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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 300?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 205?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No.

Are we ready to proceed with Bill 209?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Then we'll call Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Tuxedo.

**Bill 209—The Special Olympics
Awareness Week Act**

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de sensibilisation aux Jeux Olympiques spéciaux, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak today on legislation which honours

the athletes, organizers, volunteers and supporters of Special Olympics here in Manitoba, and I want to welcome those who are here today in the gallery with us.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was a great day at the Manitoba Legislature for our Special Olympians in our province. For the first time ever in our country, a legislature held a day at the Legislature for Special Olympians in our province.

The day started at 11:30 with a kickoff of the summer games and a traditional law enforcement torch run. This was followed by the introduction of this bill, Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act, and ended with a reception in the Golden Boy Room with MLAs from all parties and athletes, parents, coaches, board members and friends of Special Olympics Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked a new beginning for Special Olympics Manitoba. With the passage of this bill, the second week of Manitoba will be declared Special Olympics Manitoba Awareness Week. This will allow endless opportunities for awareness activities that take place in the years to come. As a member of the honorary board of Special Olympics, I look forward to being actively involved in future events that help celebrate our Special Olympics athletes as we continue on this journey of bringing awareness to this very worthy cause.

Mr. Speaker, all of those involved with Special Olympics Manitoba deserve to be recognized for their tireless and selfless work that they do to help enrich the lives of Manitobans with intellectual disabilities through active participation in sport. Recognizing Special Olympics Manitoba will honour the 1,641 athletes, 623 coaches and 795 volunteers that currently make up Special Olympics Manitoba.

Bill 209 seeks to formally declare the second week of June, Special Olympics Awareness Week. Mr. Speaker, for the past 30 years Special Olympics Manitoba has provided positive support and meaningful experiences for thousands of Manitobans living with an intellectual disability throughout the province. Many participants have benefited socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically as they begin to discover their true potential and thrive in many ways.

More than just sport, the Olympics are a part of the foundation of our society and the Special Olympics are no different.

The Special Olympics and the community volunteers and corporate supporters provide a venue for community integration, education and even employment opportunities for many Manitobans affected with an intellectual disability.

It would not be the Special Olympics if it was not all about accessibility, and for that reason it must be highlighted just how widespread the reach of Special Olympics Manitoba is within this province. Currently, Special Olympics Manitoba operates in the Central region, the Eastman region, the Interlake region, the Norman region, the Westman region, the Parkland region and the Winnipeg region, allowing athletes from all across Manitoba a chance to get engaged, network and, of course, begin competing in sport while making lifelong friends and pursuing lifelong dreams.

Although a daunting task given the geography of our great province, Special Olympics Manitoba successfully runs 134 different programs in seven regions of Manitoba. Eighteen different sports take place at these venues, and some taking place as far north as Thompson and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I truly hope that this bill acts as a catalyst for Special Olympics Manitoba, fostering recognition and creating a wide-scale level of awareness that sees more Manitobans involved with the organization either through volunteering, coaching or donating monetarily. With that in mind, the 2013 Special Olympic games are scheduled to take place June 21st through 23rd with events such as track and field, bocce ball, soccer, softball, rhythmic gymnastics, golf and power lifting all represented.

Fundraising plays a key role in the longevity of Special Olympics Manitoba. Fundraising events, Mr. Speaker, this month include the Scotia Bank Law Enforcement Torch Run on June 12th in Winnipeg, the Music that Matters festival June 15th and 16th in Morden and the Merv Tweed golf tournament July 21st to 22nd.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all honourable members to give this bill the credence it deserves and to pay all of the athletes and others directly involved with Special Olympics Manitoba the respect and accolades they deserve and have worked so very hard for.

To members opposite, I ask for and welcome your support today in the Legislature and I encourage your sustained support and participation with Special Olympics Manitoba in the future.

I want to thank all members of the House for their participation here yesterday at the Manitoba Legislature. This, of course, is not a partisan thing; this is the right thing for Manitobans in bringing awareness to this very worthy cause. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I certainly want to thank the member from Tuxedo for bringing this forward today and for the work that she's doing with Special Olympics.

I want to welcome our friends in the gallery today, who I worry have brought their sleeping bags because they've been here all day yesterday and last night we had a great reception with them, and here we are again this morning.

* (10:10)

I—of course, yesterday at our reception, I was chatting with some of the folks involved with Special Olympics and was really pleased to hear that the day at the Legislature is unique in Canada, that the Special Olympics comes to the Legislature, is welcomed here, spends the day with us, and I think that's a testament to how much Manitobans do feel welcome in this Legislature and how much we, all of us as members, I know try to communicate to our constituents and to the organizations we work with that this building is meant to be a home, to be a welcoming place for all Manitobans.

I want to say how delighted I was yesterday to get a chance to speak with some of the athletes, especially their spokesperson, Michelle Augert, who was a very impressive young woman who made me tired just hearing all of the things that she's involved in. I also had a couple of athletes approach me and ask me if I was interested in track and field and I said, yes, as an observer, absolutely; a fan, yes; a participant, not so much.

And I know, especially working in the area of community living, that encouraging physical activity, encouraging people with intellectual disabilities to be physically active is a challenge sometimes. A challenge because, you know, we're not always so welcoming in all of our sports in all of the places where physical activity and recreation happens in this province, and so Special Olympics has really

found a way to meet that need but also to meet it in such a positive way to give everybody involved the sense of accomplishment, the sense of competition, and to celebrate the tremendous courage that it takes sometimes to get involved, to get active, to compete, to participate in sports, especially when maybe it's not something that you have ever felt welcomed in before.

I also want to just—when I was reading about this year's Special Olympics and the Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in Vancouver, I was reminded of the opportunity I had to go and attend the Paralympics when they were held in Vancouver in conjunction with the Winter Olympics, and I was really proud of Manitoba because we were the only province that maintained a presence in the village where all of the kiosks were set up.

We were the only one that maintained a presence not only through the Olympics but maintained that right through the Paralympics, that treated both of those events as equally important and equally deserving of our participation, and we used that opportunity to highlight the Human Rights Museum. We hosted a visit from Prince Edward in our kiosk, and it was a great opportunity to celebrate equality and inclusion.

So I want to add my voice and I want to let the House know that we, of course, support this legislation. We look forward to its passage to committee today.

And I also want to, just for a moment—yesterday we also saw in attendance police officers, other—some law enforcement who've been involved in raising money for Special Olympics. The Law Enforcement Torch Run, of course, has been around for 25 years and in this time it's raised over \$2 million to support Special Olympics Manitoba, and that's an incredible achievement that I think is also worthy of mention today.

So, lots of things happened yesterday, and certainly the best part of yesterday was getting to meet the athletes, the organizers, the volunteers, the kids that came out to celebrate Special Olympics get to spend some time with the people who really, I think, embody the best of Manitoba, the best of our spirit here, and that's to be inclusive, to foster equality, and to all come out and support a worthy cause.

So I thank the member from Tuxedo. We look forward to the passage of this bill.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): It is indeed a pleasure for me to second the piece of legislation brought forward by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) this morning. It's certainly a very noble undertaking, and I, too, want to welcome everyone this morning to the Manitoba Legislature.

It was certainly great to participate in the activities yesterday here at the Legislature, see the kickoff, the lighting of the torch and a little run around the building yesterday. It was great just to be a part of that and witness that, and certainly to see the athletes participate in that and just see the joy in their face; it was something to be appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this, too, once we get this legislation passed, will be a real catalyst to assist Special Olympics Manitoba and their endeavours to provide the Olympic Games that they do provide to Manitobans, and I think it's something I hope we, as legislators, can take this message out and spread to our constituents around the province. Clearly, we're getting pretty good support around the province already, and there's some pretty good corporate support coming on but more can be done and more should be done. And I think it's up to us, too, as legislators, to make sure that we pass that word around.

Mr. Speaker, I guess, personally, my first exposure to Special Olympics goes back quite a few years. A good friend of mind, Ed Shaw, was involved in Special Olympics in western Manitoba, and I clearly saw his passion for that. He was a coach and he spent a lot of time coaching individuals and taking them around the province to compete in the games. And it was—it's certainly impressive to see, you know, the passion that these people have for the athletes and for the Olympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly encouraging to see it and see the sport grow as well. And, certainly, from a healthy living perspective, we know it's very encouraging, obviously. These athletes are out—they're not just participating in the games once a year, but they're also training throughout the year. And certainly heard stories of that last night, where the Olympians are out, they're training year round and also they're inspiring their family to get involved in activities as well. So it's been—from a healthy living perspective, it's been a very good program that way, and it really helps spread the message about healthy living.

