

Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
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BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
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DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
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HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	
<i>Vacant</i>	Lac du Bonnet	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 5, 2011

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, 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave to proceed to Bill 214, The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to go directly to Bill 214, The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 214—The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Brandon West, that Bill 214, The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act; Loi sur le Jour du patrimoine ukrainien, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, people of Ukrainian origin across this land have made significant contributions to not only this province but, indeed, to our country as a whole. And provinces throughout Canada have now started to recognize the contributions that people of Ukrainian origin have made by designating a day of the year when we can mark it with a heritage demarcation and celebration of the contributions that have been made by Ukrainian people to Canada and, in our case, to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it is the community that has requested that Manitoba follow the lead of Ontario and proclaim a heritage day in our province so that not only we as a general population but, more

specifically, people of Ukrainian origin, their children, indeed, the schools that teach bilingual programs and Ukrainian programs, can mark this day as a day of celebration for the contributions that have been made.

Mr. Speaker, the date that was chosen was September the 7, and this day has significance right across Canada because it happens to be the day that the first Ukrainian settlers arrived in Canada and, in 1891, two settlers arrived in this province from Ukraine to take their place among others who had immigrated to this country before.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I note that the government has also, after I had introduced this bill in the Legislature, the government also brought forward a bill that mirrors Bill 214, and the only difference is that they are—the government is suggesting that the day be not a day but, indeed, the weekend of the Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin.

Well, this is an unusual thing. Usually an act of this kind is brought forward by a private member, and I know the government has private members within its hold, within its party and, you know, I was very proud that the member from Burrows had seconded the Holodomor day act because, indeed, he has a connection to the Ukrainian community. And it was my hope that we could, once again, come together as a Legislature and work together, not in a partisan political fashion but, indeed, to mark a day that would celebrate the contributions made by people of Ukrainian origin who, in fact, support all political parties that are found in this Legislature: the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party.

And, Mr. Speaker, the day that was chosen was the day of the arrival of the first settlers to this country, and that is an important day because the hardships that these people went through to get to this country, to get to freedom and then the communication that went back to Ukraine to invite more people to come into this country was, indeed, significant.

It's also a day during the school year, Mr. Speaker, and it allows for students in our schools, especially those who offer programming—Ukrainian programming, whether it's bilingual programs,

heritage programs or any cultural programs to pause, and with parents, with teachers and communities to celebrate this day as a heritage day in our province, and it doesn't pick and choose one community over another because there are communities across this whole province who celebrate festivals of one kind or another. Whether it's Folklorama here in Winnipeg or other smaller communities who celebrate the contributions and the culture and the heritage of these people throughout the summer months, we stayed away from that specifically because it is a celebration, a heritage day that is recognized throughout our province and, indeed, is recognized in other provinces as well on that same day.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat disappointed when I saw Bill 27 come forward, because I thought that in a dialogue we might be able to come together again and do what we did with the Holodomor day act, and I've not made a big fuss about this with the Ukrainian community. I've simply indicated why I chose the days and why this act is important. And, yes, I'll take, perhaps, some blame for not, perhaps, sitting down with the government, and say to them, why don't we do this together and why don't we make this one bill within the Legislature of this province. However, everything is still not lost, and so today I speak to this bill on the basis that I think it's important—fundamentally important—for the Ukrainian community.

* (10:10)

I also have to say, Mr. Speaker, it's probably the last bill that I'll be introducing into this Chamber, and I have to say that I'm proud to do that for the people that I'm associated with and a culture that I come from as well. And I know that the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) is also of Ukrainian origin, and this is important to her, and I can understand that she would want to have a piece of this and so would the member from Burrows.

But I think we can do this is a way that all of us can have a piece of this, and all of us who represent communities and constituencies who have Ukrainian people living within them, can take some pride that this Legislature, in Manitoba, has come together to recognize the importance of the contributions made to this province by Ukrainian people. And that we can come together and identify a day that, instead of arguing about which day, which weekend, which community we should be honouring with this legislation, it is not honouring any particular

community, any particular town, any particular region.

