. We suggest that this is not a dispute of the facts, because the facts are there in Hansard on June 2, and the facts are in the letter that we tabled two days ago in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: I believe, if I understand the government House leader's point of order correctly, he was disputing the use of the word "mislead" and claiming that the word "mislead" has been ruled unparliamentary. The word "mislead" in itself is not deemed to be unparliamentary. It is when it is prefixed with the word "deliberately" mislead. The honourable government House leader therefore does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, over the course of this transition year, as relationships have been developing with the WHA and the various facilities, as issues and how we need to handle them in order to get the best result have developed, it has become very, very clear, in fact it becomes more clear every day about the necessity, the absolute need to ensure that there is a common employing authority to be able to make the movements of staff that allow us to deliver better patient care.

With respect to the deficit letter, when that letter did go out later on, it was decided that the same conditions that were imposed on facilities in rural Manitoba should also be imposed on urban facilities, and I say to the member that this has been an issue that has evolved over the course of the last year.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, when you say one thing to the members of this Chamber on June 2 and say another thing to the members of the faith-based institutions in February, the word "evolve" is not the word that we would use on this side of the House. We would have "changing and breaking your word" as the words that we would use. No wonder the interfaith and the faith institutions, the Mennonites, the Salvation Army, the Catholic church and the other institutions are having

such a great deal of difficulty. They have had their Premier (Mr. Filmon) sign an agreement 18 months ago. They have had their minister—

An Honourable Member: Did not sign it.

Mr. Doer: The Minister of Health signed it on your behalf, so if you want to stand up and answer why you broke your word to those facilities, Madam Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, honourable members opposite and especially the Leader of the Opposition have got into the habit of addressing honourable members directly. It is a well-known and very old rule that members ought to address their comments through the Chair.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, indeed the honourable government House leader does have a point of order. All questions and comments should be addressed through the Chair. Now I am not certain if the honourable Leader had posed—

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: On a new point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On a new point of order?

Mr. Doer: On a new point of order, Madam Speaker, perhaps the House and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) will stop heckling while I am asking my questions that require—if he wants to answer questions, he could stand up and have the backbone to answer on behalf of the signature of his Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), but if he does not have the courage of his convictions, perhaps you should call him to order when he heckles in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the rhetoric just displayed by the honourable Leader of the Opposition in no way amounts to a point of order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition did not have a point of order. I am concerned though that the honourable member did not pose a question.

Health Care System Bed Availability—Government Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, it was an intervention from the government House leader.

Madam Speaker, today there are 16 people in the hallway of St. Boniface Hospital. Today there are 67 patients waiting for beds in the Winnipeg hospitals. Instead of this government negotiating in bad faith, breaking their word, breaking their agreement, changing their word, changing their agreements with our facilities, will the government develop a long-term and a short-term plan to deal with the real crisis in patient care, and will it stop fighting everybody in health care and start working in partnership with proper resources to deal with the patients that are in the hallways as we speak here today?

* (1345)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, there are also thousands of doctors on strike in British Columbia today, too, where a great deal of money has been put in with no avail.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does ask a very serious question. When we met with various faith-based boards last year and we talked about the concept of a common employing authority and delegation of authority, it was my sense at the time and my staff that we would be able to have that accommodation as we move forward. Some of the faith-based facilities, and despite the letter the member refers to and discussions we are having with them, there are different points of view and a different sense of realization of what needs to happen.

The member asks for a plan. We have the plan. We are implementing. The difficulty with any major change in a system is that you are going to have people who oppose it, because it is a different way of providing services. We have provided additional

resources. Dr. Blake McClarty, for example, points out the fact that he has a commitment for additional resources to bring down waiting lists, but more importantly, he needs the ability to reorganize the system to be more efficient. That requires the ability to move staff and hence a common employer. We need these tools, Madam Speaker, to do the job the member asks us to do.

Minister of Health Apology Request

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The Minister of Health is fighting with the doctors. He is fighting with the faith-based institutions. They have broken their word. Will the Premier acknowledge and step in and recognize that this Minister of Health cannot negotiate, and I take and cite as an example—will the Premier ask the Minister of Health to apologize for his comments, when the Minister of Health recently attended at the opening for the LPN for the Brandon Clinic, and the Minister of Health compared the situations of nurses in Manitoba with warfare in Northern Ireland and warfare in the Middle East? Does the Premier have confidence in this Minister of Health to carry on negotiations in these times?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the member for Kildonan, when we have very serious issues to discuss here, flags a discussion that was held in Brandon in an attempt to find a solution to the ongoing dispute between two organizations in nursing that has been going on in this province for 20 years, and it has never been resolved. The kind of talent and skill to bring a resolution is quite a serious one. It was taken in good humour. It was part of the event, and I think the member makes far more out of that statement than was ever intended.

With respect specifically to the faith-based facilities, the member says we are not able to negotiate. We have just managed to achieve a negotiation for a change of function at the Misericordia Hospital that governments I believe in this province have been attempting to achieve for over 20 years. We managed to do that, a fundamental change in the system. We need to get on with the task of regionalizing to deliver better health

services, and we need to make sure the tools are in place to do that.

Health Care System Bed Availability—Government Strategy

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Will the Minister of Health, who today said they started on a plan last year—and I heard it from the previous minister and the previous minister about their plan—explain to the 65 Manitobans who are today in the hospital hallways of our urban hospitals waiting for beds—these are admitted patients, Madam Speaker. Will the Minister of Health explain what he and this government will finally do, given that this crisis has been looming for years and the government has held their noses, not approach a situation and it continues? What is he going to say to those families?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): The member for Kildonan is right, and right in many of the issues in our health care system that need to be resolved have not been able to be resolved in the past. I recall listening to ministers of Health, going back even to the Pawley administration, talking about the need to getting our seven or nine hospitals in Winnipeg working together co-operatively, co-ordinating services. And you know what? We relied on those boards, both New Democratic Party and Conservative governments, to see that happen. And you know how much we got out of it? Very little, very little, because the nature of that system does not allow change to take place. It does not allow the changes to take place that deliver better care.

We made a commitment as a government that we had to get into regionalization. That is the most revolutionary change in the delivery of health care since probably medical insurance in the 1960s. It does not happen overnight, but I can guarantee Manitobans this, that it will produce a much better health care system.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister explain to this House how their superboard, where the golf buddy of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is the chair, that is going to be set up is going to improve everything in Winnipeg, when the superboard in Brandon that has been in operation

cannot deal with the pediatrics issue, when superboards across the province in regional health authorities are doing nothing, like in the minister's own region where they are hiring over a dozen vice-presidents, where line-ups continue, and they ask us today to accept on faith what their superboard is going to do, when they are the ones who cancelled the personal care home beds, when they are the ones who closed Misericordia Hospital? Give us a break, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Praznik: I have always viewed the member for Kildonan as an individual who wanted to discuss the facts and we have done that on many occasions, but what we see today is the member for Kildonan stretching the facts, maybe not wanting to know the facts in order to paint a picture that is inaccurate. He flagged my own region of North Eastman. I spoke to the chair of the board the other day. They have three staff. They have not hired any vice-presidents, but they have assigned additional operating authorities and additional responsibilities to existing staff. The chair informed me that at the end of the day, they will have less administration than they have had in the past. I spoke to the chair of the board, and this is what he tells me.

They speak about Misericordia. In all of the planning that has been discussed by planners in our system over the years, no matter who has been in power, the need to find a new role for the Misericordia has been found. We have found it; they have criticized it. We are adding 280 brand-new beds to the system.

Headingley Correctional Facility Riot—Early Releases

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Following the Headingley riot, the Premier and the past Minister of Justice in this House said over and over again that the individuals released after the riot had served the necessary time, were released on humanitarian, rehabilitative, medical grounds and that conditions and supervision would be placed on their release. Then along comes Justice Ted Hughes and reports that in fact inmates were released that did not meet the standards of eligibility. He said, and I will just quote: I have reflected on why that information was not communicated to the public once it must have become known to ministry officials

towards the end of May. It would have been preferable for the minister to have made a public pronouncement refuting her earlier statements. It is unfortunate that was not done.

My question to the Premier is: now, today, would the Premier finally acknowledge the government's responsibility and correct the record, correct the untrue statements made up to 22 times in this House alone by the government?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I note that the member is quoting from the report that Mr. Justice Hughes made in respect of the incidents that occurred a little over two years ago now.

This government has taken the words, the comments and the advice of Mr. Justice Hughes very, very carefully, has considered them very, very carefully and has taken very proactive steps in order to ensure that the safety of Manitobans is paramount.

We will continue to deal in that manner in respect of our correctional institutes. I know the member for St. Johns wishes to turn our prisons, particularly the Brandon Correctional Institute and The Pas, into open correctional, open-door prisons. We have specifically rejected that recommendation from the member for St. Johns, because we feel that the security of Manitobans is more important than that kind of an ideological position.

* (1355)

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, rather than engaging in some fantasy, now at least apologize and accept responsibility for, first, releasing Donald Rouire following the riot, and second, releasing him without any supervision, without any conditions, without him even starting his anger management programming, and contrary to his risk assessment and procedures? Would the minister, the government just acknowledge that it made mistakes, or will it continue this callous treatment of the victims in the Futch family, victims that this government itself created?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, this side of the House, all members here—our heart goes out to the Futch

family. We are deeply concerned when anyone is the victim of a crime. That is why we have taken very proactive and effective steps to ensure at all times and review on a continuous basis that our correctional facilities meet the needs of Manitobans, that first of all the guards working in those prisons have good conditions, safe conditions, because we know if that is the case then the people of Manitoba are also safe and secure. So we want to reject the type of position of the member for St. Johns that we should simply be opening the doors of our prisons and letting them out. That is a recommendation that they have urged we follow, and we have consistently said that is not an appropriate way to deal with prisoners in Manitoba.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister get beyond these silly politics? Because the Futch family says sympathy is not enough. Would your government now show at least some, at least an ounce of sense of responsibility and caring and acknowledge its false statements, its mistakes? Would this government at least apologize, just apologize to the Futch family?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I have made our position very clear, that our sympathies, our hearts go out to the Futch family, that we are deeply concerned about this matter. The family has chosen to bring this matter before the courts in order that there be a full discussion of all the facts, and I, for one, welcome that development. Not only have we had Mr. Justice Hughes thoroughly review the situation with our correctional institutions, but in fact, the Futch family feels that it is necessary to proceed into the courts to have a full airing. We agree. All Manitobans should know exactly what occurred, and so I am very supportive of that kind of a process. I know they have commenced an action, and I know that all the facts will be delivered in a dispassionate and an appropriate form.

Budget Income Assistance

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, in this year's budget tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), there were many smoke and mirrors, the biggest one of which was the alleged increase in the health budget of a hundred million dollars, which by the time the smoke cleared turned out to be a \$1-million

increase. Similarly, in the budget of the Minister of Family Services there was an alleged increase in benefits to children and families; however, at the same time this government cut social assistance by \$21 million. I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services to confirm that in fact there was no new money in this budget for children and families.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question, because I really would like to inform him that there certainly was not a \$21-million cut in supports to families on welfare. Indeed, Madam Speaker, as a result of the economy in Manitoba, the jobs that have been created, many, many people are no longer on the welfare rolls but they are working. So I make no apologies for the taxpayers of Manitoba that no longer have to support welfare payments to the tune of \$21 million, because those people are now employed and earning money and paying taxes.

* (1400)

Child Tax Benefit

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services why she is clawing back a hundred percent of the child tax benefit for families on social assistance in Manitoba when David Northcott, the executive director of Winnipeg Harvest, says people do not need more government programs, they need access to more money in their pockets. People cannot eat programs.

Why is she not giving money to the poorest of the poor to enable them to buy groceries?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Again, I thank my honourable friend for the question, because it allows me to indicate on the record for all Manitobans to hear that indeed there is more money in this budget. As a result of more people working and less welfare needing to be paid, we are able to reinvest dollars into additional child care so that people who are now on the welfare rolls will be assured of a space when they become employed, because there are so many more job opportunities today than there were in years past.

Madam Speaker, I am really pleased, because we believe in Manitoba that the best form of social security is a job, and we are working aggressively to ensure that the tools are there and the resources are there so that people can move into the workforce, off welfare, become independent and self-sufficient and feel much, much better about themselves as a result.

Mr. Martindale: Would the Minister of Family Services tell us, and more importantly, tell the 25,000 cases on provincial assistance and over 14,000 City of Winnipeg cases why she and her government did nothing, in spite of very good advice from people like David Northcott, who criticized the government for doing nothing to improve the minimum wage and improve welfare benefits—what is she going to tell these people about her budget and the fact that there is nothing in there for them?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have to repeat again that the best form of social security is a job, and we are working aggressively to try to ensure that the jobs, No. 1, are available and that people who are on welfare have the opportunity to be trained to fill those jobs. I make no apologies for that direction.

I would like my honourable friend just to think a little bit about what provinces right across the country are doing as a result of the National Child Benefit. One of the key focuses of the National Child Benefit is to ensure that people are better off working than on welfare. Madam Speaker, there is not any province across the country, including New Democratic provinces, that is increasing welfare rates, but indeed what they are doing is taking—as the federal government puts more money into children through the tax benefit, we are dollar for dollar investing in children in other ways in the province of Manitoba, and I make no apologies for that.

Education System

Closing Exercises—God Save the Queen

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, by government decree back on November 7, 1988, this government stated in regulation: at the close of a school on each day on which the school is in regular operation for instruction or at the close of any opening

exercises that the school may conduct, the pupils shall sing the first verse of God Save the Queen.

My question to the Premier: does he still believe today that that is necessary, that in each and every school day, at the end of the day, that God Save the Queen needs to be sung?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the member, I believe, is not quoting the letter in its entirety. When I looked at it a couple of days ago—[interjection]

An Honourable Member: It is in regulation.

Mr. Filmon: Yes. When I looked at it a couple of days ago, the regulation calls for patriotic exercises to be held in all the schools in this province, and it includes of course opening exercises that involve the singing of O Canada! and God Save the Queen.

You know, we were just talking about national unity in the House—there is a resolution before the House today—and I have often said, you know, there are not a lot of things in the United States that I agree with—there are a lot of things I do, some that I do not—but one of the things that I think the Americans do well is that they instill a sense of patriotism and commitment to their country. They get up every morning in school, and the first thing they do is the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States. They have ceremonies and symbols to try and ensure that people respect their country and grow up as patriotic citizens. That is why we have the flags on either side of you, Madam Speaker. That is why, I think, it is important that people should be taught patriotism in our schools, that they should have that sense of patriotism, and they should be proud of their country. The way in which you do that is by having them practise the symbols of good citizenship, which include singing O Canada! and God Save the Queen, and I am absolutely shocked that the member opposite would take this negative attitude towards that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in our schools we sing O Canada! in the morning, and that is not necessarily what I am questioning the Premier. We have principals, because of the Minister of Education, that are going out now and being told that they have to start revisiting this whole issue. What we are seeking

is direction from the Premier. Is the Premier now saying that all of our public schools in Manitoba have to sing God Save the Queen at the end of the school day? That is the specific question. I do not question about singing O Canada! in the morning.

Mr. Filmon: Again, I question the confusion in the mind of the member for Inkster, because I believe this is the same person who has stood up in this House and advocated for our students to be taught more history. He has berated the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) for downplaying our history as a country. We are a constitutional monarchy. The head of government is the Queen, Madam Speaker. We have a Lieutenant Governor who represents the Queen as the titular head of government in our province. In all those cases, it is part of the understanding of what makes us different from the United States and from every other country in the world. For him to belittle that, for him to suggest that that ought to be wiped out of the record and that we should not promote unity and a sense of nationhood by not singing O Canada! or not singing God Save the Queen quite honestly is ridiculous, and he should be ashamed about that.

Mr. Lamoureux: A touch of reality for the Premier, I think, is needed. My question to the Premier is: how many public schools do you think today are actually singing God Save the Queen at the end of the school day? If you listen to the Premier, you would think every school in the province is doing that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

* (1410)

Mr. Filmon: Again, it is very frustrating to deal with someone who is so inconsistent that he wants to, on one hand, have more history and more sense of country being taught to our children; on the other hand, wipe out all the symbols of that history, including our existence as a constitutional monarchy.

Just last Monday, I believe it was, we celebrated Commonwealth Day here in this Legislature. We brought in two of the high commissioners, one from the U.K., one from the Bahamas to help us to understand. We had in representatives of school divisions

throughout the province, as well as leaders from our academic community, so that people knew and understood that we are still very much a constitutional monarchy. We are not a republican state like the Americans or so many places in the world. Having our children learn O Canada! and be willing to stand up patriotically and sing it, to understand the symbolism of our flags, to sing God Save the Queen is part of all of that.

That story was shopped around to the media by whoever it was. One of the bits of advice I give gratuitously to the member for Inkster is he should not take his political advice and his political lead from CBC Radio.