I was also encouraged yesterday in the gallery to see some of my old friends, Kevin and Monica and

Barrett Wallis, who now reside in Portage la Prairie but originally from Wawanesa. In fact, Kevin and I went to high school together, and Barrett, he's been a Special Olympian for a number of years now. And he's represented Manitoba and he's represented Canada and he actually had the opportunity to travel to Korea, participating in the Winter Games there last winter. And I know his family joined him there and it was just a great experience. And we had a chance to, you know, share some of those stories yesterday on his adventure. And, clearly, he's out training, and he's out training with his family now for the Summer Games coming up here in a couple of weeks. So they're certainly caught up in the activities there, and he has great support from his family.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say, you know, good luck and thank you for all those that help in the Special Olympics Manitoba. Congratulations on a job well done. All the success in the future, and hopefully we as legislators can spread the good word that the—more work has to be done, and we will be there to support you in your endeavours. So we, too, on this side look forward to passing this legislation and hopefully we can spread the good word. Thank you very much.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I'm very proud to stand up today and to support The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act that was introduced by our member from Tuxedo. And I thank her for allowing me to participate in the events of yesterday and support the great awareness that we developed and the celebration of athletes and volunteers as well as the law enforcement officers who have been involved in fundraising for the last 25 years and have made a remarkable difference.

We know that Special Olympics is about athletics and it's about determination and it's about bravery, but it also goes beyond athletics. I think that for any of us who have seen—I've spent some time at the Winter Games at Ravenscourt and I've seen the snowshoeing, I've seen the hockey, the competitive spirit that happens on those fields within those competitions but also that support that comes, that celebration when someone crosses the finish line. And not necessarily the first one that crosses the finish line, sometimes it's the last person that crosses the finish line, how we wait to celebrate with them. And that we can learn so much about as human beings, and I always pinch myself when I have that opportunity. And I have to tell you, when we stand and we cheer, there's usually not a dry eye at the side

of the snowshoe race because we're all there celebrating and watching as people work together for their success.

My introduction to Special Olympics was many years ago, probably 40 years ago, when my grandmother in Saskatchewan was involved with individuals. She was a teacher at the cottage school, and she felt and knew the importance of integration into our community of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. And she worked tirelessly finding a event, a sport that her students could excel at and participate in and build that confidence. And so when I was asked to participate with this awareness week, it did not take me long to say yes, and I do this in honour of my grandmother and the people that she inspired and how she inspired me.

* (10:20)

In Manitoba we have 1,641 athletes. Those athletes are surrounded by coaches, 623 coaches, and 795 volunteers, and we know that each of those athletes are surrounded by a family that love them and support them. And I would like to say that I'm sure that the volunteers extend far more than 800, when we take in the summer and the winter games.

We know that by this participation, that, as they move forward, it helps them in daily living as far as—for the athletes, as far their independence, their confidence, and helping them move on that journey of life.

I had the opportunity of speaking with Michelle Augert's parents, and they talked about, as she developed as a young woman, as an athlete, as a spokesperson, now, for Special O, how she went down that journey of independence and how she finds herself living independently, and how proud she is that she is able to accomplish that. And I think that Special O has a role to play in that, and they need to be very proud of how it extends beyond athletics.

I know yesterday that we talked about integration and accessibility and opportunity. But the thing that really stuck in my mind was that sense of community and pride that the staff of Special O, the board members themselves, as well as the athletes and the families have for Special O, and I think that that will live on for many, many generations, and I'm very excited by that.

I'd like to conclude my remarks with the Special Olympics motto: Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I do want to put a few things on the record in regards to Bill 209. Of course, welcome to the Special Olympics people in the gallery here today. It's certainly great to have you here, and the member from Tuxedo that brought the bill forward, certainly, a special thank you to you for your commitment to Special Olympics.

A bit on a personal level, I've had some involvement with Special Olympics and we've had some outstanding athletes from our area that's been involved in Special Olympics, and one in particular is Todd Wenzoski. He went to the provincial championships, the nationals, and actually won that. I know Simon is very familiar with Todd, and I know I have a couple of runners in my area as well, and the participation, the excitement of the momentum building up towards that—and it's not always about winning. It's about representing. It's about being included. It's about being part of a society that looks at people, and especially people with disabilities, out of a different eye, but yet they shine like a star of no one else. And, Mr. Speaker, it just gives them that fulfillment of being included, of being part of society of which they're able to be that shining star. And they don't do it for that reason. They don't do it for that reason at all. They do it because they love the passion. They love the desire to be included.

So, by setting this week aside in June for those folks that do participate in Special Olympics, and those that maybe not make it to the provincials or to the nationals or to the internationals, it's an opportunity for us to recognize those Special Olympians that do make us so proud in what they do and their inclusion into society.

I know, coming back to my friend Todd, his first job was pumping gas at the Co-op gas bar, and he was, and still is, great. He just comes out there. He's a champion for the business, and he used to pump gas in my home town. He actually was from a community called Balmoral, and his mother and father sold their farm and they moved to Stonewall. So now he's pumping gas at the Co-op there. And he's one of those guys that jumps to the pump, and he's always positive and he's always respectful, and he's just a lead example of inclusion, of a way that models Special Olympians. And he's one of those torchbearers that makes us all proud; proud to the fact that he gets other people involved. In fact, when he goes to the bowling hall in Stonewall, he's always the one that makes the round and says, good job, way to go, keep it up. And he's just an outstanding individual. But I know that it's one of those things

that, whenever we can share between ourselves and between Special Olympians, it gives us that opportunity to be recognized.

So, with this small part that legislation is going to be able to do to recognize those Olympians in the second week of June, is just a small part of our appreciation to all the volunteers, to the board of directors, to those that make Olympians what they truly are, and that's our stars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to put a few words on the record in—with regard to Bill 209, and I'd like to start by thanking and commending the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) for bringing this bill forward, the Special Olympics awareness week. As we've already heard, the government will be supporting this bill. In the spirit of non-partisanship, we believe that we should support resolutions such as this that commend and show support to, in this case, the Special Olympians and the Special Olympics movement.

In Brandon, in my home community, we have several hundred Special Olympic volunteers, and there's several thousand across the province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I was very proud on a number of occasions to have Special Olympians and games take place with the venue of the Keystone Centre serving as a main function. That's a tremendous sports athletic community centre in Brandon that Special Olympians have used very extensively over the years, as has the entire man—Brandon, Westman and Manitoba community.

And I would remind members opposite that we do have a bill outstanding commending and supporting the people of the—of western Manitoba, the volunteers of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba, and all supporters, organizations and volunteers that have worked to build a great Display Building No. 2 national historic site. The Keystone Centre, for Special Olympians and all people in our province, provides a fantastic sports venue. We are building and we are, tomorrow night, having the first home opener exhibition game at the stadium in south Winnipeg.

So, you know, as a government, we are very pleased to support the member in her resolution in a spirit of non-partisanship, showing that we care about this community and all who live in it. I'm very proud to stand up and say that the people of Brandon East, and on behalf of those people in western

Manitoba in this government, we're happy to support the member in her resolution.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great honour to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 209. I'd just like to thank the member from Tuxedo for bringing it forward in regards to the Special Olympics awareness week.

Mr. Speaker, it's the volunteers, it's the organizers, athletes and all of the supporters who we act—absolutely have to thank for Special Olympics here in Manitoba. I know that for all their timeless and tireless amount of effort that they, that all of those people put in, it is for the greater good of not only the athletes but also for all the Manitobans to basically contribute to the society of Manitoba. And I'd just like to speak on a couple little points here.

Many people, when they're talking about Special Olympics, and they're talking about participants and how Special Olympics is benefiting the participants socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically as they begin to discover their true potential and thrive in many ways. In my past experience helping out with Special Olympics in the, I guess, Anola area, dealing with ACL in Beausejour, with Linda Gmiterek, who's the chairperson there, and then, of course, with the Special Olympics out of the Anola and Springfield area with Bev Yakubick and her two kids, Dean and Dawn.

* (10:30)

The part that I want to share today, Mr. Speaker, is, yes, Special Olympics absolutely benefits the participants—the socially and the physically and the mentally—but I think it's even more than that. It's about giving perspective to the rest of society that absolutely—maybe takes every day for granted as far as the good stuff that we do have and we go home and are able to do the various other things that we're able to do on a day-to-day basis.