It is honouring, Mr. Speaker, the contributions that have been made economically, culturally, socially, the traditions that have been brought from Ukraine to this country. The wonderful mosaic that this cultural group fits into in our province is something that we need to be proud of. And we take that pride by designating a day of celebration for—as a heritage day act.

Now we've seen this happen before in other cultures and we, as Manitobans, come together not to put one culture above another, not to put one community above another, but to join hands, as a mosaic of this province, as cultural groups within this province and to celebrate what is important. And that is the contributions that our ancestors, our forefathers, have made to this province, to the culture of this province, to the heritage of this province, and to the economy of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, today Ukrainian people are found within all walks of life. They are found within all professions, within all vocations. They have blended into society, yet they hold very firmly and fast to their traditions and to their culture, and that is the unique characteristic of us as a province and us as a country.

Mr. Speaker, I notice my beacon is going, and I have to just conclude by saying to the members of this Chamber that it is my hope that we, once again, can move in a positive direction, and move ahead in recognizing this day as a heritage day, not for us in this Chamber but, indeed, for all Manitobans and for the Ukrainian population within this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, and I listened to the member's comments with interest, and we are both of Ukrainian descent, as are many others who have—very often the saying, you're either Ukrainian or you wish you were Ukrainian so you could be part of the culture and the traditions that are there. And many, many people enjoy the Ukrainian culture and traditions and are a very important part of this province.

And I can say to you that my ancestors came to this country in the 1800s, and they were—just as many people came to various parts of this province, but in—particularly in the area that I come from, where the member for Russell comes from, Dauphin

area, that—what's called the Parklands-Interlake area, many Ukrainians settled in those areas.

And I can say to the member that I truly do believe that it's important that we commemorate the contributions that Ukrainians make to this province and to the nation. And I want to—we can talk about how determined they were. No matter where they lived, religion was very important to them, and you could see across the landscape in this province, many places where Ukrainians—one of the first things they did was build a church, build a school, so they could worship, so they could educate their children.

And, Mr. Speaker, many of those Ukrainians made huge sacrifices because they valued education and they wanted their children to get a better education than they were able to get, because they had to leave a country where it was very difficult for some of them to get an education. And as the member from Russell said, those Ukrainians, people of Ukrainian heritage, have crossed every walk of life and have contributed to the fibre of this country.

The member opposite talks about having introduced this bill, and I will say to the members opposite that I did—I did indicate to the member opposite that I was going to be introducing a bill. And I had asked them if he would want to second the bill, but—so that we could work together. That was the suggestion that I made to the member opposite. I had indicated to him that we had talked to the Ukrainian community and that we were introducing a bill that would have the Ukrainian heritage day on the last Saturday in July every year.

And then the member opposite made a decision that he would introduce his bill. So, as a result of that, we now have two bills on the Order Paper and—but with slightly different views as to when this day should be commemorated.

But I can indicate to the member that we have had discussions with the Ukrainian community about what the date should be in Manitoba and we will share—we will—I would be—I would welcome the opportunity to talk about how we could reflect the—what has been discussed with Ukrainians, both here in Winnipeg and in other parts of the province.

So it's important that we find a way to recognize that day. And, as I said, when you look at the Ukrainian population in this province, 167,000 people. We have the—in proportion to the population of the province, we have a larger

proportional representation of Ukrainians than any other area in the country.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the culture and the education and religious activities, there are various places in the province where there are—people are preserving the culture. There are schools where children are—continue to learn the language. And there is—and it is a very important part of our heritage here.

For myself, I think that we should have a day to designate the—as a celebration of the Ukrainian presence in our country and in our provinces. And this gives the opportunity for people to profile what their contribution is and to be proud of what that contribution is and to be encouraged and give an opportunity for young people, for children of the Ukrainian—descendants of those Ukrainians who came earlier here to be—to enjoy the culture, to be proud of that culture and to learn more about what has—what they have contributed.

As pioneers, they—our ancestors took on some very difficult situations—some difficult landscapes. There were those that settled here in Winnipeg and were—worked in various capacities, Mr. Speaker, but there were those, and the majority of people who came were of—many were of farming background and have had an influence in many part of the provinces.