Brandon General Hospital Physician Resources—Pediatrics

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): A pregnant woman in a high-risk category because of an anticipated premature birth had to be airlifted yesterday from Brandon to the Health Sciences Centre because of the lack of on-call pediatric services at the Brandon General Hospital. Today I spoke to a woman from Brandon who is very worried because she is expecting her first child around April 22, and she has been told that she cannot be assured that pediatric services will be available at the Brandon General Hospital. She wants to know what will happen if she has unexpected problems in the delivery. There is a great deal of concern in the community in western Manitoba. I ask the Minister of Health: when is the minister going to bring pediatric services back to the Brandon General Hospital?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, this is certainly a very important matter that the member raises today, and it is one that is of concern to all of us. The issue fundamentally is one of recruitment, of finding additional pediatricians to come to Brandon to practise. It cannot really be one of money because if the issue is overwork, as the physicians have indicated that they are just too busy, providing additional money to them is not going to solve that problem.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have authorized resources to be able to obtain contract

pediatric services, I think in the neighbourhood of about \$175,000 a year. That would be not including expenses, so it is a significant amount of money. I understand that the Brandon Regional Health Authority has spoken, I believe, to some three pediatricians that they are attempting to recruit.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Madam Speaker, will the minister acknowledge that the minimum number of pediatricians required in Brandon is four, and can he assure us that he will make it a priority to reinstate pediatric services at the Brandon General Hospital at this required level, a hospital that is serving our second-largest city in this province as well as a large portion of western Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I understand from all the conversations and discussions that have gone on between the ministry staff and the Brandon Regional Health Authority that four is the number that is required and that we are prepared to ensure that the financial resources are available, whether on a contract or fee for service to do that. The fundamental issue is identifying pediatricians who are prepared to come to work in Brandon, and that is the work that is ongoing now by the Brandon Regional Health Authority.

Winter Roads Contingency Plans

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Highways. With unseasonably warm weather continuing to plague winter roads in northern and remote Manitoba, essential foodstuffs, fuel and building materials are not reaching their destination. Have the federal and provincial governments put forward contingency plans for communities such as Tadoule Lake, Lac Brochet and Brochet?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, because of the unseasonably warm temperatures, clearly winter roads, particularly on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, were in jeopardy about three weeks ago. Officials of the provincial government, federal government and the communities that the member mentions have been working together to find ways and means of getting

essential food, fuel, dry goods and nonessential items to those communities.

A combination of airlift, which involved up to 16 planes, was moving fuel in. There were no emergencies. Colder weather in the last 10 days allowed some of the winter road activity to resume, albeit at lower weights than might be desired, but there are many, many trucks involved in getting the goods in while the roads are still passable. I have staff out there on a continuous basis to be sure the roads are safe, and we will keep them open as long as possible to deliver the goods on the winter roads. Following that, the emergency plan of using airplanes and occasionally our helicopters will supplement getting the supply to the communities.

Mr. Jennissen: Madam Speaker, supplementary. Given the unfortunate fact that winter roads from Gods Lake Narrows to Gods River, Split Lake to York Landing, York Landing to Ilford, Pikwitonei and Thicket Portage are all closing at midnight and Shamattawa is closing tomorrow, I want to ask the minister whether the federal commitment to have essential goods shipped to these communities remains in place, since only a fraction of the normal bulk material has been shipped this year.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely my understanding that the federal commitment that was previously negotiated is still in place.

Little Grand Rapids Airport Construction

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland): Madam Speaker, it has been about three months now, in December, that the tragic accident occurred in Little Grand Rapids, something that the minister is quite familiar with, so my questions are for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. On December 11, he said that the only realistic option left would be to construct a new airport at the community of Little Grand Rapids. I would like to ask the minister: how much money has been committed in this fiscal year for such a project?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): The issue on hand is safety at

airports, some 22 airports in northern Manitoba. In that context, I held a meeting in my office, I believe it was in January, where I had numerous community representatives who were concerned about safety, plus individuals from the aircraft industry that fly planes into those airports. Coming out of that meeting, a group was struck, a task force was struck to discuss how we could maximize safety at those airports. The committee consisted of four department people or four government people, four people from the aircraft industry and four chiefs representing the communities. That committee has met twice and is looking forward to making the kinds of recommendations to improve safety at all the airports in the North.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I rise in the House as today we observe March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the 50th anniversary of the United Nations universal Declaration of Human Rights. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about racism and discrimination. We all must dedicate ourselves to overcoming our fears with truth and understanding on the various cultures that have contributed so much to the building of our great province. The elimination of racism is the responsibility of all individuals and communities. We must work together to speak and act against racism. The numerous activities scheduled throughout March and April include antiracism displays, youth workshops, films, lectures, rallies, symposiums and conferences. These events are a positive step in our efforts to eliminate misconceptions.

I would like to commend the efforts of Manitoba's schools, communities, multicultural organizations, and the Coalition for Human Equality who heighten public awareness through events such as these. Our province is well known for its diversity of cultures, diversity that strengthens us, binds us and sets us apart.

So I encourage all members and Manitobans to focus on education and understanding to eliminate cultural misunderstandings in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. The goal of the elimination of racism requires our efforts all year round. Let us make all Manitobans aware that discrimination is not part of our vision for Manitoba. Thank you.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): We certainly support the comments made by the member opposite dealing with fighting racism, but you have made it very clear that it is out of order to talk about racism and racist policies in any previous, present and future governments. The member was mentioning—I was wondering whether you could take under advisement our former concerns on racist policies. We would like you to expunge that former ruling from your rulings and precedents in this Chamber.

We think, again, the member's statement today is one which we support. We have always believed that to fight racism you have to be able to articulate the issues of racist policies in previous, present and future governments. Madam Speaker, I would ask you to look at your ruling, look at your statement and come back and break that precedent that is unacceptable for members of this side.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I join with the Leader of the Opposition in stating our support for the comments made this afternoon by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), and on the point of order I suggest that it is poorly advised for the honourable Leader of the Opposition to raise this matter in the way that he has, simply because of the very important message contained in the comments made by the honourable member for Pembina. I would not want a point of order raised for perhaps whatever reason to detract from the importance of the message.

I have no problem, Your Honour, with your reviewing the point raised or ruling on it as you see fit, but I wonder sometimes, Madam Speaker, if our points of order are always raised at an appropriate time in the sense of detracting from an important message of the

kind delivered this afternoon by the honourable member for Pembina.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on the same point of order.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. I think that the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition in fact adds to, confirms, underlines, the importance of the message that was brought to us today by the member opposite. I think the remarks of the government House leader were somewhat out of order on that, and I think do not help the discussion.

But my advice to you, Madam Speaker, is that this is the time, this is a very opportune moment, given the statement of that side of the House and the point that we have raised here, for you to reconsider that very serious decision that you made.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the official opposition and spoken to by the honourable government House leader and the honourable member for Wolseley, I personally believe there is a misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the intent of that ruling, but I will take it under advisement and report back to the House.

* * *

Mr. George Hiekes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

One of the important things the House leaders were raising, I think it is very crucial that we do have the right and we do have the obligation to raise issues that are racist to individuals, and if we could raise them in the House or raise them in the public eye in order to correct or to educate individuals who are acting in those fashions, that is our responsibility.

The reason I state that, I experienced first-hand last night, first-hand, and this was blatant racist action. I was at the Winkler hockey game. There was a busload of fans from Sandy Bay, and there were many, many

fans from The Pas. They were all aboriginal. They were lined up along the arena after the game was over. There were about five or six individuals who went right up to the known First Nations aboriginal people and started pushing and shoving and calling them dirty f---ing Indians for no reason at all. These individuals I know personally, and they do a lot of work in The Pas. They are part of the education authority. I was never so insulted. I was furious and insulted.

I am not saying that those individuals were from Winkler or from where. I do not know where they are from. They were at the Winkler arena, and those individuals should be totally, totally ashamed. Those individuals should be called to order, if known, and those individuals should be totally, totally educated. Those individuals were late '30s and early '40s. They were not children. They were adults. So what happens in those individuals' households? I fear to even think if they are raising families with those kinds of prejudiced and racist views. What happens in their households?

So we have the responsibility as legislators and educators to ensure that racism is taught about in all our schools, so that way it is taught into the families and it is taught into the public, so we do not have to see and experience those kinds of so-called negative, I think, very derogatory actions by uneducated individuals. It is our responsibility. I hope we, each and every one of the 57 members, will go out there and try and educate as many people, so we do not have to see and experience that kind of behaviour from anyone.

* (1430)

1998 Cadet Honour Band—Prairie Region

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to highlight the efforts and the achievements of two teens in my constituency. It is my honour to congratulate John Weber and Owen Nagy of St. Norbert for being selected as members of the 1998 Cadet Honour Band of the Prairie Region. They were chosen out of 210 sea, army and air cadet units from across the Prairies to represent the region.

Madam Speaker, John is a skilled saxophone player from the 191 West Winnipeg Rotary Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron and Owen is a member of the 177

Air Canada Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, performing on the bagpipes. I would like to applaud John and Owen and all their counterparts in the honour band for their dedication to citizenship and self-development through the Canadian cadet organization.

On behalf of all members of the House, I would like to wish the 1998 Cadet Honour Band and the Prairie Region luck as it tours the Prairies, holding concerts in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton. It is truly a privilege for these young people to represent not only their respective squadrons but also their communities and provinces across western Canada. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Maples Collegiate Unity Day

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I rise to say a few words about the Unity Day that the Unity group at Maples Collegiate had yesterday, and I had the honour and privilege of attending their opening ceremonies. This is the third year that this group was formed in Maples Collegiate to combat racism and look at treating everyone as one human race. Once again, this event was a day-long event at Maples Collegiate, looking at racism and treating everybody as one race. This group, as some members may remember, has sponsored the March for Unity to the steps of the Legislature two years in a row, and I believe they will be doing it for the third year.

So I just wanted to commend some of the organizers of this event: Allison Alvarez, Cindy Blicq, Bryon Chochinov, Fil Costa, Ivan Gibson, Sheila Giron, Don Hoy, Verna Isfeld, David Joseph, Rishma Juma, Mary Lebedynski, Anne Luong, Maridel Margelino, Crystal Perey, Diana Da Silva, Jennifer Sloan, and Lily Tang.

This group gives us hope that in the future racism and hatred for people because of what group they belong to will be eliminated. Thank you.

Headingley Correctional Facility Riot—Early Releases

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I was scheduled to get up on quite a different matter today on members' statements, but after listening to the last response of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) to my questions, I have

to express my dismay, my shock that he would have the gall to say that he looks forward to seeing the Futch family proceed with a civil action against this government.

He is saying he looks forward to the survivors and the victims of the murdered Walter Futch being victimized a third time, now at the hands of the civil law system in this province. He said he is looking forward to seeing the Futch family have to pursue this—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On a point of order, the honourable member for St. Johns is clearly out of line. I am the first to admit that I did not hear every word uttered in that exchange earlier on, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) is not able to rise on his own point of order at this time, but what the honourable member for St. Johns is saying is simply out of line and a very, very incorrect characterization of the answers given earlier by the Minister of Justice.

He can finish his member's statement, Madam Speaker, of course, but let him not do it and have people believe him.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns, on the same point of order.

Mr. Mackintosh: What we see here is political spin out of control.

Would you please advise the member that just got up, the government House leader, who has commented on my comments, he has no right to do that. It is a member's statement, Madam Speaker. I can say what I want. If he has some concern about what I say, he can get up on a member's statement.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, my understanding is, we have not well-defined rules on members' statements relative to the content of a member's statement. However, the member must be within the context of parliamentary language.

So, therefore, I must say that the honourable government House leader did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: So, Madam Speaker, to continue my remarks, until I was so rudely interrupted, I want to reflect for a moment on the role that this government has played in this tragedy. Mr. Futch was murdered in no small way, because this government had a responsibility for maintaining public safety. Second of all, the Futch family had to face the criminal justice system and its current disregard for victims.

Now because this government would not so much as make an offer to assure Manitoba's victims of crime—but most importantly, the Futch family—that there is some justice in this province, they now have to go on to the civil law system. This government forced them to do that, because it would not so much as even apologize for the mistakes that it made.

For the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) to now get up in this House and construe their civil action that this government caused is a scandal, Madam Speaker. It is another tragedy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, just for clarity, I think that we need to have it on the record that the House is agreed that it will not sit on Easter Monday, and I understand there is unanimous agreement about that.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this House not to sit on Easter Monday? [agreed]

DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

Manitoba Legislative Task Force on Canadian Unity

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed resolution of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital, who has 12 minutes remaining.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, I thank all members for allowing me to make some concluding remarks. The time just flew by yesterday, and there were a couple of comments that I did want to make.

I had talked about some of the themes that had emerged, some of the suggestions that had emerged that were common throughout the hearings, and the last point I would like to talk about, really would like to say in conclusion is that this legislative report is a report on what the task force members heard from Manitobans.

One of the things that many, many people did talk about was that there needed to be better recognition of the aboriginal and treaty rights of aboriginal peoples, and we as a task force agreed to that. In fact, I think the Manitoba Legislature may be one of the only legislatures that actually put in a separate resolution affirming that recognition.

So I will conclude by saying that again it was a pleasure to be a part of a task force that was able to come to a consensus. It was a pleasure to be a part of a task force that worked to see unity across the country, a task force that sends the message out to Quebec that, yes, we want you to be a part of Canada and that also sends some other messages that there are other needs that need to be recognized. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to be able to stand in this House and talk about so important an issue as the resolution that has been brought forward to the House by the government. To begin with, let me say thank you to the government for allowing this to occur. I think it is an important issue that my constituents in Dauphin will appreciate me putting some words on the record on their behalf.

Madam Speaker, the first thing I want to say is that I view this resolution as a hand out to our neighbours, a hand out to the aboriginal people in this country, a hand out to the people of Quebec. It is an extension of our friendship, an extension of our goodwill, something which in other constitutional discussions I am afraid has been missing. I think sometimes we get too wrapped up in the legalese. We get too wrapped up in

the partisan politics of nation building, and sometimes we forget the simple things which I hope will be conveyed to all Canadians through this resolution that not only we here in this Legislature but legislators across the country are dealing with and will be dealing with over the next little while.

Madam Speaker, I think it is smart to proceed with this resolution because it is not a constitutional amendment. I think there is an important difference between the resolution that we are dealing with today and what we have been dealing with in the past in terms of constitutional amendments.

So I congratulate all the people who have been involved in bringing this resolution forth for debate in this House. Those people include members from this Legislature who travelled the province with Mr. Fox-Decent as their chair and Mr. Fox-Decent's staff along with them. I want to pay particular attention to the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), who I think so ably represented this side of the House in those hearings travelling across Manitoba. As well, I want to thank the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for giving of their time and putting forth the effort to make this resolution Manitoban.

I want to thank the members of the task force for coming to Dauphin and allowing some of my constituents the opportunity to speak with the task force and tell members of the Legislature just what they think Canada is all about.

Madam Speaker, all too often in this country we dwell on the differences between us, the differences amongst us. I think it is time we started to think of what we have in common as Canadians. I think this resolution in its hand out, handshake approach gives all Canadians the opportunity to talk about what we have in common, all those good things that we have been doing for the past 130 years and not just post-Confederation but pre-Confederation. This country did not magically appear in 1867. A lot of hard work and sweat, a lot of negotiating went into building this country well before 1867.

* (1440)

Madam Speaker, I am a firm believer that we are products of our environment, that the events and the people that we meet shape us, shape our thinking, shape our very being. In calling myself a Canadian, I believe that I reflect the Canadian experience, those things that happen in a country that shape me as someone who believes he is the citizen of the best country in the world.

Events such as world wars, where Canadians played a prominent role in struggling against tyranny, against totalitarianism, against fascism, those were times when Canadians came together in a common, united cause. And, yes, Madam Speaker, we succeeded. Canadians can be proud of many achievements. One of the ones that sticks in my mind was back in 1972 when I was in junior high school, when a group of Canadian hockey players took on the Russian best in hockey, the 1972 series. One of the reasons that this sticks in my mind is the importance of this event to our Canadian psyche, to the Canadian experience.

When I was growing up, there were not very many events that would persuade my father to move the television set into the kitchen so that we could watch TV while we ate. This, however, was one of them. The 1972 Canada-Russia series, not only important for us hockey fans, but it was an expression of Canadianism. We had a feeling in this country that we were really good at something. We were good at hockey. And we had a challenge. Madam Speaker, as a nation we met that challenge.

The cynics of the world may look at that as not such an important event in the history of a nation. The cynics of the world would say that it was just a hockey game. I do not think so. I think it was one of those watershed events that occurred where we, as Canadians again—and we are pretty good at this, we Canadians are—looked at ourselves and used it as an opportunity to evaluate our nation.