I know for about seven or eight years helping out in the Anola and Springfield area with Special O, I often tell this story and, again, about perspective. When we're talking about Special Olympics in the Anola area, they have a social which is inclusive and they invite people from, it feels all across the province, because when you start asking a lot of the participants and the volunteers and the organizers who show up to those socials, they're talking about all their various experiences across the province. And some of the things that I absolutely love when we do go and attend that social—and I don't believe

it's happened in the last couple of years, but is the silent auction prizes. And Bev Yakubick, I know, works really hard in regards to getting those prizes for the youth and the participants. And the amount that the ticket prices are, they're very, very minimal. The prizes are, you know, it could be a CD. It could be one of those flowered calendars, you know, from the dollar store. It could be various things. It could be a six-pack of Pepsi. It could be, you know, a box of chips and everything, and when those participants are announced and the winning number is announced for that six-pack of Pepsi, you know, they absolutely go crazy and they come running across the dance floor and they're just so thrilled to win that six-pack of Pepsi.

And then every time I go there it just gives me that perspective to sort of take a step back and share this story with as many people as I possibly can. Because often you go to wedding socials nowadays or just some kind of fundraising socials, and if the prizes that are on the silent auction ticket—on the tables are not worth over \$50, people start to turn their nose up at the social organizers.

And so, again, my thanks to not only the member from Tuxedo but absolutely everybody across the province that helps out with Special Olympics. Just like to say, thank you, and I look forward to the—to Bill 209 moving forward and getting passed today, Mr.—or move it on to the next set of readings, Mr. Speaker.

So thank you for the time, and I thank all of you for attending as well.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Yes, Mr. Speaker, thanks for giving me this opportunity to talk on this bill and thanks from the member of Tuxedo for initiating it.

I just have to say that being involved in this brings back a lot of memories, and during my teaching years—I taught for 31—one of the most rewarding times was the winter Olympics up in Flin Flon. And I was in charge or looking after the cross-country skiing. And the one thing—I really like athletics and all that—and when you look at the Olympics, per se, people go in there and they're just focused. When I was involved with the Special Olympics the three things that I noticed that just blew me away was passion, passion and passion. And it was really neat to see them participate and it shows, basically, what kind of society we live in. People that maybe aren't as fortunate of other peoples were actually taking an interest and helping

out making sure that their social skills, physical skills are recognized.

And we have a member in our community of Flin Flon, Mr. Speaker—I do a hockey show with my brother-in-law and we interview different—the coach, players, stuff like that. But there is a Jonathon Dougall [*phonetic*] who was involved with Special Olympics and he wants to be the coach of the Bombers. And the community of Flin Flon has really—you know, he wears a Bombers jacket. He goes out and sometimes the coach lets him be on the bench, and we interview him. And it's, you know, people say, you know it's really neat how the community treats Jonathon [*phonetic*], lets him be involved in things, and Jonathon [*phonetic*] really appreciates the involvement in the community.

And so when it's time to recognize Special Olympians, it's an honour. And it's an honour for—to recognize you up in the gallery for coming out and making this a special day. And also I think it's special for both parties to work together on something like this. It's very rewarding, I think, for every one of us. We all have stories. We all have our own Jonathon Dougalls [*phonetic*] and we got to just keep on working towards that, and I think with the Special Olympics awareness, the more people that see the involvement in this, the more they realize that, you know what, we are a compassionate society and we can even do more because there's other areas of our province that might be less fortunate and we got to work to making sure that everybody is recognized, and today, or this week, recognized in the Special Olympic Awareness Week, is an important part for me, I know for the opposition and for our party. And so thank you for letting me have a few words here. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and put a few words on the record today in support of Bill 209, and I thank my colleague from Tuxedo for bringing this important bill forward.

In my constituency, I do have individuals that have been on the Special Olympics team and one of them would be Norman Peters. Norman is a great individual that just loves to participate and you can see the excitement and the joy that he gets out of participating. Being with people, he doesn't feel that he's any different than anyone else, which makes me and many other people feel exactly the same way.

And so when Norman was to go to Vancouver to participate, there was some question about financing

for the whole team to go and the community just rallies, and that's what I would like to say to those that are in the gallery today, that they're doing a great job. But all they have to do is ask for support and the support is there throughout the communities, all of the communities in Manitoba. I'm sure they just have to ask and it will come.

At one of the events that we had in the Emerson constituency in the last year, it was last summer, late summer, and it was after the Special Olympics games in London, and the individual that won the wheelchair race, Michelle Stilwell, won gold, as you all know, is from Altona originally, and we don't know the story behind Michelle until she tells us that story and she told us in Altona. We hosted her for three days there; she talked to schools and everyone. It was a great event but it happened so suddenly that she would become a paraplegic, so suddenly. She skipped school, skipped school with a bunch of her friends and they were just playing around like young people do. So she was on the back of an individual going down a flight of stairs, hit her head on the top of the stairwell as she was going down, fell over backwards and became paralyzed.

So you go from a 17-year-old, vivacious, athletic individual to someone that's confined to a wheelchair. That didn't stop her—that didn't stop her. She didn't feel sorry for herself. She didn't want other people to feel sorry for herself. She played wheelchair basketball until that affected her health and she wasn't able to continue doing that, and then she switched over to the wheelchair racing and the rest is history. She trained all over the world, but the rest is history. She brought gold home.

And that's the type of thing that makes us all proud to be Manitobans. Thank you.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take a minute to thank all the people from Special Olympics and all the volunteers.

The member from Lakeside mentioned belonging, and of the things—there's four things that a person needs to sort of end up a resilient, healthy adult, and one of those things is the belonging that the member mentioned and different members have mentioned, and I really believe that the Special Olympics is key in giving that sense of belonging.

* (10:40)

And another one of them is mastery, a sense of mastery, a sense that you can succeed at something and you can do it well. And, certainly, the athletes

that I spoke to yesterday had that sense of mastery. They knew that they were able to compete and compete well in that.

And another of the four is generosity, so an ability to give back. And I think we probably all heard that story of the young man in the—I believe it was a young man, in the Special Olympics who was in a race and he was neck to neck with another runner and one of them tripped and fell, and he stopped his race and went back and helped that person up, and they ran to the finish line together. So I think it was key—clear that he understood the spirit of generosity as well, and that that is truly what matters. It wasn't the winning that was most important to the—that young man.

And so I think the things that are coming out of Special Olympics within these young people is things that are really key to being able to be a healthy adult. So I really want to thank the people and I want to thank the member from Tuxedo, as I saw that young man yesterday—we were talking about when she gave her speech and he was here, he stood up like this and he threw his arms up in the air and it was just the expression of joy and pride. So thank you for bringing it to the House and thank you all for being here.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill. I believe it's an important step forward and that—I want to thank the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) for her efforts along with others in this House, in terms of trying to recognize the importance of the Special Olympics, of the people who are involved, both as supporting the effort and of those who are participating as athletes in the Special Olympics events.

It is, you know, as the Olympics are generally, a broader framework, an inspiration in terms of those who do well, but it also nurtures the much larger participation by many young people with intellectual and other disabilities who are then able to participate and to do well. And so I think that this is appropriate, and I'm very pleased that we're going to be recognizing the Special Olympics awareness week, and I think this is going to be an important contribution.

I want to say that as we emphasize broadly across all society the importance of exercise and of athletic participation, that this is an important part of a healthy society. And participating in exercise and participating in athletics has been shown to develop the brain in other ways than just athletic ability, that

those who are participating in athletics and in exercise, they actually also do better in school, in mathematics and other areas which are not necessarily related. And so I think this is an important factor in allowing young people, older people, to reach their potential. So I'm very pleased to be able to support this effort and I look forward to this becoming a reality in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any other debates?

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Just very few words to thank my colleague from Tuxedo for this Special Olympics awareness week private member's bill or—and also thank the rest of my colleagues for their support and participation for the Special Olympics.

Last night we were delighted to be downstairs at the dining room and I was so happy to meet many of the Special Olympians and their—they were so excited, looking forward to two weeks when they will compete in their various sport categories, and also the supportive parents of the Special Olympians.

And we heard from a mother, we heard from an athlete, and, just like what my colleague from Burrows stated, these people of—from the Special Olympics, have engendered such a heartwarming feeling of family among themselves—support and love for everyone. And you could sense it, you could feel it in the excitement, in the joy that everyone displayed last night.