And if you look at—as I said, there were many descendants of Ukrainian heritage who have played important roles in this province. We only have to look at former Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Peter Liba. That was a real honour for Ukrainians when he got appointed to the post that he was in.

And there have been people at the federal level who have taken on very significant posts and—Governor General Hnatyshyn, my colleague reminds me of.

But when you look here in Manitoba, there is the Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin—has been in place for 46 years now. And people come from across the land, across the land they come to Dauphin to celebrate their culture but to also educate other people about their culture. It's become a significant event—a significant gathering place every year in Dauphin.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have chosen the date that will coincide with that particular event, every last Saturday of every July, so that, at this significant gathering place, we can further celebrate and mark

the contributions that Ukrainians have made to this country.

* (10:20)

There, as I—we look at the church community. Certainly, the Ukrainian community has two major churches, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. They are based here in Winnipeg and, again, a way for people to be proud and to celebrate and to worship right here in this province.

If you look at the arts culture, there are many Ukrainians that have contributed in that way. There are Ukrainians who have contributed an awful lot.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I look at this bill that the member opposite has put forward, I can say to him that I think we have the same goal, but we have chosen different dates. And I hope that we can have that discussion that I offered to the member prior to tabling the bill that we should talk. And I—when I indicated to him that I have already had discussions with the Canadian National Ukrainian Festival Board, who have indicated that they would be very pleased if this day would coincide with the Canadian National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin because this would be, again, an opportunity to showcase and profile our Ukrainian heritage, our Ukrainian culture, and have a wide range of people who come to enjoy the Ukrainian culture—and the Ukrainian food, of course, which is a very important part of our culture—but they would be coming, they would come to see the performances that are world-class; world performers come to this event.

And, Mr. Speaker, this bill does not, as I said, coincide with what we are proposing, and I would welcome the member to sit down and talk with us. As he said, how do we come to an agreement? And as I've said, this has been—we've talked about this with the Ukrainian community. We've talked about it with the people of the Ukrainian Festival, and all feel that this is the right date for Manitobans. So, perhaps we can join together, find a conclusion here that will result in the bill that will recognize the last Saturday of July as the Ukrainian—a day that will recognize the Ukrainian heritage.

But I want to commend the member as well. He has always been a strong spokesman for the Ukrainian people. He talked about the Holodomor; he played a big role in the recognition of those people and the suffering that they did. This day will be a day of celebration, a celebration of all we, as

Ukrainians, as our ancestors and others have made to make Manitoba the rich culture that it is.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the words of the Minister of Finance. And she's probably right that we're very close to endorsing a very important bill, in my estimation.

I would also like to thank the member from Russell who has been indicated as being a very strong supporter of the Ukrainian heritage and Ukrainian culture. And I think him bringing forward this bill is an extremely important time in Manitoba, and as I understand, he had brought this Bill 214 forward prior to the Minister of Finance approaching him with respect to the dates.

But in saying that, Mr. Speaker, I, too, am a very proud and patriotic Canadian of Ukrainian heritage. I wear that on my sleeve. I am very proud of my Ukrainian heritage, as a matter of fact, was brought up appreciating the number of different avenues that were given to me with my grandparents with respect to culture and religion and dance, and particularly food. And we'll get into that topic in the not-too-distant future.

My sons are very proud to carry the Ukrainian name forward, and this all came about, Mr. Speaker, because both sets of my grandparents decided to immigrate to Canada in the late 1800s. And there's not a day that goes by that I don't thank both sets of those grandparents for choosing Canada for being their home. They left a homeland where they were, in fact, put down on a regular basis. They wanted to reach out and come to a country that—it allowed them the freedoms of education, of religion, of movement—free movement—and they chose Canada. And for not them, I wouldn't be here today, and I—as I say every day—thank my two sets of grandparents coming forward and settling in not only Canada, but in Manitoba. I have been blessed by their decision and I will never forget it.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, when my grandfather came to this country, the name was anglicized, believe it or not. When he came, his official birth name in the Ukraine was Boroczuk [*phonetic*] and when he came into Canada the immigration officer obviously could not put down Boroczuk [*phonetic*] so they anglicized it to Borotsik.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And I'm not—I'm very, very proud of that name because there are no other individuals in this country or in North America that carry that name.