I want to say that one of the true marks of a mature nation is its ability to look inward and evaluate its performance, to take a good, honest look at the way we behave. Do we behave in a Canadian way? Do we stand out as being different from other countries in the

world? Achievements such as Marc Garneau, Canadian astronaut, something that Canadians can proudly point to and say we have done this; contributions to UN peacekeeping, something we are famous for throughout the world, a model upon which other countries, other organizations have based their own thinking in terms of world peace; a Canadian Prime Minister, before he was Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson, spearheaded a move that made Canadians proud. We in this country, from in the past and, I would hope, into the future, can take pride in those kinds of achievements, point toward those achievements, take the confidence that we have gained through those achievements and do greater things as one nation united.

Madam Speaker, our country has also been shaped by the laws which we pass in our legislatures and in the House of Commons. Laws are very important to the foundation of any nation. But it is more than just the laws that are important. Laws do not keep a country together. I have some friends who are lawyers, but I do not think lawyers are going to be the key to keeping Canada in one piece.

We have got the BNA Act; we have the Statute of Westminster in 1931. We have got the 1982 repatriation of the Constitution from England. These are all important events along our road to growth, along our road to maturity as a nation. You can take all those laws and toss them out the window if they do not have the support of the Canadian people themselves, however, and that is what is important.

Something else that we can take pride in are the programs, the social programs that we have fought for in this country; a health care system that is national, accessible, affordable. Those are the kind of things that keep a country great. Those are the kind of things that keep a country together. That is what we have in common with aboriginal people. That is what we have in common with the Cree in Quebec. That is what we have in common with the Quebecois.

We have national television and radio. We have a national transportation system. We have national education. It is something that we should be proud of, that we can move from one part of this country to the next and have the expectation that our rights in one part

of the country will be honoured just as good as they were in the part of Canada that we have come from. We can be mobile. We can move around the country and still have those rights. It does not matter today how thick your wallet is, it does not matter what the credit limit on your charge card is, we should be proud that in this country you can move across the nation and have that kind of security. That is something worth fighting for, Madam Speaker.

It has been mentioned here in several eloquent speeches on Canadian unity that a strong national government is essential for this country to prosper and essential if we are going to move into the 20th Century and claim it as Sir Wilfrid Laurier said we would claim the 20th Century. The 21st Century could indeed belong to Canada, but we have a lot of work to do, and I see this resolution as a step in the right direction.

Canada is more than just a number of deals. Whether you are talking about the Fulton-Favreau or the Victoria agreement in 1971, which came fairly close to being agreed upon in the early '70s, it is more than just the deals. It is more than just rolling the dice several years ago. It is doing what this task force did and going out and talking to people and then reflecting those views through our legislatures.

Canadians have a common tradition. We have lived on the same north half of the continent of North America for centuries now. We have been here, we have shared, we have compromised. Compromise includes, with the people of Quebec, their civil law as opposed to our common law. That is something that was important to the people of Quebec when they entered Confederation, and I would suggest that it remains strong today in Quebec as a right that the Quebecois enjoy and should enjoy.

* (1450)

There has been linguistic compromise. There has been religious compromise. We are known in Canada for compromise, and that is what makes our country strong, not any kind of a fascist top-down kind of an approach, but something that people believe in, something that Canadians take ownership of. That is what I believe this resolution should be striving for. This resolution, I would hope, allows Canadians a

chance to have their say in what their country should look like.

Madam Speaker, I think it is very important that we, as Canadians, decide what our country should look like, what our country should stand for. I think my preference, my belief, is that what we have strived for is a society based on co-operation. I use the word "co-operation" as a noun, not so much as an adjective. Co-operation I heard once described as three guys getting together and figuring out how to knock off a bank. That is not the co-operation I mean. Co-operation is a concept. Co-operation means that people are members, are citizens of the country, and those people have a meaningful say in the operation of their country, not just the day-to-day operation of a country, but the long-term vision of where the country is heading.

One of the biggest parts of the vision of our country must deal with the aboriginal peoples and their recognition as a part of this country. They are part of Canada. It has always been my contention that the Canadian nation never would have got off the ground in the first place, well before John A. Macdonald, without the assistance, without the advice, and without the good will of the aboriginal people. I heard former police chief, Dale Henry, one time say that the aboriginal people in this country had their own form of government and they passed great laws. Dale Henry once said, though, the only area they were weak in was in their immigration policy.

I think we as Canadians have to take a good, hard look at our history, take a good, hard look at the way aboriginal people have been treated in this country, and I think we as Canadians must, and the sooner the better, we must take seriously the commitments that we made as a nation to the aboriginal peoples of this country.

It is my belief that treaties that we signed, that we agreed to—I do not care how many decades or centuries ago—I think we as a nation dealt with aboriginal nations, I think the accords and the treaties that we signed with them need to be honoured. I think that we have done some things in the past that we need to address here today in the present. Maybe this resolution that we are debating here today in the Legislature is a good vehicle to, once and for all, bring in as part of the process aboriginal nations, aboriginal nations who have, in the

past, given their word to us as a nation, and aboriginal nations who, in the past, have come through with their word.

Madam Speaker, some of the flaws that are associated, mostly, I would suggest, with the Meech Lake Accord process, I think the biggest flaw was that it was perceived as being a group of people behind a closed door deciding on what they were going to do with the country, carving it up here and there, connecting with the law here and there, fiddling with a word here and there, and they forgot about those of us who were citizens in Canada, especially forgetting the aboriginal people who, if I remember correctly at the time, did want to be part of that process.

So maybe this is our chance now. This is our chance to right the wrongs that we committed with Meech Lake, again, right the wrongs of what we did with Charlottetown, because although there was an improvement, and I had to admit several years ago when the Charlottetown Accord was being voted upon, I had to admit then that it was a better process than the Meech Lake one, but even at that, my No. 1 concern was the way in which we again left out the aboriginal community in Canada. Maybe this resolution is the vehicle upon which we can right that wrong.

A treaty land entitlement, I would suggest is something that is very important. It truly is sacred. It is our word as a nation with an aboriginal nation. We do not want to make a practice of breaking our word with another nation. We do not want to make an accord with Britain and break our word. We do not want to make an accord with the United States of America and break our word. We do not want to be breaking accords with any nation in the world. Why then, for heaven's sake, would we break our word with the aboriginal people of Canada? Why would we now not take the opportunity to address the wrongs that we have committed in the past and include native people within the discussion that takes place, I hope as a result of this resolution, gaining the support of every Legislature in the country. This, I would suggest, Madam Speaker, is our opportunity, and this is the biggest opportunity I see in this resolution.

I do not want to take up a whole lot of time because I know there are other people who are waiting to speak,

but there is one particular section of this Calgary Framework that I do want to spend a couple of minutes talking about. It occurs in the third section, No. 3: Canada is graced by diversity, tolerance, compassion and an equality of opportunity that is without rival in the world.

There is one word in there that I want to flag for people and that is the word "tolerance." On the surface I admit the word "tolerance" does have a ring to it, but, Madam Speaker, I want to suggest that we should look deeper into this word. "Tolerate" is putting up with something. "Tolerate" is suggesting that if I tolerate you, then I figure I am better and you are not quite as good as me, but I will put up with you; I will tolerate you. That is un-Canadian as far as I am concerned.

We are a country that has been open to people for centuries. We do not tolerate other groups coming into Canada. I would hope that we try to learn to understand other groups coming to Canada. When my forefathers came to Canada some six generations ago, I would hope that they were not tolerated; I would hope that they were accepted, that they were understood, that they were made to feel part of the community that existed here before they came to settle in southern Ontario in the early 1800s. I do not want to think of my relatives as being tolerated by somebody else, and I do not look upon people in the country, my fellow citizens, as somebody that I should tolerate. I understand, and if I do not understand, I try to understand, and I accept.

I do not know if that is a big, earth-shattering point to be made with this framework. I support the resolution. I support it because it simply suggests that we here in Manitoba extend our hands in friendship to other Canadians, particularly aboriginal Canadians and people living in the province of Quebec.

So with those few words, Madam Speaker, I again want to thank the people who were involved in organizing the all-party task force that travelled across the province. I want to thank the people in Dauphin who attended and expressed their views to the MLAs and to the staff and to Mr. Fox-Decent. I want to thank all Manitobans for, again, becoming involved in a debate that seems to go on and on in this country, and I think maybe in the final analysis the conclusion that we can draw is that part of being Canadian is talking

about being a Canadian, but I am optimistic and I am positive that as long as we keep talking, keep communicating, keep expressing our views, our opinions, that for another 130 years this country will stay together, it will be strong, and I hope that the comments that we make here today have played at least a small role in fostering a commitment to our nation and fostering a hope that the country will stay together and that we will move forward into the 21st Century.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

* (1500)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in my place to speak in support of this resolution.

One of the great diversities of our country that—and I am envious in some respects of the speaker who just spoke, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), when he can rise in his place as a member, a six-generation member, of this great country, and I rise in my place as a first-generation member of this country, and still I think at the conclusion of our remarks conclude that we share much the same visions and dreams and hopes for this great land of ours that he so eloquently put on the record, Madam Speaker.

I wish to indicate, of course, my support to the resolution before us. I wish to express a number of thanks. I wish to thank in the first instance the First Ministers of this land, who, on their initiative, recognized that this is not an issue that one could hope would go away by simply doing nothing and did gather in Calgary, did work towards hammering out a blueprint for future action which came to be known as the Calgary accord, which is the substance matter of the resolution currently before us here in the Manitoba Legislature.

I want to thank the members of our all-party committee that then took the resolution to Manitobans in different parts of the province in a series of public hearings and were able to, in a manner that is really quite surprising considering the amount of controversy, the amount of division that this issue has on occasion surrounded itself with, not just in the country at large but also right here in Manitoba, were able to

recommend under the chairmanship of Mr. Wally Fox-Decent and, subsequently, again place it before the Legislative Assembly here for our consideration.

I want to thank honourable members that have already spoken in this debate. I think it is kind of comforting and reassuring to note that from time to time we can, when faced with an issue that is so overriding in its universal appeal to serious consideration and reasonableness in approaching the issue, with what I am rapidly beginning to believe will be a very, very unanimous support of the resolution that we are dealing with.

Finally, Madam Speaker, of course I would like to thank the good people of the constituency of Lakeside that have given me the privilege to stand in my place here in this Chamber and put these few thoughts on record.

One never fully appreciates when history is being made. I suppose history is always being made. It is constantly evolving. But certainly, there are times there are certain specific actions in the political history of a country, of a nation, that stand out from the rest of the time. One senses that we have been engaged in that kind of period for the last little while in the debate and in the discussions and failures of previous attempts to resolve the issue of our nation in maintaining its self-integrity to the present moment as we debate this resolution before us, as we will be passing that on to the central government, hopefully for further action, for the resolution.

I listen to just one or two of the representations made, although I did not quite hear it exactly expressed by the member who just spoke, but certainly the member that I listened to this morning, the member from Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and perhaps others, made it very clear that while he was pleased to stand in support and speak in support of this resolution involving the Calgary declaration or Calgary accord, he made a point of indicating his ongoing or continued opposition to previous attempts, i.e. Meech Lake or the Charlottetown Accord.

My caution to all of us is, be wary. A Meech Lake or Charlottetown Accord is coming as a result of this resolution. Let us be very clear about that. This does

not replace the need for a Meech Lake or a Charlottetown Accord. Coming to an understanding, division of powers, a role for central government, a role for the provinces has yet to be hammered out that will be acceptable to all parts of Canada. What we have merely done is set down some very solid and acceptable broad principles of what constitutes being a Canadian that has found acceptance in Calgary, in the first instances, by our First Ministers and I suspect, just as it will happen in the Manitoba Legislature, across Legislatures around this land, acceptance, but it begs the question of the Meech Lake that is yet to come. I suspect that current events in politics in the province of Quebec will have a great deal to do about that.

That allows me to put on the record a concern that I express. Although I was pleased to have been and continue to be an original supporter of my current national leader, the Honourable Jean Charest, I have difficulty and many Manitobans have difficulty with a very fundamental position that he takes on the national unity question, which he expresses when he opposes his opposition to Canada, putting this question to the Supreme Court. In other words, he is saying that the rest of Canada does not really have a role to play in whether or not Quebec stays in Canada or not. With the greatest of respect to a leader that I was pleased to support and continue to support, I say to Mr. Charest, you are wrong in putting that position forward. It may play well in Quebec, and if one reads the editorial pages and reads the phenomena that is following that particular individual, that may be part of the politics of Quebec. But as a Canadian, as a Canadian that understands what regrettably too many of us have not always—when I say “us,” I mean generically. Those of us who sometimes—and we have all heard it in our coffee shops in our constituencies: well, if Quebec wants to go, let them go.

* (1510)

Madam Speaker, let us be very clear that we are talking about Canada and not simply Quebec's continuing participation in it. I hold the view, and hold it very strongly, there is no Canada without Quebec. For us to fool ourselves and even to fool the Quebecers, our brothers and sisters in Quebec, that there will be a Canada for them to deal with once they separate is wrong. Just a little bit of history of our country—the

honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) referred to it, and I agree with him that we have a history that predates 1867. There were thriving communities in the Atlantic provinces with very natural north-south trade relations. Boston was their port of call, not only culturally but economically, for a better part of a hundred years and more prior to Confederation. Why would we, who sometimes vent our frustrations at being governed by big central Canada, Ontario, why would we for a moment let 99 M.P.s from Toronto run us here in the West? We would not stand for that for more than three years, and whether or not there would be a prairie bloc is debatable or whether we would have a western Pacific Canadian nation forming. All of those things are debatable, but what, in my humble opinion, is not debatable is there would be very little glue available to keep the rest of the country together.

So to seriously get into discussions about how we would interreact with a sovereign nation that up until now comprised 25, 26 percent of this nation, that cleaves in two the Maritimes to central Canada in such a divisive way and that demographically, where the one city of Toronto virtually represents the populations of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta combined, and look for that to be some magic way of maintaining a country is just not in the cards.

So, Madam Speaker, I wish the Honourable Jean Charest well in his future. I think he has a great role to play. But the role that I just challenge all of us to understand is that those of us who honestly believe that a Jean Charest, successful or not, or a chastened Lucien Bouchard coming back a year from now or two years from now or a year and a half from now, the shopping list, the requests, the challenges will not be that much different than what some people have derisively, in my opinion, referred to as a roll of dice by our former Prime Minister, the Meech Lake Accord, or if you want to be more charitable, the other great effort, known as the Charlottetown Accord.

We will come to that. We will come to that passing of the way once again. We will come to that passing once again. [interjection] Well, I will not get into a debate with the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and I agree with him. It will not be done—I also agree with my colleague the Minister of

Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman). It is futile and nonsense to be talking about throwing too many of these things up into the area of public referenda. Where they will be decided is in legislatures like this, truly representative of the people whom we are elected to serve and, ergo, that is why it most likely will come back in the form of a Meech Lake. The accommodation is that I hope a more dedicated Canadian, whether it is Mr. Charest or someone like that, speaking on behalf of Quebec will bring to the negotiating table when talking about the future of this great country of ours.

So I want to put those few words on the record, because I was particularly moved this morning by my colleague's comments about if we do not make the effort and what better time do we spend in this Chamber but to discuss this issue. How do we answer to our children, rather an eloquent plea that my colleague the Minister of Energy and Mines made. How do we answer that question to our children some years hence if we fail? Why did we allow this to happen to what others have already described as this big and beautiful land of ours? Canada, you know, it is such a tremendous experiment, so young, so young geographically and spiritually, you might say, but old politically.

We are older than France, we are older than Germany, we are older than most European countries with the exception of Switzerland and the U.K. Politically we are older than the Soviet Union and all of the eastern European countries, all of whom are on their second, third, fourth republics. We have managed to work under one Constitution for 131 years. You know, West Germany, Germany's constitution dates back, that modern country, colossus of Europe, dates back to 1948. France is on its fourth republic, dates back to post-de Gaulle.

Politically, we have a great deal of maturity to offer the world. Politically, we have a great deal to offer the world in that sense, and we have accomplished this over these short 131 years. It would be a tragedy if for lack of will, if for lack of setting aside time and dedicating ourselves to the maintenance of this country we should lose it.

Yes, I was shocked and rather surprised at this afternoon's Question Period when the issue that was

brought into the Chamber just at the time we were debating this issue about our country. I applaud my Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) for gently reminding our school system about some of the history of this country. I find it is shocking that we know so little about our country, and we teach so little about our country in our school system. That is a tragedy. That leads to all kinds of very serious and difficult problems.

My people came to this country knowing the kind of country they came into, mainly an English-speaking country and the French with specific rights. I have little patience for people of my ethnic background or people of the Ukrainian ethnic background or other ethnic background, well, if we are going to tolerate French, why not German, why not Ukrainian, why not Italian? That is failure in understanding the make-up of our country. Somewhere our education system has failed in bringing about these very basic facts about our country, and part of that has to do, as our First Minister (Mr. Filmon) indicated, with just dedicating a bit of time to some of the symbolism of what constitutes a country.