So I thought we should all be watching, if not try and attend, this Special Olympic event two weeks from now. And we thank the staff and volunteers and the many people involved in the Special Olympics for a very good job of getting all these activities together for us to be shared to all of us. So thank you.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I would also put a few words on the record for Bill 209, brought forward by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson). And I want to welcome the guests in the gallery. I hope I'm speaking loud enough so they can hear me, because they spoke—reminded me yesterday that we need to speak up in here so that they can hear us in there.

But I also attended the event last night down in the dining room, and it was a great event with the athletes, the parents, the volunteers, the staff that was there. And in true Manitoba style this organization has a lot of volunteers, some 795 volunteers, and that is the Manitoba way in how we support our

organizations in Manitoba. So, hats off to all the people, the athletes and the organizers and the volunteers, for Special Olympics here in Manitoba. And, of course, it is the—our time to recognize the tireless and selfless work that they do and help enrich the lives of Manitobans who may have an intellectual disability and through active participation in sports. And as been mentioned this morning, not all of us are athletes, and I will join the side that's not athletically inclined, but I certainly applaud those who do participate in athletic events and certainly for those who are involved in Special Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 30 years, Special Olympics has provided positive support and meaningful experiences for the thousands of Manitobans living with an intellectual disability throughout the province. And this is throughout the entire province, and that's what is great about this organization. It doesn't matter where you live in the province, you can participate in this, and they are inclusive in this. And it's not just about the sports. It's about the relationships that the athletes develop and build as they participate in these through friendships. And it was very evident last night from the families—the pride of the families involved there of their accomplishments of the athletes, but also just the family aspect of this, because we know that that is what truly helps to get the athletes involved and be able to keep them involved. Because we know with all sporting events it takes many miles and many hours of time by parents and volunteers to make sure that the training is put in and that they are able to participate at events—and events throughout Manitoba and then also, as was mentioned this morning, different events across Canada and, in fact, around the world. So that's certainly a great aspect of the Special Olympics.

* (10:50)

And, again, I just want to mention that they successfully run 134 different programs in seven regions of Manitoba. And I was talking to the volunteer coordinator last night, and I said, you have a busy job. And she certainly agreed with that, that there was—it's—you have logistics problems in terms of getting volunteers into those different events across the province. And she—and I said to her, you enjoy your job, don't you? And she said, absolutely. And it was evident from just talking to her that she really did enjoy her job as volunteer coordinator.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, this bill—it's great to see this bill come forward. It's—I know a couple of weeks

ago we had our 4-H resolution that passed unanimously in this House, and it's great to see that there is agreement here that the bill will pass second reading today and go into committee. So we know that there is—when there is worthwhile and very good events and causes, that this House can truly be co-operative to moving these events forward.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, just congratulations to the Special Olympics group, to the volunteers, to parents and especially to the athletes themselves for showing such determination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words. I didn't know if I'd get a chance to put a few words on the record, but I think what we're seeing here in the House today is the spirit of bipartisanship and all of us working together to honour such an incredible organization as Special Olympics and to recognize the incredible work that you do in our community in making our society a better place.

And I want to thank the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) for bringing this resolution forward—for bringing this bill forward, sorry—and for allowing us all to have a few moments on the record.

To paraphrase a saying: a society is measured by how it treats those who are least in its—in society. And we—I think Special Olympics is a perfect example of that where folks can come together, volunteer their time, give their—of themselves to those who are least in our society.

And I think that it's an incredible opportunity for us as elected officials to play a small part in that by recommending this week, this recognition week, and it is a very small part in this and I think we—we're very aware of that, that it really is the volunteers and it is those people who give their time and their money to this incredible organization that help it to succeed. But we can play a very small part in this, and I think that's what we're all getting the opportunity to do here today.

So with those few words, I just wanted to, once again, as everyone else has in this House, to congratulate Special Olympics, to thank you for being here, for being a part of our legislative process, for your keen interest in what we do and allowing us to be a part of what you do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, and I, too, am really pleased to rise today and put a few words on the record in support of Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act. And I want to welcome again the visitors to our gallery that participated yesterday and are back here again today, because this is a very special time, a special event and an opportunity for you to see how things can work in the Legislature.

And yesterday, you may have had a little different experience where we had opposing points of view, the government and the opposition parties, on many issues. And you probably saw some heated debate and wondered whether this was what the Legislature and the legislative process was all about, and it is part of it. But there also is a part of this Legislature where we set aside the politics and do the right thing for the right reasons as legislators, and this is one of the things that I think we are able to accomplish as legislators when we work together and ensure that those in our community that deserve recognition for the work that they do are recognized.

And this is one way and one small part of what we collectively can do to ensure that there's a profile and a recognition of Special Olympians and those that surround Special Olympians in our community, and those are the families and the organizers, the board and the volunteers. And let's never forget the volunteer commitment that Manitobans participate in in many, many different aspects of our community. And so very important to recognize those that do take that extra step and provide the kind of support that community organizations and members of our community need.

And I often, often say that, you know, government can't do it all and nobody wants government to do it all. People want government to step out the way, but they want government to be there to support worthwhile community endeavours. And this is one area that I think government does need to come together and support those that believe in and support members of our community that need that kind of special support.

And we saw last night at the reception just the indication of how many people there are out there and what joy we can see when people work together, when our Special Olympians are recognized in the way that they are recognized throughout our community and throughout the world as a result of the work that Special Olympics done, and the commitment of families, the commitment of

individuals and the commitment that we can make and should make on a regular basis.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say congratulations to our Special Olympians, first and foremost. They teach us much, and when we can all join together and ensure that those in our community that need that kind support receive our support and our recognition—we're truly thankful for the opportunity to be able to stand here today as legislators to join together and to support Special Olympics, to support a week that will recognize Special Olympians for the special people that they are in our community. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this matter?

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock and move to private members' resolutions?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock and we'll move to private members' resolutions? *[Agreed]*

We'll now, at—the hour being 11 a.m., move to private member's resolution, and the resolution under consideration this morning is the one sponsored by the honourable member for Flin Flon, titled "Northern Climate Change Research".

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 15—Northern Climate Change Research

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Seconded by northern member of Le Pas,

WHEREAS Manitoba is recognized as a leader in taking action on climate change and working towards a greener future; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's northern geography and central location means that we are among the first to experience many of the varied and oftentimes challenging effects of climate change, such as an increase in forest fires, melting sea ice, shortening of

the winter roads season and changing habitat of— for seals, whales, polar bears, caribou and other northern species; and

WHEREAS Manitoba universities are leading important research, including the University of Manitoba Arctic research facility, which hosts the Canadian Excellence Research Chair in Arctic geomicrobiology and climate change; and

WHEREAS the Churchill Northern Studies Centre works with universities throughout Manitoba and is involved in documenting climate change, polar bear health, biodiversity, wildlife population cycles, water quality and other research initiatives; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has fostered important partnerships to study climate change in order to determine how the best mitigate the challenges and take advantage of opportunities for environmental protection innovation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to continue to mote—to enhance understanding of the physical environment and advance social and economic progress.

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Flin Flon, seconded by the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead),

WHEREAS Manitoba is recognized as a leader in—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's Order Paper? [Agreed]

WHEREAS Manitoba is recognized as a leader in taking action on climate change and working toward a greener future; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's northern geography and central location means that we are among the first to experience many of the varied and oftentimes challenging effects of climate change, such as an increase in forest fires, melting sea ice, shortening of the winter roads season and changing habitat for seals, whales, polar bears, caribou and other northern species; and

WHEREAS Manitoba universities are leading important research, including the University of Manitoba's Arctic Research Facility, which hosts the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Arctic Geomicrobiology and Climate Change; and

WHEREAS the Churchill Northern Studies Centre works with universities throughout Manitoba and is involved in documenting climate change, polar bear health, biodiversity, wildlife population cycles, water quality and other research initiatives; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has fostered important partnerships to study climate change in order to determine how to best mitigate the challenges and take advantage of opportunities for environmental protection innovation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to continue to promote and facilitate northern research to enhance understanding of the physical environment and advance social and economic progress.

Mr. Petterson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is very important for the north. My constituency of course is Flin Flon constituency, and it goes right from Flin Flon right up to Nunavut, and we can see the different changes in climate warming throughout the region. And it's great that the Province has recognized that, and we're interested in research because it is going to have an effect and has already had an effect on Manitoba. We take a risk of global climate change very seriously, and the government will do its part to protect the environment.