You—if you come across a person who carries my name, we're related. There is no one else that does not carry the name that my grandparents were given when they came into this country, and that in itself is a great sense of pride that I and my family and my children carry forward with that name, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now, as for heritage, my grandparents didn't speak English when they came here and they had very challenging, difficult times. They farmed in probably not the best of land, although they did eventually, through very hard work and industrious nature, eventually get some very good agricultural land as they did over in the Ukraine, but they had some trials and tribulations.

My grandfather and his relatives, Madam Deputy Speaker, during the First World War were interned. We had an internment camp in Brandon, Manitoba. It's not a proud part of our heritage, I can assure you of that, but men of Ukrainian descent were taken out of their families and put in internment camps because of their heritage, because of their names, because of where they came.

After the war, Madam Deputy Speaker, they, in fact, went back to their industrious ways and developed this province, and I'm very proud of that.

They had other challenges, Madam Deputy Speaker, of language, of religion, but they got over those, and I am, as I say, very proud of the fact that they developed this province into what it is today.

One of the things that I remember as a child is that we, as Ukrainians, we follow the Julian calendar, and that may not mean a lot to other individuals of other cultures, but I always celebrated two Christmases. I had the English Christmas, as we had it, and we had English Christmas often, we had presents and all the rest of it, but my fellow students in elementary school were so very jealous of me because I always took January 7th off, and we celebrated Christmas again and I got more presents and I didn't have to go to school on January 7th. And they always asked me where I was, and I said, because I'm Ukrainian, I get to get two Christmases—and how do you like that? And, by the way, I really enjoyed it. They perhaps didn't enjoy it as much.

An Honourable Member: And going to church.

Mr. Borotsik: Yes, absolutely. My mother and my father and my grandparents certainly—I was an Orthodox, as was mentioned—we have both Ukrainian Catholic, Ukrainian Orthodox, and I was brought under the Ukrainian Orthodox religion and I'm still very proud of that.

As a matter of fact, went to a school called St. Andrew's College here in Winnipeg. My parents forced me to learn Ukrainian. Unfortunately, I didn't—wasn't as good a student as I should have been and I have lost some of that ability, but I still have some of it.

But one of the things I do remember and still hold very dear to me is the culture that we have. The pysanky at Easter, which is Ukrainian—the food. Now as you could probably tell, I do in fact take advantage of Ukrainian food. I don't like spicy food. The spiciest food that I have—that I like, is holubtsi, and now I wonder how *Hansard* is going to spell holubtsi. And we have pyrohy and we have borscht and we have the paska and all of those wonderful things that made my family and, certainly, made my children appreciate the fact of our culture.

Believe it or not, I actually did the kolomayka. I took Ukrainian dancing. It was not forced on me, because it was actually quite an interesting dance; it was an interesting way of celebrating Ukrainian dance. And I can't because of my knees now do it, but I could try if I had to.

We all agree, and the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) stood, and said: This is a good piece of legislation. It does the right thing. It celebrates a culture and a heritage of a people in Manitoba and across this country.

It's been said, we have 167,000 people of Ukrainian descent in Manitoba. We have over 1.2 million Canadians who trace their roots back to the Ukraine.

* (10:30)

It's important that we, as a people, have an opportunity to celebrate that heritage and our culture. It's a good piece of legislation. Let's not politicize it, please. Let's work together to make this thing right now. Now, when I say right, we have a bit of a division. September 7th has been chosen for a specific reason. It was the first day that a Ukrainian settler, an immigrant, came from the Ukraine and set foot on this great country of ours. The first day was September the 7th; that's why it's been chosen.

We have Ontario already passing legislation to declare a Ukrainian heritage day on September the 7th. We will have other provinces following suit. Those other provinces will, in my opinion, through the Ukrainian council, will choose September the 7th. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, has a huge Ukrainian population; they have Ukrainian museums, they have Ukrainian art museums. It's a huge Ukrainian culture and they will, I believe, pick September the 7th.