We can see it in ourselves. We can see the relatively small amount of symbolism that we have in this Chamber that conducts our affairs, the normal kinds of courtesies that we extend to each other when we address each other. We can see how quickly it begins to break down if we break those little rules, and they are there for a reason. Symbols that we hold dear in our nation are there for a reason, unless we conscientiously want to change them.

If we want to do what our sister Commonwealth country Australia is up to right now, and they are, in fact, debating in their Legislatures and their houses of Parliament whether or not they wish to change from a constitutional monarchy to a republicanism, that is a fair game, that is a fair debate. I suspect we would have a good debate in this Chamber on that issue. As an unrepentant czarist you would have trouble with me, mind you, but nonetheless I would welcome that kind of debate.

* (1520)

But that is not the issue. The issue is the current status as it is. The Queen is our Queen. She is a Canadian Queen under our Constitution, and here we

are dealing with constitutional issues and we are prepared not to consider the Constitution as it currently stands.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few comments, allow me to express once again my support for this resolution, my appreciation and gratitude to all those who have worked for its present form and my hope for the future that in a small way—I should not say in a small way. We are part of 10 jurisdictions that make up this great nation of ours, 12 if you count our territories, as we should, because our evolution and our Constitution is an evolving one. Yes, it started in 1867 formally. Manitoba was privileged to be one of the first to be expanded from that original grouping of federated provinces. Moving on to the west, Saskatchewan, 1905, and Alberta. Moving on to 1948 or something like that, Newfoundland—or '49. It is evolving right now in the territories into different forms of government, the Yukon and the Territories.

So the Constitution ought not to be a static thing, carved in stone. It will change from time to time, but I am proud that we are taking this bit of time in the Manitoba Legislature to address the issue, and I feel that at the end of the day when we rise to vote on this issue, we shall all feel a little better for it and for having expressed ourselves as Canadians about the future of our country. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity this afternoon to put a few words on the record on behalf of my constituents, who, I know, particularly during the Charlottetown and Meech Lake rounds of constitutional discussion, were very, very concerned about the future of Canada and the future of Quebec in that country.

The Calgary declaration I think has elicited much less public outburst, although I recognize that the committee that was formed by the Manitoba Legislature has certainly done a great deal to inform people about the Calgary declaration and to enable them to have the opportunity to speak on it. The Calgary declaration in itself is part of a much larger effort to try to, I think the term is used “reach out to Quebec,” to meet the concerns of a large number of our fellow citizens who have begun over recent decades, and I think it has been that long, since the 1970s, have begun to feel a much

more distant part of this country than they did in earlier generations.

The Calgary declaration I think seeks to find some common ground. It seeks to find some common principles upon which we all agree. I attended one of the hearings in St. Boniface, and I know that there are areas that the Calgary declaration does not meet. There are areas where many Manitobans do not agree with it. There are areas where there will be debate, I think, on specific issues within this House, and I think we have heard some of it today. It is, as all attempts to find common ground are, a kind of compromise and one that we believe is in the best interests, not only of Manitobans, but of all Canadians. As we look across the country, we see that other provinces are dealing with it in much the same way that Manitoba is, in a very serious and dignified way, a way which enables all citizens in many walks of life to contribute to the continuing debate about the future of Canada.

But no statement of principles, no sense of common ground in itself is going to I think achieve the magic results that people, particularly in western Canada, would hope for. The Calgary declaration on its own is simply that, a declaration, an assumption of a series of common principles, but what will matter and what will make a difference is constant attention and daily and weekly attention on the part of both governments and other community institutions to the small things of a federation, to the youth exchanges, to the language programs that are run in colleges and universities during the summer across the country.

I know from many of my students who have attended the federal-provincial programs in Quebec that they come back with a renewed sense, for many of them a new sense of what it means to be Canadian. Those programs in Trois Rivieres or Laval in Quebec City are programs that are operated or at least paid for by the federal government and to some extent operated by the provinces. They have taken, since the 1970s, young people from right across the country. They have introduced them to each other and they have introduced them in many cases to a sense of Quebec that they could never have found in their institutions at home, in their public schools or in their communities, and it is an eye opener for many of them.

I do not think any student who goes to Quebec and lives in one of those colleges in Quebec City or in Trois Rivieres or Rimouski ever comes back the same kind of a Canadian. They are better Canadians for it and they recognize it, and they become ambassadors. I argue that it is in those small things, those exchanges, those attempts to support bilingual teaching in Quebec and in Manitoba and in other provinces, to ensure that we have supports for minority languages across the country, that it is in the attention to those daily details of a federation and of a federation which accommodates all kinds of languages and peoples that we really make a federation work. So a Calgary declaration in itself, a common ground of principles is only one part of the effort that we have to make on a daily basis to keep this federation together.

I would like to commend the work of the committee and of their staff. I served on the Charlottetown committee which went around the province, and I know the work that is involved in sitting day after day to listen to people, to attempt to focus and to enter and engage into the discussion that they want to have with the commission. It is also a tremendous amount of work for the staff, for the provision of translation and for the details of taking your group around the province, being there on time, et cetera. It is a lot of work, and the committee deserves commendation and our thanks.

I would also particularly like to note that the committee this year, this time, took the time and trouble to go to schools and to put questionnaires into schools across the province. I look forward as an historian, in future years, to go into the archives and read those comments of students. I think there will be an interesting slice of a generation there and their attitudes toward Quebec and toward the kind of country that they want to see. So I commend the commission for that, and I look forward to reading them in the archives sometime.

Now the origins of the Calgary declaration come to us from the Business Council on National Issues, and that in a way is very much a sign of the times. In earlier decades, in earlier centuries perhaps, these kinds of important declarations, these kinds of declarations of common principles would more likely have come from a political party or, indeed, from a social movement,

particularly in the Prairies. The social movements of the '20s and '30s would have been really the birthing ground of these kinds of principles. It is a sign of the times, I think, of the power the business community has taken within political affairs and, of course, particularly the Business Council on National Issues which has directed much of its attention to determining a particular constitutional path for Canada.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Nevertheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Calgary principles have struck a chord, particularly in western Canada. I know that there are some who are surprised at this. They often tend to equate the separatism of Quebec with the separatism of the West. It is a very serious misunderstanding of the West, in central Canada and in eastern Canada. There have been certainly, at times, movements towards a kind of separation, I will not deny that. We know that there are meetings of groups that are called Cascadia. We know that British Columbia at times has looked to the United States, but these, I think, are very much fringe movements. They do not represent the heart of the prairie provinces or, indeed, of British Columbia. In fact, I often go back to Professor W.L. Morton's argument that what the West wanted in all of its social protest movements—in Social Credit, in the Progressive Party, in the CCF—that what it wanted to do was reshape the nation in the image of western Canada. I think that still remains one of the best interpretations of the approach of prairie Canadians to the federation.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the previous speaker spoke of our history. I know that my colleague, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) also spoke of the history of western Canada and the history of Canada itself. We should never forget that, although the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) wanted to speak of the north-south aspects of Canada and the role of 1867 in creating an east-west nation across this continent.

It is important to remember the thousands of years of history before the arrival of Europeans and to notice the importance of both eastern and north-south routes, east-west routes and north-west-south routes—sorry, I am getting confused here. Both east-west and north-south

routes in—I thank my colleague from The Pas here—the pattern of aboriginal history. The trading routes went east west. They also went north south, down from Hudson's Bay through The Forks to the Mississippi and the Missouri. There were central trading fairs that were held in the 16th Century and the 17th Century and across western Canada. Those fairs, those great entrepôts such as were held in the Missouri area or held at the Eagle Hills in the Saskatchewan and Alberta country, were the great centres of aboriginal trade, taking goods across this country band by band, traded from east to west and traded up into the Mackenzie into the Yukon districts.

So those linkages in an aboriginal Canada were there, not just east west but also north south. It was essentially a continent of traders, a continent of politicians, diplomats, and warriors, and that is, I think, the setting for the fur trade, for a multinational corporation eventually but which did lay the foundations of the eastern and western edges of Canada which bound together people from the heartland of Quebec and the St. Lawrence, which bound them with the people who came into Hudson's Bay and who created families and communities and fur trade societies along the Great Lakes and into British Columbia and north to the Skeena and the Nass rivers. Those fur trade communities, mixed race, French and English and Cree and Ojibway and Dakota-speaking, all of the languages of aboriginal North America, that really is the foundation that we should look to for our interpretation of the kind of Canada that we want.

In the 1870s and afterwards, Manitoba became integrated into a transcontinental economy but also into party politics. Manitobans and western Canadians became involved working side by side in the great national parties, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party of their day. They worked with French-speaking Canadians, not just from Quebec but from New Brunswick and from Manitoba. They worked together to create a nation, a new North American nation of two languages across this country, and their battles continued. No one of that time would ever argue that western Canada's needs or wishes were met.

Until the 1930s, western Canadians saw themselves very much as a colony, and I noticed echoes of that in the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Enns) speech, still

that same kind of political legacy. In the 1930s, of course, the debates were over natural resources and the role of provinces. In the 1970s and 1980s, those debates continued perhaps at a much higher pitch. Alberta fought for provincial rights, it fought for energy, it fought for control of its energy against the federal Liberal government. Saskatchewan fought over potash. Saskatchewan fought over the right to tax windfall profits, and they lost. Some battles they won, but some were lost.

In Manitoba we fought over, and I say fought advisedly. I was not in the Legislature at the time, but I do remember the very virulent and poisonous atmosphere that was there in Manitoba over the French language debate. I think the Legislature perhaps was a very difficult place, and a very difficult time to have been in the Legislature. The speeches that were made at that time I hope some members regret. I hope that the kind of hostility which was shown in parts of our province to French-speaking Canadians was something that has dissipated with time.

The CF-18, I suppose, symbolizes for many Manitobans their continuing battle with Ottawa and for a particular place in Confederation. But the point I am making, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that, yes, we have our debates, we have our battles, but western Canadians are Canadians. They see that those battles and those needs and wishes can be met, not always immediately, not always perhaps even over the long haul, but that the debate continues and that we can within a federation make some of those decisions in the best interests of everyone.

In the 70s and 80s, prairie Premiers Lougheed, Schreyer, Blakeney, Lyon, all of them became much more significant players in the national politics and in national parties than I think prairie premiers had been before. They played an important part in 1982 in the Constitution Act, in the extension of provincial taxation and, as they had hoped, in the institutionalizing of federal support for provincial programs.

During Meech Lake and Charlottetown, western Canadians, again, and Manitobans in particular, expressed themselves over and over again about the meaning of the federation, and it had many different voices. This is not just a regional issue as well. I think

we tend to think of the West, and it is often portrayed as such, particularly by publicity organizations like the Canada West Foundation, it is often portrayed as speaking with one voice, but that is not true. The Triple-E Senate that the Canada West Foundation supports is not one which is supported across all of the West.

Strong federal institutions equally have a voice in the social democratic tradition and in the social democratic provinces of the West. Even though we have different voices and left and right are the simplest ways of expressing them, I think we are of one mind that Canada matters, that all Canadians are equal and that we acknowledge that we share a Commonwealth with both other western provinces and with those older provinces to the east of us, and indeed with the new territory, the new predominantly aboriginal territory of Nunavut.

In the case of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have always been at the forefront of the debates about the nature of Canada. We have always been the province I think which has debated the central issues of Confederation. We have not always done it kindly; we have not always done it in the interests of all our citizens, but we have been the province which has had to face these issues most immediately. If we look at 1870, 1869-70, and the entrance of Manitoba into Confederation, we tend, I think, perhaps in our ceremonial occasions, to think of it as the birth of a province, which indeed it was, but we should also remember that it was a violent occasion. It was a violent defence of language rights and rights of religion.

Manitoba was born in violence, and it was born in a violent dispute over fundamental issues of language and religion and the role that they would play in the new province, and there should be some sympathy I think with the kind of debate that the people of Quebec are facing today, both not so much in religion anymore. There have been enormous religious changes in Quebec. It is not I think the same kind of issue that it is even in the west.

But in terms of language, Quebec does face very serious issues in a different way perhaps than French-speaking Manitobans. English has become the language of the global marketplace. It is increasingly

difficult to maintain a culture without that language, and so I am very sympathetic to the kind of issues that Quebec faces. I do not always agree with the way in which they have tried to solve them, as many English Canadians and English Quebecers are not, but the central issue that they face of maintaining a culture in northern North America and maintaining a language which is facing a serious onslaught from the global marketplace, from the Internet, from all the means of communication is a very, very difficult one, and it is one I think that we should be very aware of.

* (1540)

Manitoba has also faced a very difficult French language issue, when the government of the day, in this case the NDP government of Howard Pawley, tried to introduce supports for French language rights in Manitoba which were very strongly and sometimes quite violently, in a verbal sense, opposed by people across Manitoba. That was a very difficult and a very painful fight particularly for French Canadians in Manitoba, for Franco-Manitobans, and it is one I think that will not be easily forgotten by the generation which had to deal with it.

But it is not just the French language that has been a focus of debate in Manitoba. Other languages too, the languages of central Europe which became part of our educational system just before the turn of the century, raised issues of language in education and the role of the state in education that Manitobans still face today. That debate, too, was extremely painful, extremely difficult. The solutions that were found then were not necessarily the solutions that we might find today.

It was in Manitoba that the Governor General of Canada, when he came here in the 1930s, said to a gathering of Ukrainian people—I forget which particular society it was. I think it was actually at a very large picnic that he made a great speech which said that by being better Ukrainians, you will be better Canadians. That confirmation, that full acknowledgement from the Crown, that heritage languages as we call them today, but the language of the family, the languages of Europe will have a place in Manitoba is something which caused considerable debate in Manitoba. It has come to be seen as commonplace. It is at the base of our heritage language policy; it is at the base of the

multiculturalism which came to be the Canadian commonality by the end of the 20th Century. But in the 1930s, to accord that kind of place to recent immigrants, as people saw them, was something which was very new, very different and caused a great deal of anxiety amongst the older Anglo-British Canadians of Manitoba.

So Manitoba has fought these battles, ones which other provinces and other communities have had to face, and we continue to do so, most recently and most importantly the new place that is being accorded, and I use those words very carefully, to aboriginal Manitobans.

Manitoba has become the place where the experiment into the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs begins. Manitoba was the first of the provinces to establish aboriginal education authorities, and I am sure my colleague the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), with the very important and large school that was created at The Pas during his tenure as chief, will be able to say more of that, but educational autonomy, political autonomy.

At the Meech Lake Accord it was Elijah Harper. I recently went to hear John Crosby speak, refer to—perhaps, it is a Newfoundland colloquialism—but anyway refer to somewhat derisively I thought, but anyway, he was wanting to claim, I think, the ending of the Meech Lake Accord by Newfoundland, not by Elijah. But it was in fact Elijah Harper. Manitobans know it, and the debate that that represented I think was focused here.

None of us will ever forget, I think, the teepees outside the Legislative Building in Manitoba. It was not just their visible presence on that symbolic site—the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today wanted to talk about symbols. I think that is an important symbol that we should remember in Manitoba history—but it was not just the symbolism of that outside the Legislature, it was also the fact that people came to visit those teepees every night.

I remember walking down from my community to go to one of the evening ceremonies and seeing many people from my community, not aboriginal people but people who were there with tobacco in their hand who

were coming to be a part of it. For many of them, it was the first time that they had participated in aboriginal ceremonies. It was certainly the first time in which they had recognized, I think, the overwhelming aboriginal political presence in Manitoba. So it had many important elements to it, and it represented visually the kind of debate that was taking place across Canada about the new role, the new place, of aboriginal people in the federation.

So I congratulate the constitutional committee. I think they have continued that important role enabling us to play a significant part in the debates in Canada about language, race, and in earlier days, religion. This committee in particular has ensured that there is an aboriginal context and an aboriginal presence in the Calgary declaration. So I congratulate all members of the committee and acknowledge particularly the part played by the two members from our own caucus, the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin).

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this addition, this extension of the Calgary declaration with the presence of aboriginal principles and place will have an important part to play not just in Manitoba but in supporting the constitutional position of the Cree of James Bay, the Mistassini of the Montagnais-Naskapi, of the Mohawks and of the aboriginal people generally of the province of Quebec, because they have a constitutional position to maintain, and I think in our version of the Calgary declaration there is something of significance there for them.

Finally, I want to say that I think the challenges for Canada are only expressed in constitutional terms. The real challenges that we face I think come from a much larger issue, and it is the issue of globalization. It is the expansion of international capital, it is the merciless impact of the market, the downward pressure on wages that we are beginning to see in the new contracts across Canada. That really is the challenge that we are facing at the end of the 20th Century, and it is faced by people in Quebec and Ontario and British Columbia, just as we are facing it here.