And that is important, because the environment is changing all the time. With the permafrost melting, it changes flows of creeks, flows of—from swamps. For instance, one of the airports up north with the permafrost thawing has major damage to the airstrip because of the bumps. The roads—the road to Lynn Lake is horrendous in the spring because the permafrost is melting and has a big effect on driving and on your car, which I'll get into further. Climate change—increased frequency and intensity of forest fires. Right now, up in Flin Flon, they were fighting a for—very close to town. There's a evacuation order on one of the dams—I don't know if it was Conawapa or whatever—that's just recent.

So these things are ongoing. Flooding down south here—something that we used to think would happen every few years. Now, it looks like there's a threat every year, and we've taken precautions—our

government—in trying to build up security for all Manitobans, which is important.

The other thing is the change up north in the environment for the different species like the polar bear relying on the fall for the ice floes to freeze and for it to go out to hunt seals is becoming longer. The hunting in the north has changed because things aren't as predictable. It used to be you go to some of the elders up on the reserves and they'd know when to hunt different species and that, but they said it's all out of whack because different species are flying—other birds and that are going north; other species aren't coming back. One species of animal that my three communities of Tadoule, Brochet and Lac Brochet rely on is the caribou. And I had the honour last year going up and seeing the caribou migration, which is something, and I really would have to say if you have a chance to go up there during the caribou migration, it's really something. But it's like a food basket that goes through these three communities. If the weather changes—and I was up there, oh, I think it was late November, early December and the caribou were going through the communities of Tadoule and Lac Brochet, and they said sometimes it's varying now because of the warmer fall; they're waiting, you know, for the lakes to freeze and things like that. Well, this will have a great effect on those communities, because they rely—the price of food is so high there they rely on the caribou for their food. So that's important. Also, different whale species and that are finding it hard to find food because of the warming of the ocean.

I mean, things are changing so much that now the Port of Churchill, which was—or is still a seasonal port, might be a year-round port. And so, you know, things are changing that way. The railway that goes up to Churchill, built on permafrost, is having problems because, again, with it thawing and all that, the railway is—you have to go very slow, so money has to be spent on it. But the Manitoba government is spending money on Arctic research facilities and one's in Churchill, of course, and our—and more proud to support the Churchill national research centre, the CNSC, and the University of Manitoba Nellie Cournoyea Arctic Research Facility in its effort to be recognized—Canada's centres for Arctic research and education. And I think this says something because we are a different province, in that we have many different geological areas, but we also have different environments, from the Hudson Bay lowlands to the Canadian Shield, to the prairies, and these, the biodiversities, have obviously an effect

on the insects, the animals, whatever that live there, but also in the health of that region, the health of the forest. So this is all very important.

The Churchill Research Centre, established in 1976 and it is Canada's largest independent, non-profit research facility, and it's moved out to the old air testing centre, so scientists from all over the world go up there to test different things. So—very proud of that.

Also, the University of Manitoba Arctic research facility in the University of Manitoba, like I say, the initiative, it's a \$15-million facility. It has 60,000 square feet and, again, studying the North, studying the different changes, and I think this is very good, very important to my constituency because I can see the changes in, like I mentioned before, living up there I do a lot of paddling on the Churchill River and, as you paddle down the river and all that, you can see areas where the permafrost is thawing and the banks are caving in. So things—changes are coming slowly, but they are changing.

Different species—the polar bears are now being mixed in with other bears, black bears or grizzly bears, which never happened before. So things are happening that way, and the research facilities will look at this here and look at different ways that we might have to spend money and to prevent disasters like the fires, like the flooding, like the spruce budworm that, because there hasn't been cold enough weather—believe it or not, it's—I thought it's been cold enough but cold enough weather—huge tracts of land, the forests are dying off because of spruce budworm. So we have to, you know, look into that, find out what we can do because when you look at the logging potentials but if these huge trees die because of spruce budworm, they go, you know, just to waste. And it leads to forest fires because they basically dry out, die out and are there, and then if a fire by lightning happens or whatever, it's just like an inferno.

So it's very important that these research facilities are studying Manitoba, studying the changes in the climate, and studying how we can prepare or what we can do for this. There might be some benefits in tourism, though, as obviously the climate gets better, but we're going to have to be careful. The people that live up north have relied on the migrations of birds, migrations of animals, and relied on certain animals for their livelihood and, as this changes, they're going to have to basically look at other ways, maybe, of changing their

lifestyles. And so, again, studies have to be done, and I'm proud to say the research facility in Churchill and the research facility in the University of Manitoba obviously are going to be looking into that.

I'm excited about the Port of Churchill, though, Mr. Speaker, because I think with global warming it could become a port for the prairies and an important port. And we're going to have to look at that. We can maybe expand it, if it's in a year-round open port. A lot of things could be shipped from Churchill and create an economy there that could create jobs and that for the people that live in that area.

* (11:10)

So, I'm excited about that. The one thing I'm not excited, like I say, is with the changes in the environment come changes that as a pattern and that when I go and see—that I don't like, and that is when you see the environment with the spruce budworms, the thawing of the land, the rivers, creeks and that changing, the swamps changing. It definitely has an effect, so I'm glad we as a government have a couple research facilities that are going to be studying this, and thanks for the time for talking about this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to be able to reply to the presentation on this motion today and this resolution brought forward by the member from Flin Flon. The northern climate change research is the topic that they've chosen to speak on, and so I would certainly want to say that there have been many advancements made in regards to developing research in the north for bettering the issues and acknowledging some of the climate change areas that have taken place, and I'd like to reiterate, or put on the record today, I guess, some of the points that parties have done over the years in the past decades in regards to this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the member means well, from Flin Flon, when he started off by saying, whereas Manitoba is recognized as a leader in taking action on climate change and working toward a greener future. He means well by that, but the actions of this government have not followed suit in regards to those words. And you know, perhaps a prime example of that would be that the Lake Winnipeg was just nominated as one of the most threatened lakes in the world. And it does tra—all of the flows of water through Lake Manitoba—through Lake Winnipeg, pardon me, do eventually end up, and as we found out in 2011, a lot of the water of Lake Manitoba ends up in Lake Winnipeg as well.

But there's a great concern about the types and mechanisms that are used. We've seen the government stall, I guess, if you will, the processes of trying to get greater systems in the city of Winnipeg, to clean up some of the phosphorus and nitrogen that has eventually—ends up into Lake Winnipeg from the city of Winnipeg and the surrounding area, Mr. Speaker, and the—of course, it's a great, large water area that—geographical area that drains into our northern parts of Manitoba. And I think that we need to make sure that we are cognizant of all—at all times of the systems and situations that are around us and what our neighbours are doing.

And I think that it's a—it's compelling upon the government to try to discuss these issues with our neighbours to the west, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but also to the south, as we have had meetings over many, many years now with the legislators forum that will be coming into Winnipeg here at the end of June, Mr. Speaker, with Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, to deal with waters on the Red River as they flow north as well.

Mr. Speaker, I've been proud to be a part of that process in all but one of the last 14 years that it's been meeting, and I think it's incumbent that we continue to have those kinds of dialogues with neighbours. And it's something that, again, this government has not had enough discussion in rece—and co-operative planning with our neighbours to the west. And we've seen that in regards to flooding on the Assiniboine River, the Souris River and other areas in the last while.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the—you know, we talk about the northern geography and the central location. We are, as I've pointed out, the hub, I guess, if you will, of the water drainage programs for the designated area that we have in the prairie watershed here. But the talk about—the government talks about them, and I'll just say here that among the first to experience many of the varied and oftentimes challenging effects of climate change, such as an increase in forest fires, melting sea ice, shortening of the winter-road season, changing habitat for seals, whales, polar bears, caribou and other northern species.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that there is climate change in—occurring in our atmosphere and in our global situation, and that it happens here in Manitoba as well. But I would challenge the government somewhat to say that if they think that

this is happening in Manitoba in isolation, I think it's happening in our neighbouring provinces as well. It's certainly happening in the parts of Ontario that drain into James Bay and Hudson Bay. It's happening in Saskatchewan. It's happening in Nunavut and Northwest Territories, Inuit, as—in our Inuit regions of Canada.