To have Manitoba offside isn't that pan-Canadian look that we continue to hear from the government. They want to have standardization, they want to have pan-Canadian and the pan-Canadian is September the 7th. So I implore the government and its members to reach that conclusion, that, in fact, a very positive piece of legislation should go forward with September the 7th.

There's a justification, not only because others have chosen it, and it's accepted by the Ukrainian community but, as the member from Russell has indicated, it's a perfect opportunity to share our culture with other students and other people and other communities during that date. It's a school day. Students are able to then learn during that school day what it means to have a Ukrainian heritage in the province of Manitoba.

So, I am very happy that the legislation's been brought forward. I'm extremely pleased that Manitobans are going to embrace the Ukrainian heritage. What I would simply like to say is, please, to the members opposite, let's not make this divisive. Let's not make it less than what it really is at the present time. Let's get together and show September 7th as the day that we all, in this province, will celebrate my heritage and the heritage of many others throughout this province and this country. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm really quite honoured to stand here and discuss an issue that I think is so very important, not just for the discussion that we have here today, but an important reflection on who we are as Manitobans, our traditions, our history, our culture. Just—I think that's so very important for provincial leaders like ourselves to take on and share with each other.

I want to talk a little bit just—coming out of what I just heard from the member for Brandon West, I congratulate him. I think more people, whether Ukrainian or whatever your background is, need to

tell our stories. I thought that was absolutely interesting what the member for Brandon West put on the record. Personal reflections, your thinkings about your upbringing, your—the cultures that we're all part of, and how so very important that is, not just to Manitoba but to our country. You know, there—I don't think we spend enough time talking from one generation to the next, from one culture to the other, as Canadians, as Manitobans, and I really think that—I really listened intently to what the member for Brandon West had to say. I thought that was extraordinary.

I also want to say that I really do admire the leadership of the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) in this whole discussion that we've had over the years. Over my 16 years of being in this building, I can honestly say that the member for Russell has represented his culture, his community, very well and really, Madam Deputy Speaker, needs to be congratulated for the work that he's done, not just with this bill, but in—on efforts in the past that we've taken on in this House.

I understand what the crux of the discussion is. I think every single member understands the importance of having this discussion, of stepping forward with, I think, some—a concrete day by which we can celebrate, and understand the challenges. I acknowledge the contributions of the Ukrainian community in Manitoba and across Canada.

I do, though, want to be very clear that I don't believe it should be limited to a day. I think, as a society, we need to take this on even in a bigger way and whether it's our school systems, whether it's our churches, whether it's our government institutions, I think we need to understand that it's not just one day. There's 365 days in a year that we need, I think, to understand each other better and treat each other with respect because that always hasn't been the case when it has come to the Ukrainian community in this country. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think there's unanimous support all around this Legislature for moving forward with this kind of an approach.

As for the day that has been chosen, I understand the rationale. I think the member for Russell made a good case for the day that he has picked in his legislation. I do, though, believe that there's a good case to be made for the day that has been picked in the legislation that my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), has brought forward.

And I want to be clear, I do represent the Dauphin-Roblin constituency. I do represent a

number of communities, Dauphin included, that have made a huge—that have a large Ukrainian population and made a huge contribution to the province.

We do have the Selo site, where Canada's National Ukrainian Festival is hosted. I don't say this from any kind of a partisan, local, MLA promotion kind of a perspective. I think there's a very good reason, outside of that, even—of course, I want to be a good MLA, Madam Deputy Speaker, but, at the same time, I think we have to find a date by which we can maximize the impact that we have, maximize the opportunity to tell that Ukrainian story that needs to be told and needs to be heard one generation to the next.

The—it is a National Ukrainian Festival. It's Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. There are people from all over Manitoba, all over Canada and from around the world that gather in Dauphin on the August long weekend every year. These are people who have taken seriously the job that they have, the obligation they have to tell their stories to the next generation, not just in our province but around the country and internationally. That, I believe, is a huge advantage. That is something that I believe we should take advantage of.

And the Ukrainian Festival is a celebration. It is very much a celebration of Ukrainian heritage and culture and traditions. And you can come to the Ukrainian Festival this August long weekend and you can be absolutely dazzled by the performances. You can be absolutely wowed by the food. You can participate, you can go up to the top stage and you can have oven—bread baked in a clay oven, just as they did back in the 1890s. You can participate in all of that.