I believe that we can face that challenge better as the larger North American nation of Canada, because Canada has come to stand for—and it is really the

achievement of the generation since the Second World War—Canada has come to stand for a kind of social democracy, for health care, for public education, and for the redistribution and for the sharing of a greater wealth. It is something which is worth defending. It is something which I think has a general accord, finds a general accord in Quebec and Manitoba and all of the other provinces and in Nunavut. I think we can defend these together better than we can as isolated and smaller units, and so for different reasons I think the federation of a northern North American nation is as important in the 1990s as it was in 1867.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I came here as an immigrant, as some of my colleagues know. I came to Quebec; we chose Quebec in 1960 as a place of residence. My family is still in Quebec, I make frequent trips to Quebec. I ensured that part of my children's education was in Quebec. I also ensured, and—c'est grâce à l'éducation du Manitoba que mes enfants parlent un français très mieux, plus mieux que le mien, Monsieur le vice-président, mais je sais bien que ce n'est pas facile. Eh bien—

[Translation]

—it is thanks to the education in Manitoba that my children speak a much better French than mine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I know very well that it is not easy. Well—

[English]

And I am grateful to the education system of Manitoba for enabling my children to speak a much better French than I do and to be able to participate—certainly at least one of them has—in a national role, in a national student organization, using every day both languages that he learned here in Manitoba and that have made both him and my younger son bilingual and full Canadians.

I do not agree with the previous speaker that there will be no Canada without Quebec. I have much greater faith in English Canadians. I have much greater faith in the sense of nation that we have created in English Canada as well as in English and French Canada since 1867. I do think we will be a lesser Canada, and I think we will, and most fundamentally, be less able to understand the tremendous economic

changes and the onslaught of that global capitalism, the new world order, that we do face in our next generation.

* (1550)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on what is an extremely important resolution as it relates not only to our province but more particularly to the country which I do not think for one minute that there is any member of this Legislative Assembly could ever be questioned on their loyalty to the country, from whatever side of the House or whatever political party, that I have that general understanding that is automatic when one comes to a Legislature, comes to represent the constituency of which they represent, that without question they are truly Canadian through and through.

I also want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Canada is greater than any political party in this country, and I think that is absolutely important to state. I think it speaks for itself many times and many times over. I want to particularly compliment the leaders of Canada, of our provinces and our territories, for putting together the Calgary Framework and presenting it in the manner in which they have because I believe that the intent and the direction and process of which this has been put forward truly does have a chance of making our country one which will be stronger, one which will continue to be a country, and from our Premier to all the Premiers to the territorial leaders, and all those people who have worked on it, I compliment them.

I also want to compliment the task force and the leadership of the task force, and all members of the task force equally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I believe each and every member of the task force put forward a very genuine, honest, and straightforward position and work on behalf of the greater constituency. Not any specific constituency, but each one dedicated themselves to the preparation of this resolution so that we could in fact go forward jointly, and I want to recognize them all in an equal manner.

I also want to say, and I checked some of the history with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that I guess it was Sir Winston Churchill said

there will always be an England. Well, I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I believe—[interjection] Pardon me?

An Honourable Member: It is a music hall song, but do go ahead.

Mr. Downey: It was not Winston Churchill. Well, I like Winston Churchill and I thought it fit him very well. He could have said it. I will say that if we all work hard enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we all as Canadians and political leaders and people who are put in responsible positions, work hard enough, there will always be a Canada, and I do not believe this place at any time, or have any other feeling than that there will always be a Canada, because I believe if we really believe in it we have to work just a little bit harder to make sure that that, in fact, is the case.

I also want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in representing the constituency which I represent I think if a survey was done, and I think that would also hold true throughout the province, that the majority of my constituents and the majority of Manitobans would call themselves Canadians first before they called themselves Manitobans. And that I think is extremely important, that we continue to emphasize the fact that I believe we are Canadians first as it relates to wherever we are in this great country. I feel very strongly about that because it is so easy to become a territorial representative, it is so easy to decide that it is only in the interests of one small—whether it is a constituency or one area of a country that quite frankly is more important than the other, so I am very much a believer in that.

I also want to recognize the work that was done on previous efforts. I make reference again to my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) who has said many times, and it is worth repeating, that I feel extremely honoured to be one of 57 people out of 1,200,000 people, approximately, to be chosen to speak on behalf, their behalf not only as a member of the Legislature but as a member of Executive Council. I feel extremely honoured. That is why it is extremely important that we all take our responsibilities seriously and put forward our best efforts at every opportunity, particularly as it relates to maintaining the system which we all work in, and that is the democratic

parliamentary system. So many people throughout the world would love to be in the position that we are.

I just have had the opportunity of being on Team Canada. I have been on several trade missions. The best feeling in the world is to return to Canadian soil, to be part of this country and to have this as our home base and our home. I also want to point out, as part of the Team Canada mission, as we arrived in Mexico, as we arrived in Brazil, as we arrived in Argentina and as we arrived in Chile and as we left, the respect that the leaders of our country have, the welcome that we received, there was no greater feeling of pride that I have ever had in my life, to be recognized as a country of which I am from and the honour in which we are held. The same holds true of other areas that I have been to throughout the world.

So what we have to spend less time doing, colleagues, as Canadians and Manitobans, is start talking what is right about Canada rather than what is wrong with Canada. Too many times the debate always centres around the difficulties and the problems. I can tell you there are a few problems that we have to continue to work out, but there are so many hundreds of reasons that we have such a country that we have, and we should never, ever give up on it.

I want to, as well, say, and I think it is important to note as well, that I am not a great historian, but I have to say that the longer I am in the Legislature, which is now some 20 years-plus, and having observed, and I appreciate the comments of the member opposite because I was part of the language debate which was very difficult, very difficult for all members of the Legislature, very difficult for all Manitobans, in fact all Canadians, as was the debate on Meech Lake for many people. Again it was dealing with the rules of how we were going to co-operate and get along and trying to reflect in current terminology and current law what the history had meant to be in our province. It was extremely tough, and so one learns a little bit from these historic activities that take place.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

I can tell you there is one other piece of history that I have observed that I think started a lot of the problems we are currently having and that was, for the little

knowledge I have, but the feeling I have is it was when Pierre Elliott Trudeau repatriated the Constitution in 1981, brought it home about which we were all extremely pleased but did not bring it home with the full consent of all the partners in the family. By leaving Quebec out, without having Quebec as a signatory to the Constitution, in my mind, was a very, very dangerous action which has caused this country since 1981, 17, 18 years, a lot of turmoil as it relates to how we are getting along as a country.

Patience, I think, would have been a virtue at that particular time. I believe that it would have happened. There might have been a change in government where there would have been a government in Quebec that was not so adverse to signing. That I believe, but that was not to be, and, of course, looking back in history, we are now dealing with the fallout of that decision, which I think, and I say it again, was a mistake for Canadian history, for Canadians to have to deal with. We were ready for it, but the whole family should have been ready for it.

So that is in the cards that we were dealt. That is where the political leadership of the day took us. I never agreed with it, and now we are dealing with where we go on from this particular time, and, of course, this Calgary Framework is another solid piece of work that I think will bring us back onto the right track.

Again, I want to say—and I missed some of the comments my colleague said—I think today we are also seeing an extremely important event taking place as part of Canadian history, the fact that a national leader from one political party, which I am an extremely strong supporter of, is in the process of making a decision which will have tremendous impact on him and his family as an individual, but in my mind it has to be wanted and requested by the people of Quebec. The rest of Canadians may all say that that is the right thing for him to do and pressure and urge him to do so, but it has to be the people of Quebec that want him to do that. It is my understanding that that is, in fact, the case, that there is a strong pull for Jean Charest to take on the leadership of the Liberal Party, which does not trouble me at all.

* (1600)

In fact, Madam Speaker, I would be strongly supportive if that is the way it works out, that the people of Quebec strongly request him as a leader to help, not necessarily to do anything more than to get them on a path where they can rethink, where they can pause or hesitate as to whether or not the direction they really believe they want to go is to leave Canada, because it has been said many, many times by many very qualified people, what would be the results of Quebec leaving Canada?

I do not even want to speculate, Madam Speaker. I do not even want to speculate, but I will speculate on one thing. I will speculate on one thing, and this is my reading of it as an outsider, that the distinct or the special—the uniqueness of Quebec, their law, their language, will, in fact, be better protected within the Canadian system and the Canadian structure than it would be on the North American continent if they were to be a country on their own.

I believe that, Madam Speaker, because one can point to many examples of the tolerance of Canadians. Yes, again, we can point out some of the intolerance of Canada, but in a general sense we are a tolerant country, and I can tell you, as much of a struggle as it has been, I believe we have progressed to the point where I think any province that wants to preserve itself, its uniqueness, can do so, and the framework which has been demonstrated here can, in fact, carry out the protection that is needed for the culture and the opportunities that each jurisdiction wants.

But there is one particular point that has to be made and made over again, and that is the continued average citizen saying we have to have equality of the provinces. There is no question about it, if you try to change that principle or try to argue against it, that, Madam Speaker, is one principle that everybody subscribes to. Again, it is a demonstration of how this country is tolerant and how if you believe in something strong enough the system allows you to do it. How many new political parties have been formed in one region of this country or another? How many political parties have been formed to reflect a change in society's thinking? Could it be the CCF for certain ideological reasons? The Reform Party, certainly, the progressive farmers of western Canada. There is the opportunity within the system that we have to truly reflect changes

in a major way through the political party system that we have to take the message and to govern a way in which the country wants to be governed. I do not think you have to leave a jurisdiction or major changes to the Constitution. I believe that this country has accommodated, and to try and change it in any substantive way will just put us in a deadlock.

One of the key areas—and I think this is why we are maybe seeing a little bit of a change of attitude. We are seeing a change of attitude within the public of Canada today because of what major reason? We are seeing a very positive improvement in the economy of our country. The economic conditions in Canada, whether it is a balanced budget in Manitoba or the provinces or nationally, I compliment all of the leaders and all those people who are in responsible positions to take us in that direction because with improved economic conditions people feel better about themselves and the home in which they live and are somewhat comforted that there are better times ahead.

So I think, Madam Speaker, with the improvement in the economy, with our financial activities far more under control than they were in the past few years, that this in itself will go a long, long way to keep this country bound together because the national government has a little more room to move as it relates to some of the demands and pressures that are placed on it.

Goodness sakes, when one looks at the history of Canada, it has been one of the toughest countries, I am sure, to govern with the regional differences, but again, I believe it is one of our major strengths as well.

So I will conclude my comments today by saying that it is the matter of the presentation of the policies and the rules of which we live by, a fair and balanced approach absolutely is essential. I could have stood up here today, Madam Speaker, and I am refraining from doing so because again it comes to the fair and equitable treatment of all Canadians. I will not leave my speech without putting one example on the record. One could put several on the record, but I will put one on the record particularly. I am distressed and troubled, as a western Canadian representative, particularly representing a community in southwestern Manitoba where we have some free-spirited and free-minded people who decided that they wanted to market their

grain outside the country of Canada, outside the Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction. Yes, the law has been interpreted that they broke the law. Yes, they paid the price. One of them has spent some time in detention because he, a lot of people would argue, exercised a freedom.

What has happened recently in Ontario is that there has now been a change in the law or the policies of the administration for the wheat growers of Ontario where all they have to do is register with the Canadian Wheat Board that they want to market their grain outside the country of Canada into the United States, without any additional cost, without any penalty. If they were 500 miles west of that location, if they tried to do the same thing—now they are doing it within the law of Ontario and the federal government, they can in fact do it—in western Canada, that cannot be done. Those are the kinds of inequities that have to be dealt with and dealt with sooner rather than later because we cannot tolerate people being treated in different manners in different regions of the country. That is the kind of administration of the law that I am talking about.

So fair and equitable treatment under the law. It speaks to it in the Calgary Framework, and, Madam Speaker, the people of Canada should expect no less than fair and equitable treatment under the law of this country and the policies of any government, national or provincial.

So as a proud Canadian, and I say that, I could speak for hours and hours as to what is so good about this country, and I would not have very much time, Madam Speaker, to speak what is wrong with it because there are not many things wrong with it. Again, the people of the rest of the world can attest to the fact that we do want to be part of this country, and it is told to me time and time again. In fact, we have just heard that there is a resolution in Washington where the Northwest Angle are wanting to, in fact, consider leaving the United States and joining not only Canada, but Manitoba. I am very pleased to say—

An Honourable Member: Who would not want to do that, Jim?

Mr. Downey: Well, that was the member from Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who said, “who would not want to do

that?" And that is the point that I am making. Let us not throw away what is so precious to each and every one of us and will be the future for our children and our grandchildren. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to rise this afternoon to put some of my remarks on record in regard to the Calgary declaration, the unity task force, and the accompanying resolution. Let me first of all, though, express my gratitude to my colleagues for their co-operation. I want to especially give a warm mention to our Chairperson, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent. He was here a while ago; he is still up there. Mr. Fox-Decent, I find to be a person who has a lot of skills in working with a group of individuals, getting those individuals together to have a good discussion and then to pull everybody into some sort of a consensus. This was my second task force that I served on where Mr. Fox-Decent was the chair.

I would also like to, of course, express the same kind of gratitude to the staff who helped us along. The staff were excellent, and they were always accommodating and helping us along. I want to also give thanks to the members of this Assembly who took it upon themselves to visit schools and to talk to students regarding Canadian unity. Of course, I want to thank the public for taking part in the unity task force hearings. As people have mentioned here before, there was a mail-out. The response was overwhelming. There was e-mail and then there was the phone, and, of course, people talking to groups or individuals helped to gather a lot of information.

* (1610)

Now, my colleagues here will know that I expressed some concerns at the start of our meetings. The declaration, the Calgary declaration as it is now called, is not a perfect document, and a report on our accompanying resolution is also not perfect, Madam Speaker. Before I get into that, though, I want to start out by saying that as an aboriginal person who, I might as well as say, has lost just about every part of my culture, that is, I almost lost my language, today my daughter, as I said earlier in a previous speech here in the Chamber, is unable to speak her language. I take responsibility for that, because I should have maybe been more, you know, to make sure she learned her

language, but having been taught English and having English ingrained in my brain and everything that I do, it became such a habit for me to speak English at home. I remember my mother telling me, or asking us, to have my daughter stay with her for the summer so that she could teach her Cree.

I do not remember the dances that they used to have, but our elders tell us that we used to have all kinds of dances, even in The Pas. Our powwows that we used to have, I do not remember seeing them because they were gone by the time I was born and old enough to be able to understand those kinds of things.

I mention these, Madam Speaker, because every once in a while I find myself thinking about whether I understand what is happening in Quebec, whether I understand the reasons Quebec has always been talking about wanting to separate from Canada. At one point, I think it was during the Meech Lake debate, I thought I had grasped a bit of an understanding, and that is, I could relate to the French people in Quebec at the time. I could understand why they were so bound and determined to keep their language and their history and their culture.

Having experienced myself the loss of culture, the loss of language, our religion, and so forth, I thought, you know, it is no wonder that they are so aggressively trying to make people understand in the rest of Canada that they are serious when they say in order for our language and culture to survive that they have to have their own country.

So sometimes I am sort of, I do not know which way to go, but let me say that I think I understand in terms of losing culture, language, and history. I think I have a bit of an understanding as to what that means, because we as aboriginal people experienced that ourselves.

Now, when I say the Calgary declaration is not perfect, it is a good document to get people to start talking about what Canada is all about. Let me just focus my comments to the reasons why I thought the declaration was not perfect and perhaps needed some reworking. Let me also say that those concerns that some of us had at the start of our hearings, the process was more or less confirmed by those people who came

before us and told us, for example, that they had some problem in agreeing that one of the characteristics of Canada was that all Canadians are equal and have rights protected by law. Some people had a problem completely embracing the notion that Canada is graced by a diversity, tolerance, compassion and an equality of opportunity that is without rival in the world.

People who were living in poverty, for example, told us that there is no equality, there is no equity, there is no equal opportunity. Women also told us the same thing and aboriginal people told us the same thing. The French people who are living outside of Quebec told us that the Calgary declaration perhaps overlooked them, but the focus was really on the Province of Quebec and the citizens within that province. So I just want to give some example as to why I make the statement that the Calgary declaration was not a perfect document.

Now, the other thing that people made very clear to us was of course that aboriginal people have to receive better recognition by the general population of Canada. There again, the Calgary declaration made only a passing reference to aboriginal people, and yet we as aboriginal people knew all along and recognized that it was critical that aboriginal people be an integral component to any initiative that has Canadian unity as its objective. This notion is, of course, now being played out in Quebec. The Cree from Quebec will probably end up playing a very key role in this whole exercise. Some people here in Manitoba have even told us, have even gone so far as to say that it will be the Cree in Quebec who will end up saving Canada.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear. I agree with that.

An Honourable Member: The Inuit.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, and the Inuit. The Cree and the Inuit, that is true.

Now, I do not have a reason to doubt that assertion because when you look at Manitoba, right here in Manitoba, we as aboriginal people have continually contributed to the development of Manitoba and Canada. For example, during the war our people volunteered to go to war to protect Canada. They did not have to volunteer to go, but they did, and the losses

were heavy. The loss to our people, as a result of the war, was measured not only in the number of our people who never came back after the war, our people who were killed in action, the loss was also measured by the fact that our people had to relinquish their treaty rights in order to enlist in a war.