And I think that we need to be careful, Mr. Speaker, because we need to be able to make sure that we're using science to define what some of these terms are and how they're impacting us. And I see no science to differentiate that Manitoba is different from Saskatchewan and Ontario in this regard. So I know that the government hasn't done much research in this area, and so I'm concerned that these kinds of statements are made but there's not much to back them up.

Now, there has been a lot of work that is being done. I've been on the Namao. I've been on Lake Winnipeg myself, and I've seen them taking tests. And I commend the government for the work that it's done with helping the save Lake Winnipeg group, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation, the science that's taking place on Lake Winnipeg now. This is all part of making sure that we gather the data that we require to make sure that we are looking at better sciences for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I guess the—to come to the record of the NDP in regards to its ability to look after climate change, it's actually very poor. Even our Auditor General has indicated that there'd be a gap of 2.7 megatons from their target that—of 1990 greenhouse gas levels, that their target was to be 6 per cent below the 1990 levels. And there's many programs, but they're simply not meeting their targets. This was in a performance audit that was done for achievements that were supposed to be targeted to the end of 2012.

We're reminded as—of the statement of Premier Gary Doer, as well, when he was here, and he said, if we don't achieve it, we—I think, the ultimate penalty will be the defeat of the government. Well, Manitoba has not achieved its stated greenhouse gas emissions targets of 17.2 megatons per year, Mr. Speaker.

According to Environment Canada, Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions in 2011 were 19.5 megatons, Mr. Speaker, and this is 2.3 short of the NDP's own stated goal. And so the Auditor General's report appears to be quite accurate in regards to the shortness that the—shortfall, I guess, that the NDP have incurred in their own practices.

And Environment Canada has also said that the greenhouse gases in 1990 were 18.3 megatons and today they're 19.5. We were 6.5 per cent over the 1990 emissions level and 13 per cent over the Province's own goal. And they indicated at that time that they would be reducing it from those levels, but, obviously, it is much higher than the 1990 levels, here we are 23 years later.

This is—to prove that it can be done, our neighbouring provinces of Ontario and Québec, two of the largest provinces, and I might argue, probably some of the more highly industrialized provinces that we have in Canada, have managed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 5 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively.

So, Mr. Speaker, like so many other areas, the NDP aren't keeping up to their own expectations, never mind the expectations of Manitobans, when it comes to, particularly, in this case, greenhouse gas emissions. It's also like the, you know, telling Manitobans that you can trust us, we won't increase taxes. And after the, you know, the last election, and, of course, now they find out that not only are the taxes increasing, they don't even have a say in how it's going to happen, which was part of legislation as well. So not only are they breaking their promises, they're also breaking the legislation that exists in Manitoba today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by saying that we were very—we would be very encouraged on this side of the House to see more action in regards to some of the environmental packages that they've worked with.

I want to commend the University of Manitoba for the work that it does in regards to acknowledging Manitoba's Arctic research council and facilities in dealing with the—for having, of course, Canada's excellent research chair in the Arctic geomicrobiology and climate change, Mr. Speaker, and the northern—Churchill Northern Studies Centre, as well—to work with these areas in regards to improving the environment in our northern communities.

* (11:20)

So, Mr. Speaker, while I applaud work being done, this government has left much more to be worked on.

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): I—it gives me great pleasure to speak about the warmer temperatures in the north, the climate change and

everything that I've seen over the years taking place, growing up in the area. The Pas, north of The Pas, I've worked all over northern Manitoba, so I've seen changes over the decades and generations.

One of the things I've noticed is the increased frequency and intensity of forest fires. As we speak today, we have forest fires in northern Manitoba. 1988 and '89, we had an abundance of forest fires in northern Manitoba that affected all of Manitoba and parts of Ontario and so forth. This comes as a result of warmer temperatures in our climate in our area. And the many insect outbreaks and extreme weather events we are witnessing today and the many other disasters that are going on, such as my honourable member from Flin Flon mentioned the flooding and the potential drought, caused by climate change, we hear about them, we read about them, and we see people, entire communities, affected by these changes. We see melting ice, sea ice, in the north that contributes to diminishing polar bear populations due to earlier ice breakup. We see many, many changes that affect the environment in those regions. I have been to Churchill in my younger years working on the railroad line and I saw how the north was back then, but as the climate change progresses there are many, many changes to the environment that affect the many species of fur-bearing animals, the fish, the birds, the insects, the medicinal plants and so forth.

We get concerned. We are concerned about those changes. We are concerned about the reductions in fish and narwhal and beluga whale populations, the food sources. We are concerned about the shortened hunting season and the impact it has on the people that rely on that diet. We are concerned about shorter winter-road seasons that northern communities depend on to transport food and other supplies to their communities. We are concerned. Vulnerable runways and other infrastructure built on permafrost are shifting because of melting permafrost from warmer temperatures.

Mr. Speaker, we're concerned about all of these that—all of these matters that concern us, but I am glad that we are moving in a direction that will address these matters, that will address these issues to the satisfaction of the northern Manitobans and all of Manitobans and all of Canadians that are impacted by these climate changes. What we have done to date in addressing these issues eases my mind, that my children and my grandchildren will benefit from the research that is being done right now to prevent any more of the damage to the environment and also the

disasters—natural disasters that are happening around us.

I'm glad that we're all focusing in that direction, because if we don't, we stand to see more—more damage and more disasters. We have to pull together to prevent this, and by doing this we need information; we need data; we need to know how we can adjust to these climate changes. In essence, we need to have research that will provide us that necessary information for us to deal with these critical areas of concern.

Mr. Speaker, I'm in favour of a northern climate change research centre. We need it, and if we don't move in that direction we may be in for a bit of a—problems down the road. I don't want to see that; I don't want to see my grandchildren suffering because maybe we didn't act soon enough or do enough. I hope that we move in this direction unanimously for the betterment of northern Manitobans, for the betterment of all Manitobans and all Canadians. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): It's a pleasure to rise and put a few words on the record regarding this resolution.

It is actually an issue of particular interest to me because I had the pleasure of—before I was elected to this House, to represent farm groups not only here in Manitoba on the issue of carbon credits and climate change—that, actually, with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture I sat on a number of committees in regards to that, too, back when there was a Liberal government in Ottawa and there was lots of discussion about carbon trading and what might be done to help deal with the issue of climate change.

And, certainly, there was lots of meetings, lots of talk, very little actual research was initiated at the federal level. There has been a bit here—done here in Manitoba and I'm certainly pleased that we seem to be learning a little bit more all the time about some of the factors contributing to that.

But there was a lot of looking around to find somebody to blame, seemed to be the biggest issue. And, of course, initially farm groups in particular seemed to be a target not only here, provincially, on occasion, but nationally there was a lot of looking at the cattle population—which is a contributing factor through methane—and a number of other agricultural practices that might be considered to be carbon unfriendly. However, when we started digging up data and evidence to support our side of the

argument, that, in fact, what we do in agriculture is actually farm carbon—it's really what we do.

The plants that we grow, the livestock that we produce, are all part of that carbon chain and part of the carbon cycle. And we started finding more and more evidence, in fact, to support the fact that agriculture actually is a source—not a source for carbon, but a place to store carbon, and that actually has gained a fair bit of support nationally and internationally. There are, certainly, changes in agriculture practice that can be brought into play, particularly in the prairies, that can increase the carbon content of the soils that can be a huge factor in carbon offsets—absolutely huge. It's amazing how big the numbers can be and, in fact, could deal with a lot of the carbon emissions that we seem to be having a great deal of difficulty dealing with here in the province of Manitoba.

But there was very little commitment, there were, certainly, groups struck and discussions going on about whether or not we could actually do anything in terms of practical application of this, put some incentives in place, some recognition of the positive aspects of it that could be part of the carbon offsets. It's actually part of our party's program. When we talk ecological-goods-and-services approach to landscape management, carbon offsets was one of the many benefits that could be measured and, in fact, probably could be used as an incentive.

* (11:30)

But across the prairies only one province actually took action, and, surprisingly, that would be Alberta. Alberta actually moved ahead and put a carbon trading system in place and incented carbon—agricultural carbon offset, carbon storage, and it has been a huge success. In fact, a contributing factor, of course, to the farm community because they did generate some revenue out of it, but, when you look at the numbers that they have been able to sequester, those numbers are very impressive indeed. Now, that against, of course, their huge oil industry, which is, in fact, an emitter, and they do their best to minimize that these days, but they have actually made the most net progress of any province in Canada. And, as my colleague pointed out, we've certainly seen reductions in Ontario and reductions in Québec. Part of that was their move to actually use more friendly practices in terms of agricultural practice and incent them to store carbon in the soils or change agricultural practice, as composting was another one that was used to some degree where—in areas where

lots of livestock were a big factor, and progress was made in terms of taking carbon out of the system.