There is a more serious side to the National Ukrainian Festival as well, Madam Deputy Speaker: up on the top hill at the Ukrainian Festival site, the Selo site, there is a section, memorial way, that is dedicated to the Ukrainian people; the tomb of the unknown Ukrainian soldier; Holodomor; a very moving, very touching cairn of—there—when people were—the member for Brandon talked about internment in Canada—we know that that was part of what was included in this site at memorial way.

We've had, through the co-operation of somebody such as Inky Mark, our former Member of Parliament, who worked with a number of Dauphin folks to build up at that site, I think also underlines

the kind of challenges that the Ukrainian community has faced in our province.

* (10:40)

So I think it is a very appropriate location. It's a very appropriate weekend to be celebrating and thinking about the challenges that have been faced by the Ukrainian community in Canada. And I also want to make sure that I touch upon the—our areas, and every area of Manitoba can talk about the Ukrainian contribution. And if that Ukrainian migration to Canada hadn't occurred, I'm absolutely convinced that our province would not be as strong as it is. It would not be as diverse as it is. It wouldn't be as economically successful as it has been. Certainly, agriculture would not be where it is today without people like the Negrychs who homesteaded north of Gilbert Plains.

When my great-grandparents homesteaded up in the Swan River Valley, they came as far as Dauphin on one of the first trains into Dauphin and then got on the Cowan Trail and went up the Cowan Trail over the Duck Mountains into the Swan Valley. Well, they went right next, right past, and by all accounts, could have stopped in at the Negrych farm in the 1890s as a relief point, before they made that trek over the mountains.

The Negrych farm, a national historic site, shows you exactly what it was like, exactly what these Ukrainian settlers faced in opening up land, beginning a farm, homesteading in our Parkland Region. And I give all kinds of credit to those people who worked to establish that farm as a national site so that generation after generation can make that short, little trip north of Gilbert Plains, along Highway 274, and stop in at a site that has been preserved.

Up until about 15 years ago, maybe 20 years ago, there was still a family living on that site, living much the same way as their forefathers and foremothers did back in the 1890s, and maintaining many of the practices that were used, including the use of hemp in making soap and making gunny sacks and those sort of things. So Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to lend my voice to all the voices around in this Chamber today in support of a day recognizing the contributions and the challenges faced by our Ukrainian community here in Manitoba.

I want to congratulate the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) for his steadfast support of this through the years, and I also want to congratulate our

Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) for bringing forward a bill that would also accomplish that same kind of recognition. So thank you very much for a few minutes, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank the member for Russell for bringing this forward in a timely fashion and recognizing the importance to have a Ukrainian heritage day in Manitoba.

Liberals recognize the need, indeed, the imperative to have a Ukrainian heritage day in our province and the urgency to do this and, clearly, although we follow the lead of Ontario, we recognize and we have to make sure that we have an approach that works in Manitoba.

Ukrainians have contributed enormously to our province and, indeed, to Canada many, many different ways, and I don't need to go into that contribution now. I mean, that is the contribution that we should recognize; we should celebrate.

But we also need to understand the adversities that Ukrainians have faced in the Ukraine, in the Holodomor and, in Canada, in the internment. And so it needs to be a day which is not just a celebratory day but a day which, in fact, recognizes the hardships and the difficulties as well as recognizing the contributions.

Indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this Chamber, all three parties have worked together on a number of occasions on previous resolutions and bills to recognize the internment. That was, in fact, a Liberal resolution which was supported by all parties, and recognizing the Holodomor and having a day to recognize the Holodomor, and those were resolutions and bills which came from the Conservative and NDP parties and were supported by all parties. And so we have a tradition in this area of working together, and I hope we can continue that tradition.

And, of course, we need not only to work together but to work with members of the Ukrainian community in Manitoba to make sure we have the best possible date for the Ukrainian heritage day in Manitoba.

Now, I want to put on the record, from my perspective, first of all, that I have tremendous admiration for the Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin which happens each summer. Indeed, I have attended the Ukrainian Festival almost every year for the last 12 years. It's an incredible festival and one that more

and more Manitobans should be aware of and, I hope, will attend.