* (1620)

My grandfathers and several of my uncles went to war for Canada. Some scholars tell us today that based on a per capita, our people were very well represented. Some even say that our people came in handy in another way; that is, they were able to transmit sensitive messages in their language, and the messages could not be decoded by the enemy. We have been told that.

Then we have the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood under the leadership of Dave Courchene, who, in 1969, along with the chiefs of Manitoba and the rest of the Indian people in Manitoba, rejected the white paper in 1969 which was going to assimilate aboriginal people into the overall society. That was rejected. In Meech Lake, Elijah Harper, with the support of the chiefs of Manitoba, defeated the Meech Lake Accord.

Madam Speaker, these are only some examples that I give to show you how our aboriginal people have helped to shape the history and the direction of Canada on a regular basis. That is why it is important for our nation builders, and everyone else for that matter, to acknowledge and accept the fact that to exclude the contribution of aboriginal people from their unity building exercises would be a grave mistake.

I acknowledge and I commend the work of Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come and his people. I am also grateful for Chief Coon Come, his commitment to his people and also his commitment to Canada.

I want to talk a little bit about the framework from the point of view that it excluded aboriginal people. We thought it was very important in our meetings amongst ourselves and also with the general public that we included and recognized the aboriginal people in this exercise, even though some people regarded the framework as not having constitutional context—and I heard the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) say earlier. But in the event that in some future

constitutional discussion any leader or premier, who may be referring to this legislative resolution, will see that this Legislature and citizens of Manitoba referenced aboriginal people in a more appropriate manner, in a more sincere way, in a more respectful way than just referring to them as Canada's gift.

I want to also go on record, Madam Speaker, before I close, acknowledging and commending the leadership of Swampy Cree Tribal Council for presenting such a well thought out statement. They spoke wisely and with commitment on behalf of their people.

This legislative resolution also provided for a nonderogation clause. This Legislature recognizes and agrees that treaty and aboriginal rights should be better recognized and that aboriginal people be full partners in future constitutional discussions. That is why I support this resolution, Madam Speaker, and I urge all members to support it. Thank you.

Mr. Eric Robison (Rupertsland): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to just briefly put a few words on the record. It, indeed, was a learning exercise for us, the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and I, particularly in the work that was done with respect to the resolution that is before us. It was my understanding that we were going to try and pass this resolution by day's end, however, I understand that things may change.

I would like to, first of all, Madam Speaker, commend the work that was done by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), the members for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), and, of course, the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and the member for Rossmere, the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), and, of course, the Chair, Mr. Fox-Decent and the staff members. I believe that they were commended somewhat by previous speakers, and I offer my thank yous to them, as well, for the work that they did in guiding us in some of the areas that we perhaps had a difficult time in understanding in some cases.

We certainly became more aware about the diversity of the province of Manitoba in our travels, and we had the opportunity of course of being in Gimli, Brandon, Portage, St. Boniface, Dauphin, The Pas, Thompson,

Norway House and of course here in Winnipeg. I was truly moved by some of the statements that were made by the ordinary Manitobans who have this deep commitment for national unity and the unity of this country. I believe that we heard overwhelmingly that the right of aboriginal peoples has to be first and foremost and that aboriginal people have to be participants in any constitutional reform processes that may lay ahead of us, Madam Speaker.

Many have said that aboriginal issues have been prominent, particularly with the Meech Lake Accord in 1989, when it commenced its work at that time and as well in 1991 during the work leading up to the report of the Manitoba Constitutional Task Force where it recognized aboriginal peoples' inherent right to self-government within the Canadian constitutional framework. I believe that is also contained in a report.

I want to refer to the report again, and again as my colleagues have indicated, 78 percent of respondents in this province thought that the seven points in the framework reflected this country's fundamental values and characteristics. I join with my colleague the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) in that we not only kept our ears open during the hearings that were held in different communities in Manitoba and also the letters and also the presentations that were provided for the task force, but we kept an open mind on other issues that were bothering and also were on the minds of Manitobans.

We took seriously these presentations that were made, for example, the need for a strong central government to promote and reinforce Canada's unity. We again heard from people in Thompson. I do not recall the elder woman's name that spoke to us in Thompson, but she again spoke about the sentiments that were expressed by the member for The Pas, and I too heard her loud and clear that the aboriginal people of Quebec do not have an opportunity to express their opinion about their feelings about national unity. She again brought that to our attention, and it was a woman I admire because she served with the Royal Air Force in England during World War II, and I admired her for not only being an elder but also for being a war veteran that served her country at a time when she was needed to do that.

So the James Bay Cree as you will recall, Madam Speaker, held their own referendum prior to the referendum in Quebec, and 97 percent said they wanted to stay within Canada. The Inuits, at the same time as well too, came up with a vote that roughly rounded out to about 98 percent wanting to stay within the country as we know it today. We commend the Inuit people. Perhaps that is a good starting point for me. The Inuit people of this country have long been forgotten about and have not been recognized as being a part of this country, probably to a larger degree than First Nations people. The Metis too, as well are the forgotten people, and I will get to that in a moment.

* (1630)

The Inuit people for many years were disenfranchised and were not recognized as being contributors of this country, but we do not have to look too far back about the contributions that the Inuit made in the war effort, for example, in the protection and the freedom that all Canadians now take for granted. They had the Inuit code talkers, I believe, who were from one of the northern communities in the N.W.T. So the Inuit people certainly have contributed to the freedom that we all enjoy in this country.

The Metis people are often regarded as the forgotten people in our country, in this country known as Canada, but the Metis people too have made significant contributions to the freedom of this country as well; the Metis people, as you know, Madam Speaker, and their leader, Louis Riel, who was hanged in 1885 on November 16 during the rebellion that occurred.

As we look back in history—and the trial that occurred in Regina at that time commenced on the 25th of, I believe it was 1885. In Regina, two whites, 46 Metis people and 81 Indians went on trial, many for the same charges Riel did, which were treason and felony. Of these, many were convicted, including seven Metis and 44 Indians, and a couple of our forefathers that were convicted were, of course, Big Bear who served his time at Stony Mountain Penitentiary and Poundmaker, and also Riel, and Riel had a conviction to fight for his people.

So while the debate is happening nationwide right now about recognizing Louis Riel as a founder of this

country, a Father of Confederation, at the same time exonerating him, we support that naturally, but what we believe, as well, in addition to not only exonerating him, what we have to talk about is exonerating the eight so-called Indians that were hanged at Battleford a week after he was on November 27, 1885.

Those eight Indians, Madam Speaker, were called as follows: Miserable Man of the Crees, Bad Arrow, Around the Sky, Wandering Spirit, Iron Body, Little Bear, and these people were members of the Cree nation. There were a couple of Assiniboines that were also hanged in Battleford in 1885, and their names were Itka and Man Without Blood. These Indians were found guilty of murder, although as part of the rebellion they were charged with different murders.

So while the discussion is happening with the exoneration of Riel, we believe that at the same time these Indians be exonerated as well. In addition to that, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples we should just go ahead and proceed and establish with our national government, try and convince our national government, our federal government, to proceed with the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and have a modern-day treaty for the Metis people. Therefore, in my opinion, this would cover many of the wrongdoings that were done to the Metis people over the years.

How the Metis people came about for a large part as well, too, is that they were not technically Metis people. However, because many of our aboriginal people served in the wars, in World War I, many had to give up their treaty and Indian status in order for them to be accepted by their friends in the military and in order for them to go to bars and where all the other soldiers went. So they gave away their treaty rights in order to be recognized as one of the group, so to speak. So that is how we created another generation of Metis people. We must keep that in mind if we are to make any steps toward correcting some of the wrongs that have gone on over the years, Madam Speaker.

The other matter that I wanted to talk about is the disparities in income between men and women. This was brought to our attention by representatives from women's organizations, and we took that seriously and ensured that it be a part of the report. We also heard a

good number of presenters identify the failure to acknowledge French communities outside of Quebec as a weakness in the framework that was done, and the Societe Franco-Manitobaine, for example, told us that the recognition of linguistic duality in point 4 would be better expressed by the better recognition of minority language communities throughout Canada. So we have had that opportunity, Madam Speaker.

Now, as aboriginal people, we have always had a problem, and I want to reiterate my understanding is that this is not a constitutional round, that this is simply to talk about the unity of this country. We, as aboriginal people, have always maintained our relationship with the Crown in right of Great Britain. Later, of course, that responsibility was transferred, without our agreement, to the Government of Canada or the Crown in right of Canada, as they call it now.

But our elders teach us that a relationship based on the treaties, commencing with the numbered treaties in 1871, and the ones before that, the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, especially among the East Coast First Nations people, were based on peace and friendship. Of course, later on they got into the more specific numbered treaty areas starting with Treaty No. 1 in 1871 that was signed at Lower Fort Garry.

Therefore, the elders always maintained that the relationship with First Nations people is one that we should maintain. That is why we have a strong connection with Canada, because the First Nations people believe that there is still some obligation on the part of the Canadian government for First Nations people based on those treaties, even though it may appear that they have been broken. Certainly, many of those treaties have been broken time and time again. Nevertheless, aboriginal people have persevered in spite of jails, in spite of being incarcerated, standing up many times for things that we believe in, and the residential school experience which was another assimilation attempt to take away our identity—chopping off the hair of our kids that went to school and giving them brush-cuts when they first entered residential schools. Those are all a part of our history.

It is not a proud history of this country, but, nevertheless, Indian people, First Nations people have

remained true throughout this history of this country, Madam Speaker. They have proven that by not only enlisting in the Canadian Armed Forces in times that the country needed them but also during peacetime. Many of our relatives, many of our elders, have served in the wars of years gone by—and many of them we know personally. And throughout all that and in 1969, when the now Prime Minister was then the Indian Affairs minister introduced his white paper—on assimilation really is what it was, although he called it a new relationship with Indians—it really was another attempt to assimilate us into the mainstream of Canadian society, again leaving the identity that my people have been proud of over the years.

We have had, of course, a patriation of the Constitution in 1982, when it was proclaimed in Ottawa through the ceremony and the glamour that goes along with such an occasion. I remember in 1981 lobbying the Senators and the House of Lords, I guess, and the members of Parliament in England at that time and being on the opposing side of who is now the Prime Minister was then the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, counterarguing that the recognition of treaty and aboriginal rights were not fully entrenched in Canada's Constitution, and they should hold up on this until they heard the arguments of the Indian people in our country prior to sending it back to Canada.

We enlisted the support of 94 members of Parliament, although the House of Commons in England consists of over 600 members, Madam Speaker. Nevertheless, we were able to have those 94 speak up and be heard about their support for First Nations people in this country. So we had an interesting opportunity in the early '80s to hear about not only how that Parliament works, but certainly they had an opportunity to hear some of the arguments and some of the problems that we had with the patriation of the Constitution.

* (1640)

To make a long story short, the Constitution was patriated in 1982. There were First Ministers' conferences with First Nations, as called for in Section 37 of the Constitution, and these First Ministers' conferences happened in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1987.

Again, they could not reach an agreement on the wording or the terminology on the concept of self-government.

As a result, we are still here today. We have gone through Meech Lake. We have gone through Charlottetown. Now we may renew our dialogue with the First Ministers and, of course, the Prime Minister on renewed relationships with First Nations and aboriginal people in this country and again try and figure out our place within the family of nations within this country that is known as Canada.

What was made very clear to us during the hearings that we held throughout the province of Manitoba, was that there are indeed three founding nations in this country, that there are the First Nations, there are the French, and there are, of course, the English. We recognize that, and I certainly was glad to hear that. So, Madam Speaker, in spite of the things that occurred to aboriginal people, we are still willing to be patient, and we are still willing to work in unison with the rest of this country.

Again, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come has made some statements that he does not want to stay or be with—he is not on side with the government of Quebec if indeed they want to separate from the rest of Canada. We certainly support that, along with Matthew Coon Come, we have Grand Chief Joe Norton of Kahnawake and Chief Billie Two Rivers who are of the same mind, who have repeatedly said that they do not want to separate from the rest of this country. There are the Atikamak [phonetic] Indian people in Quebec and other nations. I just mentioned a couple, the Haudenoshune [phonetic], or Six Nations people as they are called, but there are many others as well.

So we have had also, of the 15,000 or so respondents that we have had to the work of this all-party task force in the province of Manitoba, 56 percent of the respondents also believe that there should be better recognition of the concerns and rights of aboriginal people and that aboriginal peoples are important as we look at the whole question of national unity. We thank Manitobans for offering their advice on these issues, and I believe that it was a testament that aboriginal people do have more support on a broader scale than we realize.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, I want to thank my Leader for giving me the opportunity, and of course my colleague from The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), to serve on this. It was truly eye-opening. It was an opportunity for us to hear from other Manitobans. Sometimes we do not take that opportunity to avail ourselves to learn about the other cultures of people. We had an opportunity to meet with French people and of course other cultures in Canada, and they are all of the same mind that for the most part national unity is very important. I am very glad to report that and also echo the sentiments that have been expressed by my colleagues on both sides of the House and especially with the words that were spoken by our Leader in that it is very important that we solicit the views of Manitobans on this very crucial issue.

Now, whether or not we are faced with a constitutional round of discussions in the very near future, that remains to be seen, but certainly I believe that Manitobans have spoken about how they feel about national unity, and that is very important. They have spoken on the recognition of aboriginal people, and we thank them for the effort that they have made.

I want to stress one more time that aboriginal people—we are in a time where I am in agreement with my colleague, the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), that I believe that as we go into a new constitutional round, if we do—assuming we do in the next 24 months—that it will be aboriginal people again that will save the day. I am convinced of that.

It has been a prophesy among our people that in time, in spite of the indifference and in spite of the prejudices and in spite of the negative experiences that many of us experienced in society, that there will come a time when our advice and our knowledge as aboriginal people, our elders certainly will be sought to save maybe the plight of this country or the future of this country. I am convinced that this will occur again in the next little while.

We naturally support the Framework, the Calgary Framework. We believe that Quebec is a welcome and invited partner in the process, and again I reiterate aboriginal people are certainly part of this.

I want to, just before I conclude, Madam Speaker, again refer to the report and the resolution. I want to say that the resolution I think is in a lot of ways much more detailed than what I had read from other Legislatures across this country, from what I understand, and it only makes sense because the aboriginal population of this province is roughly 12 percent. We need not look back too far in our history as to what happened to the Meech Lake discussions. The gentleman that I replaced in the Manitoba Legislature of course had a significant role, and again we are faced, seven years or eight years later, with they would like to take that away from aboriginal people, that significant part of our history, so I believe that the committee, the task force rather, should be commended for the effort that they have done in this report and also the resolution that is before us. I think that it is quite radical that we would have a nonderogation clause, but also No. 2, that we should have better recognition and treaty rights for aboriginal people, and that aboriginal people are indeed a fundamental part of the unity of this country.

So with those few words, I was hoping that we would pass this resolution today, but I understand that there are others that would like to speak to the issue and certainly that is their right, so I would like to thank you for that opportunity, Madam Speaker. I thank my leader, I thank the Premier for moving and giving us this opportunity to debate this issue, and I want to assure you that we are supportive of the resolution before us. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I truly feel honoured to have the opportunity to speak to the unity resolution and the Calgary agreement. I think we should not lose sight of the history in this country and why this country came together the way it did, and why people immigrated to this country originally. When one looks back to 1867 when the country was actually formed as Canada, and when I look specifically at our people and when we came here, one has to reflect about the intense negotiations and discussions that must have gone on during that period of time and also the intense feelings that must have been there when the various jurisdictions, provinces such as Manitoba, were formed.

* (1650)

I reflect specifically on our Manitoba history and specifically on Louis Riel and the fight that he fought to ensure that the rights of the people of Manitoba would be enshrined in Canada and the pain and suffering that a person like Riel actually endured to ensure that Manitoba would in fact become part of Canada. It was at that time a very small province, the postage stamp province they called it, and the reason I reflect on this, Madam Speaker, is because it was only two years or four years after Riel that our people in 1874 decided to emigrate from the Ukraine to Canada.

We came, our people came to Winnipeg and then via the Red River moved upstream and formed what was then the East Reserve, and the reason our people came was because Canada, first of all, needed the agrarian background that the Mennonites were known for because they wanted to open parts of western Canada, and they offered land in Manitoba so that our people could settle here.

But the reason they really came was because they wanted to maintain the religious freedom that they had known and had been promised by the Ukraine or by Russia at that time and, of course, that period in history ended, and the Mennonites came to Canada and were given, at that time, special status, and I think that is important to note because there are many in this country today who are profoundly engrossed by the feeling that this must be one Canada and we must all be treated equally and we must all have the same rights, and that has never been the case, Madam Speaker.