So there are actually ways that you can make progress, but—and research actually exists to support this. But you actually have to move on it. You can't just talk about it. And, in fact, I suspect just talking about it actually contributes more to climate change in the negative sense of the word than any other factor.

Now, we have seen that the Auditor General indicated that the gap was 2.7 megatons from their target of 6 per cent below the 1990 greenhouse target levels, and, if I remember correctly, that was not the first target. That was about target No. 3. We have gone through a whole series of, well, we can't make that target, so we'll change the way we interpret that or we'll certainly change the target and we'll set a longer timeline. And right now, near as I can tell, the work, in terms of doing carbon offsets and reductions, has almost ground to a halt here in Manitoba. There's really very little going on. There's a few meetings taking place sort of semi-annually, but progress seems to be very limited, and that is certainly not what we wanted to see.

It is very reminiscent, in some ways, of the whole issue of nutrient management here in the province. The target really was to find someone to take the blame for nutrient loading issues. Lake Winnipeg was one that was referred to. Lake Manitoba is one that we'll certainly be hearing from probably within the next decade or so. But Lake Winnipeg, of course, with so much—such a high population around the lake boundaries, gets a lot of attention, and there's historically often been algae blooms on the lake, but the frequency does seem to be increasing a little bit, and a lot of that is, of course, being blamed on phosphorus loading. And phosphorus loading isn't just a Manitoba problem. It's a worldwide problem, and we've seen some jurisdictions actually make significant progress. But to do that, you actually have to correctly identify the sources, which was and is still an issue here in Manitoba to actually identify what the real sources are, and then you have to find programs that actually can help deal with the origin of those sources.

And, of course, in the case of Lake Winnipeg, that has been a bit of a problem because the sources are many. They're not like what we saw in some of the Great Lakes where we had point sources usually generated by industry or large cities. Here we have some point sources, some industrial, certainly some

of them based around urban centres, and lake—or sorry, Winnipeg has been one that has certainly been mentioned quite a bit in terms of the need to deal with their phosphorus issue in their effluent and where they put it. But really what we've seen here is actually some—an effort to try and find a scapegoat to blame, and that was initially and still remains to a high degree the hog industry, and yet we've seen they have made massive improvements in terms of how they have dealt with their nutrient load and how it's applied to the landscape.

I don't think actually very many people appreciate what goes on. They take their effluent, which we in the city here and in many cities across the province actually semiprocess it in an initial treatment, really take all the dangerous bacteria out of it and some solids out of it, and then we just drop it straight into the water system and we let the water system dilute it. That's not what happens in agriculture when it comes to the effluent from the hogs. It's used as fertilizer and put on the fields. The waste between the hog operation and the field is next to nothing. The runoff from most fields is actually monitored and kept to a minimum, and the rates that we can apply are actually monitored and kept within the range of what the plants can use in that particular year or the next. And I don't know whether people appreciate the field efficiency when it comes to plants, when—with what they are capable of removing in terms of phosphorus that's applied to the field. Their field efficiencies run over 90 per cent for almost all species of plant. So they're not only actively finding this nutrient, they're putting it to good use growing a crop, which we all need and all benefit from as Manitobans, and the amount that's lost from those fields is really very negligible.

And this, I mean, you're comparing apples and oranges here. In one case we're dropping the effluent directly into the river and saying, okay, well, the river's going to deal with this, but we don't actually know how the river's going to deal with this; and the other, we're actually applying it, letting the plants, which we can—not only know how they do it but we're able to monitor the results on a very ongoing basis. So, results versus a very nebulous theory.

Getting back to the whole issue of climate change and greenhouse gases, there are certainly many areas where we have opportunity to do more than we have done. Some of it, of course, can be at the smokestack and to reduce situations like that and more efficiency in terms of how we use the energy sources that we have, but probably our greatest

potential advantage is actually to use the landscape. The landscape actually sequesters carbon in massive amounts. When we talk about that the 2.7 megatons, that is less than 0.1 per cent of the carbon offsets available just in crop farming here in Manitoba. It is such a small amount in the big picture of things. So, we can actually make much more difference.

So, I think, really, what we—the message here is, let's go beyond just talking about these things and actually take some action in the areas where we know and understand and can actually make improvements rather than just look for some other solution that might be a magic solution but probably never exists.

So, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regards to this resolution.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable minister, I want to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Stanley Knowles School 43 grade 4 to 8 English as an additional language students under the direction of Marilyn Calderon. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this morning.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: And I'll now recognize the honourable Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): I, too, welcome the students. Over the last 12 years, we've had 125,000 people choose Manitoba, and right here we see the future of the province of Manitoba. So thank you for coming to the Manitoba Legislature today.

It's very good to be speaking to this very important resolution put forward by my colleague from Flin Flon, Mr. Speaker, and it was quite refreshing, actually, to hear a Tory talk about the importance of science. I think we need to—the member from Arthur-Virden talked about this, and I think we need to send a copy of the Hansard to the Government of Canada. You know, about a month ago, we had scientists from across Canada protesting, and you know what a reactionary group scientists are.

So, for these folks to come out and actually talk about the importance of science and the need to have the federal government supporting science—of course, here in Manitoba, we need look no further than the Experimental Lakes, Mr. Speaker, and what we saw there—despite my having signed an agreement with the federal government a number of years ago, as the minister of Water Stewardship, about research on Lake Winnipeg, seeing the federal government completely pull out of the ELA, this is very, very concerning.

You know, there's discussion internationally about what the federal government is doing in regards to science. They just don't want people to have the information that dispels their myths of what is happening, not only on climate change but a myriad of issues. So, again, I think we need to package off the Hansard and send it to the PMO. Incidentally, when you send something to the PMO, you don't have to pay postage. So we could send multiple copies there.

The issue of climate change is a very important one, and as a former minister of Water Stewardship, we experienced it first-hand in the province: three major floods, the worst natural disaster to hit the province of Manitoba. And interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the water that flows into Manitoba flows from the west to the east into the province, and from the south to the north, and from the east to the west, and it all culminates, as we know, into Lake Winnipeg, which is the sixth great lake of North America and is the 10th greatest fresh water lake in the world. So protecting Lake Winnipeg is very important and also recognizing that as the flow moves more into Lake Winnipeg, it needs to go somewhere and out, eventually making its way into the northern Arctic and around by the Port of Churchill, which the member from Flin Flon talked about the effects of that. Perhaps we will see the time when the Port of Churchill becomes a year-round port, which would be an extreme climate change.

* (11:40)

We're also seeing change in seasons, Mr. Speaker. We see seasons moving about a month later than they normally would've. We're seeing weather patterns change, more floods, more storms; I mean, the hail that we all experienced here yesterday—all of a sudden we heard this loud thumping. I thought it was the air conditioning was beefing up because the member from Steinbach was just putting too much hot air into this Chamber, but apparently it was hail.

So an even greater power was commenting on the delay on Bill 18.

What we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is putting words to action. And we're putting words to action through Manitoba's Arctic research facilities and, most specifically, the Churchill northern research centre and the University of Manitoba's Nellie Cournoyea Arctic Research Facility. And these are two internationally recognized organizations. I'm going to focus first on the Churchill northern research centre.

We were very, very pleased to invest \$6 million in the CNSC for over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that we have a unique facility, that we have a unique location and we want to support that, as the provincial government, and share it with the world.

Now this centre was established in 1976 and is Canada's largest northern, independent, not-for-profit—no two-tier science here, Mr. Speaker—not-for-profit research and educational facility. The centre is involved in a variety of education and research initiatives, including documenting northern research issues, such as climate change, polar bear health, which is the big canary; as the polar bear goes, so goes the North. Biodiversity, the—this biodiversity is an extremely important point of study, area of study, because it is the whole myriad that makes up an environment that keeps it healthy. And if one area's put out of balance, all areas will follow—wildlife population cycles and, of course, water quality.