If it were or if it had been that everybody was treated equally and with the same consideration, I doubt whether the Mennonite people would have settled in Canada. They simply would not have come here. I think we can reflect on the special arrangements that were made for them during the First World War and that the young people, the Mennonites, did not have to serve during the war. The same consideration was given during the Second World War. They served but in various other ways. Many of our young people did go to war and did serve in armies as Mennonite boys and Mennonite women, but they need not have because there were special provisions made.

I think we need to reflect clearly—and it bothers me some days, Madam Speaker, when our people, when

the Mennonite people reflect negatively on what is going on in Canada today and on the debate that is going on in Canada today, because I think we need to look at our historical background sometimes to truly reflect where we have come from and where we are today.

I was really enlightened, Madam Speaker, when I was given the opportunity to visit some of the high schools and speak at some of the high schools about the Calgary accord and ask them what they thought of the provisions within the Calgary accord. I was absolutely thrilled to hear that these young Canadians, in my view, are as well or are probably better prepared to become the leaders of the future, and I think they have a better understanding of the need of Canada. Maybe what we should be doing is allowing them to negotiate amongst each other and form the agreements that this country really needs.

I believe that the Calgary accord and many of the provisions made under the Calgary accord truly reflect what young Canadians are telling me in the high schools today, or most of them are telling me in the high schools today. That, I thought, was really invigorating, and when one looks at the comments that were written on the questionnaires that we handed out and asked them to fill out, I think that again reflected how deeply concerned they were about the country and how deeply they love this country and how truly Canadian they are.

My constituency, Madam Speaker, I think is a very unique constituency and truly reflects the multicultural mosaic that we are known for in Manitoba, and we truly are as Canadians. I reflect again back on history when the Mennonite people came to Canada and the native community that lived here, and this was their home. Truly, when one thinks back, we invaded their home, but they extended the warm hands that were needed to allow the Mennonite people to survive. The native community saw to it that there was sustenance and housing for them, helped them build housing in such a way that they could, in fact, survive the winter, and that will never be forgotten by many of our people. That history is clear.

So I think the holding out of hands to each other was demonstrated then, and I think we should reflect on that now. Similarly, when the Ukrainian people came

during the early 1900s to this country, they suffered hardships, and again they found friendship and warmth amongst the then Canadian people, and we should not forget that. I think that was reflected by many of the comments that were made by students in our high schools when we talked about the diversity and the linguistic diversity that we had.

In our constituency, Ukrainian is spoken quite fluently in many of our communities. That is their language. The French language is spoken quite fluently in many of our communities. That is their language. German is spoken quite fluently and that is the language. There is nothing that stops the people from practising not only their religious rights but also their linguistic rights in all parts of our constituency and in our province. That is what makes us unique, Madam Speaker. That is why this country is so great. That is why the Calgary accord speaks very clearly that we should recognize that diversity.

We should allow Quebec to be unique and different because they are. They are unique and they are different but the same as Manitoba. The province of Manitoba is as unique and different as Quebec is. Let us recognize that in amendments to the Constitution and let us build on that. Let us draw from that the strength that this country needs to walk into the next century, into the millennium, and then I think we will all have a greater degree of pride. If we start looking at the positives that we can generate out of that sort of multicultural mosaic and talent that we bring to this country and we look at our historical backgrounds and the connections that we can make into our past countries that we came from, there are tremendous advantages.

So I think we should reflect clearly on what the true depth and meaning of that is and how much we can gain out of this instead of bickering and disagreeing. I would ask all members in this House and all people of this province to truly join with us and support this resolution and truly start discussing with our friends all over this country the possibility of keeping that uniqueness and being a united Canada and remaining that way.

I was just told that I did not have to sit down at five o'clock, that we were probably going to look at waiving

private members' hour. I am going to ask the House leader. Maybe he might want to intervene at this time.

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I apologize to the honourable member for Emerson for interrupting his contribution this afternoon, but there have been discussions and I believe there would be a willingness to waive private members' hour this afternoon.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour? [agreed]

* (1700)

Mr. Penner: Madam Speaker, that allows me to put a few other comments on the record that I think will speak to the diversity of thought process that was initially implemented when this country was formed, and not only when this country was formed but also when we started discussing processes that we needed to ensure that this country could in fact grow. I think western Canada was and has been as unique as all other parts of Canada are.

I remember when you read history, you have to reflect on the discussions and the debates that took place when we talked about opening up the west and what was needed to open up the west. The railways came into the discussion. I mean, we needed something to move our products into an export position, so the railways were built. There was special recognition given to the provinces and to the railways, but when the debates came about as to how the farm community could survive and the co-operatives were formed because there was a lot of discussion at that time as to how to bring together and form a coalition to market the products that western Canadians were good at growing, and the world, of course, needed grain, the formation of the pooling system and the pools became very evident.

Out of that grew a western Canadian wheat board which is now called the Canadian Wheat Board. Those rights were not given to other provinces. Those rights enshrined in legislation to co-operatively jointly market their grain were given to western Canadians. The Ontario Wheat Board was formed later as a marketing

agent for Ontario wheat, but the wheat board in western Canada was formed just for western Canadians. Similarly, other processes and other arrangements were made for other provinces.

So we have never at any point in history had total equality in this province, and we should not, Madam Speaker, in my view, think now that we can all be treated equal, because we never will be. If we will, and if the same principles have to apply to everybody, then I think we will set in motion a debate and a discussion that this country, I think, will probably not want to end up in.

I agree with what my colleague the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Downey) said today, that if we in fact allow ourselves to enter into the debate about giving special powers and separation to one province and we allow one province to be removed, then the question is, will there be a Canada to negotiate with by that province or to join with? I am not sure whether that was the Minister of Industry (Mr. Downey) or the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) made that statement. I think we should reflect very closely on that, because it is important that when a split in any nation occurs, that the rest of the country might not be called Canada very long. There has been discussion on the West Coast whether they might, in fact, be looking at separating, and the fragmentation, in my view, would keep on occurring, and it would not take very long before we would no longer be a nation.

So therefore, Madam Speaker, I think it is absolutely imperative that we do everything in our power as negotiators and legislators to give security and comfort to those that are in the position to negotiate, that they be given the freedoms to come to a point that we can all agree upon and that this country can, in fact, survive. Therefore, I think the Calgary accord is so important because it speaks in the first clause about all Canadians being equal and having rights protected by law. It speaks of all provinces, while diverse in their characteristics, having equal status. That, I think, is now the case. As Canadians and as Canadian provinces, we all have equal status. That should be retained.

Canada is graced by a diversity, tolerance, compassion, and an equality of opportunity that is

without rival in the world. I think that is the reason why people, when they look at emigrating to another nation from their homeland, look at Canada as their first choice. When people were asked by the United Nations which country they would see as the most likely one that they would like to call their home, Canada was the first choice. We should be very careful, I think, as citizens, as individuals, as governments, as legislators, as parliamentarians, very careful as to what kind of rhetoric we use in the debate to ensure that we leave the impression that we are Canadians, and Canadians first, and that Canada is and will remain our homeland and that Canada truly will be a great country and a country of growth.

Clause 4 says Canada's diversity includes aboriginal peoples and cultures, the vitality of the English and the French languages and a multicultural citizenry drawn from all parts of the world, and that truly is the basic fundamentals of Canada.

Number five, I think, is a very important one. In Canada's federal system, where respect for diversity and equality underlies unity, the unique character of Quebec society includes its French-speaking majority. Its culture and its tradition of civil law is fundamental to the well-being of Canada. Consequently the Legislature and the government of Quebec have a role to protect and developed the unique character of Quebec society within Canada.

We could say exactly the same thing for the province of Manitoba, because we do have a responsibility to protect the unique nature of the diversity of language, linguistics, multicultural people in this province. That is our responsibility, as it is the responsibility of the Quebec Legislature to protect the rights of the Quebec people.

If any future constitutional amendments, on No. 6, confer powers on one province, these powers must be available to all provinces. And very clearly that was the position of all the premiers in Calgary; that if powers were given to one province, those powers must equally be given to all other provinces. Who can argue with that? There is no debate on that. There is no argument about that. That is why we are Canadians. That is why we have the country of Canada.

Number seven, Canada is a federal system where federal, provincial and territorial governments work in partnership while respecting each others jurisdictions, and that is what makes Canada so great, that we as a province, as a government within the province of Manitoba, have the right to govern, and so do all other provinces and provincial governments have the right to govern. And Canada, the government of Canada is the overall governing body which we operate within and all provinces do this equally and should have the right to do it.

Canadians want their governments to work co-operatively and with flexibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the federation. Canadians want their governments to work together, particularly in the delivery of social programs, and provinces and territories renew their commitment to work in partnership with the government of Canada to best serve the needs of Canadians. It could not be said any better, Madam Speaker. That is the responsibility of our federalist system. If we take one piece, if we remove one piece out of this we will indeed destroy the very fabric of Canadianism.

I find it interesting, Madam Speaker, that we have currently, as we speak about unity, a group of people who are Americans in the Northwest Angle that have asked their member of Congress to present a resolution before Congress, as he did, asking Congress to give them the right under the Constitution, give the right to vote whether they would like to leave their country and they would like to then join Manitoba. They have called me on a number of occasions asking whether this would be possible.

* (1710)

First of all, Madam Speaker, they would have to be given the right under their Constitution, which would mean in a constitutional amendment, and, secondly, they would then have to vote as to whether they, in fact, wanted to secede. Thirdly, we would then have to, if they really did this, choose whether we would want to accept them, and never have I seen in this country a nation or a group of people from a given nation being rejected. This country has always opened its arms to people who wanted to come to Canada. We have always had open doors to people, and I suspect we

would have open doors, as well, to these Americans who have indicated a willingness to choose.

But, Madam Speaker, I think the fundamental reason why this question was put by the Northwest Angle people was because of the disagreement of the jurisdictions that govern Lake of the Woods. I think it is tremendously important to those people of the Northwest Angle, as it is to Manitobans—and I believe Ontario people—that we should sit down together and see if we cannot negotiate a pact that would give equal rights to all people on Lake of the Woods. I think that would, in fact, satisfy the people on the Northwest Angle, and I doubt very much whether they would then want to choose to leave their country.

I think it is important that we recognize the importance of the issue, because, again, we are talking about jurisdictional rights. We as Manitobans have demonstrated on numerous occasions that we can either sit down with our North Dakotans, our Minnesotans, or we can sit down with people from Ontario or Saskatchewan or indeed the Northwest territory and negotiate and settle our differences without causing conflict. We have demonstrated this during the great flood that we experienced this past year and floods that we have experienced before. We have demonstrated this in forming a trade corridor between the three states to the south of us and now even having gone beyond that. We have demonstrated that in economic agreements and in trade negotiations, and, surely, Madam Speaker, we as a nation can negotiate and sit and discuss and come to terms with the people in Quebec in the same manner to ensure that they will, in fact, remain Canadians.

I stand with a great deal of pride here in this place today, Madam Speaker, because the people of my constituency have given me the right to be their spokesperson in this Legislature and to be their representative. Very few people of Mennonite descent, prior to the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), have been able to stand in this building and represent a portion of this province as representatives of Manitoba, and I take a great deal of pride in that. I take a great deal of pride in being a Canadian. I take a great deal of pride in being allowed to speak freely my views in this Legislature.

I take a great deal of pride in representing all the views of my constituents, regardless of what language they speak, Madam Speaker, or what religion they are or which church they attend. I take a great deal of pride in looking at our future generation, our young people, and being able to call them in the future Canadians, and, surely, all of us in this Chamber today would wish that the essence of the Calgary accord could be implemented and amendments made to the Constitution that would allow Quebec the comfort that the people of Quebec need in order to ensure that we all believe that they should remain enshrined as Canadians.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am honoured, as well, today to put a few words very briefly on the record with regard to my support for the Calgary declaration, and I join with all colleagues on both sides of the House today to comment on this process.

Firstly, I would like to offer my congratulations, as have other members to the chair, to the members of the committee and also to all the Canadians and all the Manitobans who made presentations to the process, people who wrote in, people who phoned in, and the people who came before the committee.

I listened very carefully to the comments of my honourable colleague for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) who is an historian, and I too have been a student of history in years gone by. I would perhaps offer as a perspective or a reflection on the Calgary accord that one must be a student of history in order to understand the present, and if you do not understand history, and this has been said many times before, then you are cursed to repeat it. I think that the Calgary declaration must be framed in an historical perspective, and while our honourable colleague across gave one particular presentation of history, history is a multifaceted issue and I think that it can be economic history, it can be social history, it can be religious history, it can be political history and it is as varied and diverse as all of us are in this Chamber and all of us are in this community. We all have our own histories.

I can remember, Madam Speaker, as a member of the Manitoba Historical Society, sitting in a dinner one

night in St. Norbert and a resident of St. Norbert was indicating the significance of that community to Manitoba's history. He was reflecting on La Barrière and Riel and that group of adventurers with Father Ritchot who turned back the mauvais Canadiens [nasty Canadians] who were trying to sneak in the backdoor to Red River in those days. I had the particular pleasure to be able to go over to that individual after dinner and shake him by the hand and tell him that my great great uncle was a lawyer in that company of Canadiens who were coming into Red River and he was turned back and went to Pembina and sat and cooled his heels in a mud soddy in Pembina, North Dakota and returned back to Canada.

I can also reflect that in the late '50s and early '60s, the political discussion amongst young students of the day was what does it mean to be Canadian. Well, we defined it in those days and discussed it that we knew that we were not English, and we knew that we were not American but in those days there was great confusion as to really what was a Canadian, and I can remember a defining moment when it was brought home to me as to what it was to be Canadian. I was walking down Oxford Street in the city of London and I looked around at the people around me and the crowds around me, and I probably was 18 inches taller than anybody else on the street, and I was probably 50 pounds heavier and I was feeling somewhat claustrophobic with this mob and I knew that was not my country even though my father was a Brit. My mother was educated there.

I remember coming back across the Atlantic far more Canadian than when I went over. It is an emotional state, it is a state of being, it is a presence that you hold in your mind. I think that part of the historical perspective of the Calgary declaration, as it has been referred to earlier, is the Charlottetown Accord, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, and my colleagues here that I looked at the Accord and I realized the faults but I thought this was an opportunity to keep us together as a country. I was standing on a combine in Baldur, Manitoba, talking to a group of farmers at the time of the Charlottetown debate trying to convince them, and obviously I was not terribly successful, but I was trying to convince this group of Manitobans that they should support the Charlottetown Accord and equally when Meech was around.

* (1720)

We all knew the faults of Meech, but I think that we are embarked right now on a different process. What we did with Charlottetown and with Meech was try to embark upon some fix-it process, on individual changes and modifications to our Constitution and to our definition of Canada and the way we regulate Canada and the way we relate ourselves to one another. [interjection] Yes, indeed, another supporter, says the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), and indeed I was, Madam Speaker.

One of the processes that I have learned since coming into this Legislature is a lesson in dispute resolution or in trying to accord is that one moves out from juxtaposed or conflicting situations or opinions or positions until one reaches a vision, a statement of vision, a statement of general accord that everybody can join in. I think rather than pointing faults, taking issue with the process, or with the clauses, or with the individuals that were involved, we can all make I think political opportunistic points, because it is not a perfect process. I think everybody that is involved will agree that it is not a perfect process. I think that from a position of trying to present and absorb the larger picture, that we have to have a statement of principle, and we have to have a beginning of the discussion. That is what I think the Calgary accord, the Calgary declaration, tries to say to all of us. I think that from that perspective it is important that we all stand up and attest to our support for this process. I think that the roots of this discussion go back to 1837, to the Durham Report which the British governor of the day forwarded back to London.

I think that as my honourable colleague the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) said that we can look in the short range to the repatriation in 1981-82 and the fact that not all members of our family were at the table when that was done and that it was done in haste, that the repatriation was done in haste, that that has brought us to the situation we are today.

I had the opportunity to go out to one of the schools in my neighbourhood to speak to the Calgary declaration and dialogue with many of the students in one of my high schools. I issued them a challenge. I said that the relevance of this process of this declaration

to you individuals sitting here in this classroom today is that we are embarking upon the journey to solve these problems, but it will be your challenge to make it work, to pick up the torch and to reunite and reknit this country.

I think that we all had a wake-up call when we stood on the banks of the Red River here and saw the outpouring of emotion when we thought that our country really was in jeopardy. We were trying to send a signal to people right across this country that Canada means something very, very dear and very, very important to all of us.

I went down to Quebec as a chaperone on a student exchange right after the last referendum. It was an opportunity for me to meet with some of our colleagues in the Quebec House, and these were separatists. I went down in some fear and trepidation that they would be rude, that they would be dismissive, that they would be angry. In fact, I found a bunch of very elegant, courteous individuals, who were trying to explain to me, as a representative of the Manitoba Legislature, that they wanted to be heard, they wanted to be acknowledged. They wanted their fact of existence and their culture to be acknowledged. They were not looking for superiority of status, or of rights or of claiming money from the central purse. It was more academic, it was more ethereal, it was more spiritual.

The more we try to define the contest or the debate in terms of monetary policy or carrying passports or things of that nature, Madam Speaker, I feel that we are missing the mark. Because what we are really talking about is how do we see ourselves, what does it mean to be a Canadian, what is important to us, to our country. I think that all members in this Chamber as many Canadians before have said that Canada is a place of refuge. Every one of us has an immigrant story.

My father came to this country as an immigrant from Great Britain. He came in 1926. My mother's family came from the United States of America in 1783 after their time of troubles down there. They were all immigrants. They came here for peace, they came here for religious freedom, they came here for opportunity. You know what, Madam Speaker, those verities have not changed. Those are still fundamentally real today as they were 100 years ago, 1,000 years ago. So we

have to start focusing on what is it that we all agree to? What are the fundamentals that we are after?

So, Madam Speaker, I have enjoyed the opportunity to put some of these comments on the record today, and I join with all my colleagues in this Chamber in supporting and endorsing this resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Je vais juste mettre un couple de mots aujourd'hui sur le record.

Il y avait un couple de questions quand on allait à l'école voir les étudiants. Puis nous avons demandé, qu'est-ce que c'est le Canada? Qu'est-ce que c'est être Canadien? Puis il y avait les enfants qui disaient, c'est notre pays, c'est notre vie, c'est notre chez-nous. Il y avait une qui avait dit, c'est une nation qui inclut toutes les provinces et les territoires.

C'est ça que je voulais dire parce que moi, ma famille, je suis la onzième génération des Laurendeau ici au Canada. Quand mes enfants, ils vont être là, je veux que ça est encore un Canada uni. C'est proche au coeur puis on peut voir ça parce que tout le monde, ils disent que le Canada c'est pas seulement les provinces et les territoires, c'est les citoyens qui sont ici dans toutes les provinces et les territoires qui veulent s'exprimer dans leur langue, dans leur culture et puis voir qu'est-ce que c'est être Canadien.

Je voulais aussi remercier les membres du groupe de travail qui dans un esprit de collaboration ont pu produire un rapport unanime.

[Translation]

I am just going to put a few comments on the record today.

There were a couple of questions when we went to school to see the students. We asked, what is Canada? What does it mean to be a Canadian? Some children would say it is our country, it is our life, it is our home. One said it is a nation that includes all of the provinces and the territories.

That is what I wanted to say because my own family, I am the 11th generation of the Laurendeaus here in Canada. When my children are there I want it still to be

a united Canada. It is close to my heart; we can see this, because everyone says that Canada is not just the provinces and territories, it is the citizens who are here in all provinces and territories who want to express themselves in their languages and their cultures and see what it means to be Canadian.

I also wanted to thank the members of the task force who in a spirit of co-operation were able to produce a unanimous report.

[English]

So, Madam Speaker, it is my honour to address the members of this Assembly today on an issue that is perhaps the greatest that we face as a nation today: the unity of our country. This is an issue with which Canadians are familiar. In fact, some might say that many are weary of the debate regarding our country's future. Despite the fact that this issue has been debated and discussed extensively throughout our history as a nation, it remains important that we continue to work to strengthen our federation. We are a country that is often cited as the best in the world in which to live. We are a country that immigrants from around the world look at as a place of opportunity and peace. We are a country which offers our children a future of diversity and promise. It is with this in mind that I say that we must never pass, on opportunities, to strengthen and protect the country we are so fortunate to have and we should feel privileged to discuss the Calgary Framework today.

Madam Speaker, I also would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge our Premier (Mr. Filmon). As one of Canada's most experienced statesmen, he has been a leader on the issue of national unity. He has always, in my experience, placed a priority on the unity of this country and approached the debate in a nonpartisan and diplomatic manner. Manitobans can be proud of the role that their Premier has played in ensuring that Canada remains a strong and united country.

Madam Speaker, when discussing the issue of national unity and the Calgary Framework, it is vital that we keep in mind that the advice and the will of those it will most affect, Canadians. It is with that in

mind that I am pleased that nearly 20,000 people communicated with the task force during the course of their consultation. This is not a matter that can be dealt with in the confines of political arena. It is something that needs to be debated and discussed on the streets of our cities and our towns and the local coffee shops and stores. Ultimately, it is not the politicians, not the academics, and not the media which will decide the fate of Canada. It will be ordinary Canadians because that is who Canada belongs to.

* (1730)

It is with that knowledge, Madam Speaker, that I am pleased that so many Manitobans took the time to participate in these discussions. As well, we must remember that young Canadians will be the most significantly impacted by our discussions and decisions because they will inherit this great land. I had the pleasure of visiting several schools in my constituency and to speak with and listen to young Manitobans on their vision of Canada and their opinions of the Calgary Framework. It was a tremendous experience to listen to the passion and heart with which these young people spoke of their country. They expressed to me that they were proud of our country's diversity and its heritage. They expressed to me that they wanted to inherit a country that is diverse and yet equal, a country that is tolerant and compassionate and, most of all, a country that is united.

One of the phrases that was expressed during those meetings was that a chain gets its strength from the individual links. The links that make up our country, the provinces, must, I was told, be strong, equal and united. Madam Speaker, the support that I heard for the Calgary Framework was more than support for a document, for a piece of paper with words and ideas. It was support for a country that found unity, not in spite of its diversity but because of it. The classes that I spoke to were made up of individuals from all races and all nationalities and to hear them speak as one about the love they have for our country made me extremely proud. The values that they expressed as being important to them contained within the Calgary Framework, and if it has the support of young Manitobans, the future stewards of our country, I believe that it should receive the support of the members of this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, as a country we must never forget that our diversity is our greatest asset and it is our strongest link. Through that diversity, we can share experiences, learn from each other and become an example to the world, that we can celebrate our differences and not be torn apart by them. The Calgary Framework is an important step towards ensuring that we move forward as a country of promise. It is important in ensuring that the next century will see a Canada that is as united and strong as it is diverse. I ask all members to join me in supporting this framework and in support of Canada.

Vive le Canada uni. [Long live a united Canada.]

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to put a few remarks on the record with regard to the—and I must say from the outset that I rise in support of the Calgary declaration and commend our First Ministers for the foresight and the deliberations that brought them to this declaration. I also want to pay tribute and recognize the residents of Sturgeon Creek, for if it were not for the residents of Sturgeon Creek I would not have the opportunity to speak on this very important issue in the Legislature. I take that very seriously. It is one that I think so often we take for granted and maybe not take it seriously enough and the opportunities that are made available to us as MLAs. We are certainly privileged in that respect, as many members have indicated through their remarks with regard to this issue.

Madam Speaker, I look back and I have had the opportunity and I have listened with interest at many of the comments that have been made from both sides of the House. Each one, I think, has been able to make their comments from the heart and with a great deal of sincerity. There have been some things that have troubled me with regard to things that I have—and I relate this back to my childhood growing up in southern Saskatchewan where I was born and raised. I think there have always been divisions within our country with the East, mainly Ontario and Quebec. My parents, I can recall them talking about Quebec and Ontario getting so many privileges, and they did not realize maybe the reason for that was based on the populations of the country and the provinces that they referred to.

In that time, and I did hear lots of concern over that issue, and I think that even during that time as maybe

strongly as they felt and people, and I am not singling out my parents, God rest their souls, for what they said and what they felt, but at no time was there any discussion of a separation or splitting up from Canada. Canada was the country that they came to and immigrated. Both my parents immigrated here; my father from Scotland and my mother from Sweden. They came here with the idea of looking for their freedom and a better life for their family and their brothers and sisters and their parents.

I think that maybe it was unique in the sense that with my parents, because of the fact that one spoke Gaelic and the other spoke Swedish, there was not any carry-over of that language to their children. I think what they have done in raising their family and certainly myself, being the youngest of 16 children, there were a lot of things that I maybe missed out on in terms of the opportunity to learn the language from the heritage which I came from.

Madam Speaker, I think in growing up in that time, I do not think that at any time there was any discussion of any province splitting away from Canada. I do not know whether it was because of the fact that we did not have the communications that we have today, but I would hope to think that we are intelligent enough and we have a greater understanding of the importance of this country and that we should grow stronger together. They did not know all the things, they did not have the inner knowledge of what went on in Quebec, and the people in Quebec did not have the inner knowledge of what went on in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. So I think that if we have a greater understanding of what goes on in the provinces—and certainly our country has shrunk in terms of the communication, everything is more accessible—that we should have a greater appreciation for each one's contribution to this great country.

I think that those are the underlying factors, at least that is what I have seen in terms of my own personal experience. Certainly I have had the opportunity to do limited travel, maybe not as much as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) when he talks about the travel he has in different trade conferences and things like that, but I have had an opportunity to gain an understanding and appreciation for different cultures and different languages and

different people that have different things. I mean we are a very diverse country.

I grew up around aboriginal people. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the aboriginal people, and I have always had that, but I did not have the same understanding of French Canada, but I still to this day, because of my involvement, I have grown an understanding and appreciation for them as well.

I do not share, as the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), a man whom I supported, the Honourable Jean Charest, for the leadership of the Conservative Party. I supported him, but I do not support his view that Quebecers should be the ones who make the decision as to whether or not they stay in Canada or whether they do not. I share my honourable colleague's support on that, yet I still have a great deal of respect for Mr. Charest and the decision that he will make in terms of keeping this country together. I wish him well, and I know that that is a decision that is going to be a very difficult one for him to make, and I know that whatever he decides, he is going to do a very honourable job.

* (1740)

I also believe that when we end this debate or each one has the opportunity to put their comments on the record, there has to be something else that has to bring some finality to this, whether it is a Charlottetown Accord or a Meech Lake Accord, there has to be something, and I do not know where that is going to come. I certainly have the confidence and the respect for our Premier (Mr. Filmon) who has been a tremendous leader in the constitutional debate and given considerable amount of good vision in terms of where the province of Manitoba should go. Granted, there may be differences of opinion in terms of other members in this Legislature.

The thing that I have difficulty with, with such an important issue here, and the comments that I have heard from other members is that they have taken, to me—I have interpreted this and hopefully I am interpreting it wrong—I have gotten the feeling that they have taken a political approach to this because they sit on the other side and the Premier sits over here and we sit over here, well, they are finding some difference

with this, maybe not in the true sense that they are coming out and saying that, but there is the innuendo and the comments that are made. I do not want to belittle that. I just noticed the differences, and I respect the honourable members for the decisions and the positions that they are taking, but I think that if we look at that and take that side of it, then I do not know how we are going to be able to deal with the people in Quebec because I think that we are all in this together.

Yes, we are going to maybe have some disagreement, but let us take the politics out of this. There is no room for politics on this issue. We are all Canadians and, Madam Speaker, I think that from that aspect, I would hope and I would urge all honourable members to take that approach very seriously because I think, you know, I have a great deal of respect for every member. I may not agree with every member in this Legislature in terms of their philosophies. I do not think that we can have an agenda on this issue. I think that we have to go out there and represent the people of this province and this country in order to keep this country together.

So, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put these few comments on the record, and I know that we want to move on with this, so thank you very much.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to support the Calgary Framework developed by First Ministers. I support its efforts towards the resolution of Quebec's role in our country and federation, and also its effort to recognize the rights and concerns of aboriginal people. The seven points contained in the Calgary Framework to me appear to recognize some of the major concerns of people in Canada, and it also puts forward those concerns then in seven positive statements as a declaration, as a declaration that may assist us in, in fact, solving some of these very difficult concerns.

Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the efforts of the committee, the chair, and the MLAs who spent a great deal of time conceptualizing, developing a process, hearing the people of Manitoba, and then doing the very serious work of analyzing what they heard and understanding what was meant by the people of Manitoba. That takes a great deal of effort and time, and I really commend them for their work and also for

the process that they developed which I believe has been, in fact, a very open and encouraging process to all of Manitobans.

I also am very impressed and encouraged by the passionate participation of Manitobans. I have read a number of the quotes of their points of view that they passed on and quotes that have been included in this report of the task force. Madam Speaker, I am particularly pleased that so many youth saw this as an opportunity to speak of their vision of Canada and speak about their future in a very formal way, in a way that would in fact be contained within the ultimate report of the task force.

Madam Speaker, my views are not going to be expressed in a very constitutional, technical way. I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to have studied in a very detailed way constitutional law when I was in law school and had the opportunity as Minister of Constitutional Affairs for our province, but today I am not going to address my concerns in the constitutional way or even in the historic way. I want to speak very briefly from a broader view, that of a citizen, a part of Canada, a part of a Canadian family.

I am very pleased Manitobans have given such a strong message to the task force that Quebec is a vital and welcome partner within the federation. The vitality and contribution of the people of Quebec is absolutely essential, in my view, to our country.

On a very personal note, I had the opportunity when I was much younger to spend some time in Quebec participating in Y camp there and getting to know the people. Currently, my son is studying in the province of Quebec, and that has brought much closer to home, on a very regular and personal basis, the issues of Quebec. It has allowed both my son and our family to experience Quebec culture, Quebec language and the people of Quebec, and this growing familiarity increases my view that we need Canada as it exists. We need Canada to remain together, and we need then to deal with these very important issues brought forward through the Calgary declaration. This framework and its declaration provides positive statements to that end.

Madam Speaker, just as a final comment in my support of the framework, I would like to draw

particular note to Clause 7, which focuses on governments working together in partnership and that Canadians want their governments to work together. I believe that that is one of the very most important statements within the Calgary declaration. That is a statement that will, in fact, help us solve our issues and will, in fact, serve the needs of Canadians. This is what Canadian people want to see. This is what they have a right to expect.

Madam Speaker, with that, I will add my support of the Calgary Framework to those who have spoken before me, and I will commend it to all members in this House. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, the thing that I like best about a debate like this is that we are able as Canadians to speak probably more from our hearts than we do on other issues. Some will argue they speak from their hearts on all the issues, but, certainly, I think we can speak with one voice on an issue like this. There seems to be a very strong consensus in our country that it is a very fine country and one very worth protecting.

The reason I like a debate like this is that you do not need to be a constitutional expert; you do not need to be a constitutional wordsmith to say those things that you feel inside yourself. I think of us 56 members of this Legislature as amongst the most fortunate people in the country, certainly in Manitoba, and why are we so fortunate? Is it in no small measure not because we happen to find ourselves living in the most blessed country anywhere in the world? I have felt that way for some time, but, certainly, that feeling has increased and increased with every day in my experience as a representative of the people.

I can very truthfully tell you that there is not a day that I walk through the doors of this Legislature that I do not remind myself how fortunate I am and my family is and my fellow citizens of Manitoba are because also we are citizens of Canada.

The resolution before us, to me, reflects all the feelings that I have for the country. I cannot really ask for anything more to be put into the resolution, and I really do not want to see anything taken out of it either, because it reflects the pride, the intense pride that I feel

as a Canadian. Where else but in Canada have I been given the opportunity to do what I do, to be able to be assured that I have the opportunity to ensure my family is properly fed and clothed and looked after and all of their needs are taken care of, and other Canadians, some less fortunate than I and some more fortunate than I, we would like to work toward the ideal in this country of opportunities that are there for all of those people. In a country like this you can do that.

* (1750)

It is not a country without issues to be resolved, and I am very proud of all of our provincial and territorial leaders who were involved in the Calgary Framework work that was done to bring us to the point we are today. I am extremely proud of each and every one of them. It does not matter what their political persuasion. I, of course, have a strong bias in favour of the leader of the Manitoba delegation, which should surprise no one. That being said, Manitoba takes a strong place in any discussion about matters of importance to Canada and to Canadians, and that is borne out by the daily activities of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province. But my praise goes to all of those people who drafted this Calgary Framework.

My family, and those of many of the members here, the history of those families goes back many years in Canada, some not so far back. Maybe the more recent arrivals have more reasons to feel grateful and proud than I do, but I have learned. I got my pride from learning about it more than actually experiencing first-hand what some people experience when they come from other countries which are not quite as blessed as Canada is.

I think that this is the kind of debate where we can speak our own personal minds and hearts, but I do not have any concern that I would in any way not be reflecting the views of the people of Brandon West and the people of Brandon. Where but in Canada can a community like Brandon thrive the way it is and has done and will do? For all of those reasons, Canada is very much worth preserving and strengthening. All honourable members have discussed various aspects of

this resolution, and I will not go into the details, but I will say that it represents, in my view, the highest and the noblest instincts of Canadians. Those are very, very admirable ideals for us to strive towards achieving, and I am very supportive of all efforts to achieve that.

With thanks, Madam Speaker, to the premiers, territorial leaders, with thanks to Wally Fox-Decent, someone who has come to be so highly respected in our province, with thanks to our colleagues who took part on this work and with thanks to honourable members for their co-operation in getting this matter before the House. I will conclude my comments by saying that this resolution is very, very supportable for all of the reasons that have been enunciated by all honourable members in this debate. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

The motion is accordingly passed unanimously.

O Canada! was sung.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, shall we call it six o'clock?

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday next.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 19, 1998

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