The science—since the science has been founded, literally hundreds of scholarly papers, Ph.D. theses and undergraduate theses have been published from research done at the CNSC. And every year approximately a hundred and twenty-five scientists from more than 22 universities and 10 government departments from across Canada and abroad, Mr. Speaker, utilize this centre, along with 600 members of the public, participating in joint university courses, learning vacations, naturalist tours and youth educational programs. So this is a centre that is available to all, whether you're a Ph.D., whether you're doing your own research or whether you're someone who just cares, this centre is available to you.

In the past, it has hosted from Canadian universities many eminent researchers who have come from University of Toronto, Guelph, Manitoba, Winnipeg. Our neighbours to the south have also made use of the centre, such as South Dakota State

University, University of Wisconsin, Kennesaw State University and University of Maine.

This centre focuses on the western Hudson Bay region and it provides logistical support, it provides courses and field research facilities to several hundred people every year. It develops research on unique attributes of the area.

And another very important point to the centre, is it is Manitoba's most northerly green building and is compliant and has exceeded all provincial legislation regarding leadership in energy and environmental designs, otherwise known as the LEED gold standards. So that's one area that we are committing to pure science, Mr. Speaker.

The University of Manitoba also recently opened an extremely important facility and it was the Nellie Cournoyea Arctic Research Facility at U of M, which was opened by our colleague, the minister of post-secondary education, on March 18th of this year. And I want to commend her efforts and the efforts of the University of Manitoba in recognizing Nellie Cournoyea, who has long been a leader in northern Canada, not only within Canada or North America, but internationally. So it was really wonderful to see Nellie here in Winnipeg and to know that her good work continues and that she's getting the recognition she so deserves. This space accommodates graduate students and researchers coming to U of M as a result of the Canada Excellence Research Chair, which is held by Søren Rysgaard at the present time. The innovative, \$15-million facility will house 60,000 square feet of specialized labs, state-of-the-art instruments and classrooms. There are custom freezers where sea ice can be grown under carefully controlled conditions and a remote-controlled submersible that can explore and sample the environment under the ice.

Our Province is contributing funding to support the U of M CERC research program as well. These two areas combined make the University of Manitoba the home to the most well-funded sea ice research team in the world, Mr. Speaker, and as Manitobans we can all feel very proud of that. The focus is on Arctic sea ice; it is essential to understanding marine life, planetary weather patterns, human health and northern development. In addition to the new chair and the 17 University of Manitoba researchers already involved in sea ice research, the university has invested in three new tenure-track faculty positions, post-doctoral and research associate positions as well as graduate

students and support staff. The families—the facility's Centre for Earth Observation Science has more than doubled to over a hundred people.

I want to recognize that the melting of the Arctic ice is affecting Venice, is affecting London. They have literally built gates up on the Thames; if the seawater rises, they've got gates to stop water going into the Thames. Venice also has gates to provide water coming in. This is an international issue, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate the good work being done by Manitobans, and I want to let Manitobans know this government supports science.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to speak to this resolution, which deals with northern climate change research.

First of all, I want to recognize the many Manitobans who've been involved in one way or another in northern climate change research. People like David Barber and many, many others have contributed to our understanding in the Arctic and the polar environment and how rapidly the Arctic ice is melting in the summer and how much less there has been in recent years in terms of Arctic ice and how much thinner it has been than historically.

I also want to recognize those who've made significant contributions in northern Manitoba and around Churchill understanding the impact of climate change on polar bears, for example, and the work that's going on on the boreal forest. Because the climate change is making significant changes in the boreal forest, and, of course, concerns about the potential for increased numbers of forest fires in years where there's droughts as a result of climate change is certainly just one small aspect of that.

But I would like, as well, to talk about the impact of climate change on southern Manitoba, because I think it's very important that we are paying a lot of attention to the impact of climate change on southern Manitoba because increasingly the evidence is consistent with increasing wet weather in the spring and early summer being associated with climate change. And we certainly know, as Bob Sandford and others have pointed out, that when the temperature of the atmosphere gets higher—I think it's for every degree increase in temperature, the amount of water vapour that can be held in the atmosphere goes up about 7 per cent, and this, of course, is then a setup for increased wet weather events.

* (11:50)

But it would appear that there may be in addition to this—as was first suggested to me in 1999 when I visited the International Institute for Sustainable Development and saw a model of climate change which predicted increased wet weather in early spring and summer in southern Manitoba and North Dakota. And that certainly seems to be the pattern that we've seen in the last 15 years, particularly; well, let's go back at least to 1997.

This, sadly, has not been received, the recognition from this government that it should have received. And for the whole length of this government's tenure, they have tended to focus on policies which are draining, draining, draining policies. And as a result of these policies which are primarily draining policies and not much in the way of water retention, we've got a lot more water now coming off the land than we did 15 years ago, or than there was 30 or 40 years ago. But the acceleration of drainage has been particularly strong or particularly large in southwestern Manitoba in the last 15 years.

And certainly, when you've got a lot more water coming off the land more quickly, this is a set-up for big floods like we had in 2011. And I think it's almost certain that the policies of this government, which have meant water coming off the land a lot faster and in a lot greater volumes, have contributed to the extent of the flood in 2011. Certainly, if we had 30 per cent less water coming off the land, the amount of water coming down the Assiniboine River and reaching Portage la Prairie could have been very considerably less at its peak. There would have been less problems on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, and the cost to all of us would have been considerably less.

But, sadly, the government has not paid the attention that it should to climate change in southern Manitoba and not paid the attention that it should in terms of agriculture and, in particular, nitrous oxide production as it relates to climate change. I drew this to the government's attention more than 10 years ago, but because this government was not particularly interested at that juncture and didn't pay attention to the agricultural greenhouse gas production, the greenhouse gas production in Manitoba has continued to go up rather than down, and we have been a long way from achieving the Kyoto targets which the government had said it wanted to achieve and, indeed, put in legislation. And, indeed, the government had to break its own commitment because its policies were so ineffective, were so incomplete in certain respects, so misguided.

And one has to acknowledge, therefore, that, you know, this government has been not paying the attention that it should to climate change research and the impact of climate change in southern Manitoba. And that's one of the reasons why I would have really appreciated inclusion, in this resolution, the impact of climate change and the need for a lot of research related to climate change for southern Manitoba.

There is increasing evidence, for example, that there are good ways of reducing nitrous oxide production coming off agricultural land, and, so far, this government has not really paid much attention to that. And yet it is certainly an area where there should be increased research, increased attention, increased action, instead of the kind of laissez-faire attitude that this government has got to agriculture in general, in fact, as well as to the needs of farmers. Certainly, adequate attention to nitrous oxide, because the reality is when nitrogen goes up in the air as nitrous oxide, it's not only a danger in terms of an increased greenhouse gas and global warming but it's also a loss to farmers because the valuable fertilizer that has been on the land, or put on the land, is essentially going up as gas instead of helping the plants that it really should be designed to. And so there is a win-win here, but should have been looked at and where there should have been a lot of attention paid.

Let me come back to the flooding where there clearly also is a major need for action. And, in terms of the areas where we need to act with balancing any drainage with water retention, there is a, as a recent example, a good article by Bartley Kives in the weekend edition of the Free Press talking about the need to make major changes in southern Manitoba to address approaches which will provide much more water retention and, at the same time as helping climate change, will also help us in terms of Lake Winnipeg.

There is increasing concern that climate change, for a variety of reasons, may be one of the factors which is exacerbating the problems, the algal problems and the concerns over Lake Winnipeg, that the climate change itself may be contributing to the floods and the runoff of water and phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, that the climate change by itself—what's happening on the lake may contribute to the amount of algal blooms. And certainly this is an area where there clearly is a need, again, in southern half of Manitoba, for much more effort in terms of relationship to climate change and looking at the

actions that we need to take as a result for the benefit of farmers, for the benefit of all of us, for the benefit of Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close at this point, but I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to this resolution and it's quite something to listen to the government say that they're a leader on climate change and they listen to science, when they've ignored it for so long. In fact, you'd have to look long and hard for a government that has taken so little action on the environment and has such an appalling environmental record as this particular government.

Lots of interesting comments here, anecdotal evidence that we heard about, you know, climate

change is happening because the seasons are changing. Well, they—just look at what happened this spring, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, that was not an early spring. But, again, that's called anecdotal evidence; that is not scientific evidence.

And you need to go to the scientists to indeed understand—or for them to look at what may or may not be happening in the environment. And that is something that this government could indeed pay more attention to. You know, we have—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon West will have nine minutes remaining.

The one-hour allocation for private members' hour has expired. The hour being 11:58 a.m., I'm—the House is recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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