But I have a major concern with the festival day being the Manitoba Ukrainian heritage day, and that concern in particular surrounds the fact that I think it's very important that the Ukrainian heritage day should be on a day which is a school day so that it can be a focus of learning for young people from all over Manitoba, that it is inclusive of all Manitobans, not just for one part and one region of Manitoba. And I think it's very important that, you know, we have in the curriculum that emphasis, on Ukrainian heritage day, on understanding the history of Ukrainians in Manitoba, understanding the adversities, understanding the contributions. And it is that—for that reason, as well as for the fact that Ontario has already established September the 7th—it was the first date when Ukrainians came to Canada—that I think it is a reasonable date.

But I think that we need in Manitoba to have, you know, everybody working together, and there may be need for a compromise here. I would suggest that the government might be wise to let this bill pass today and go to committee, and it can be amended at committee stage to alter the date or to alter other facts, but I think that that would be a reasonable way for the government to show leadership and show interest in working with everybody, all parties, to come to a common agreement and to work with the Ukrainian community. And, quite frankly, if we did that, one of the wonderful things is that there would be an opportunity for members of the Ukrainian community to come and present at committee stage and all legislators can hear directly from people at committee stage and we can come to a consensus and come to a firm decision on the date and some of the things that maybe we should be including as well in this bill.

So that is my recommendation, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I've going to sit down now so that hopefully there'll be time for at least two more speakers to say a few words. Thank you.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): It is somewhat humbling to stand in the House today and speak of Ukrainian Manitobans. I'm fortunate enough to have Ukrainian blood within me, and I'm very aware of the struggles that Ukrainians went through before emigrating to Canada and becoming part of this beautiful mosaic that we call Manitoba. I believe we have over 120 cultural groups—ethnocultural groups within

Manitoba, and every group gives more than they would ever take. And through the festival of Folklorama, in which we celebrate our differences and live together in peace, we have an incredible story to tell the world, and part of that story is the story of the Ukrainian immigration.

I know my people came, they arrived in Halifax, and two brothers arrived with their families. My grandfather's brother went up to Cape Breton and my grandfather came here to Manitoba. And they were given land, as immigrants were given, up in the area in the Interlake. And it became time to have a community centre, a place where people could gather, and so he and a gentleman named Mr. Leiberman got together and jointly donated land for a rail station, for a church, for a school. And that town, the people were grateful and named the town Meleb, which is M-e-l for Melnick and l-e-b from Leiberman. And from that small gathering of people came a community, which was vibrant and lively and multicultural in its own way, and the development of Meleb-Park-Cumming School, which I think may have been the first school attended by former Premier Ed Schreyer. So there is a giving in Manitoba, not just of, being of Ukrainian descent, to Ukrainians but a giving to all, and this is part of the incredible story that we have.

* (10:50)

I know that the festival held every year, the—it's Canada's National Ukrainian Festival held up in Dauphin where there is also a tremendous Ukrainian settlement and still people here—people still living there of Ukrainian descent today. I know our Deputy Premier resides from the area around the Dauphin area, and there's great vibrancy there.

One of the things that I would like to talk about is the culture that has been shared, not only in the sense of dance and culture, but food. And I, like many, have never met a perogy I didn't like, but there's all kinds of giving. And one of the things that I really enjoy in talking to Manitobans is: What is your heritage? What is—you know, where have you come from? Because we've all come from good places, including the people of the First Nations.

One of the things that has been very exciting for me to watch, although established in 1944, is the development of the Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre. My father was quite active when there was an awful lot of development going on. This was about 20 years ago. And then when the centre

was opened and we could go in and see so much of the culture that was preserved by those who have come before us, and will be passed on to future generations. Just to get a greeting card in Ukrainian was so exciting, the celebration of the heritage, of the art work, and the beauty and the colour.

And I know that I have not been fortunate enough to go to Ukraine yet—but I will one day—I know that people who have gone from Manitoba and also right across the prairies—because there's a large population across the prairies that settled who have gone to current Ukraine, and people who have come from Ukraine to Manitoba, some of them have told us that there is more Ukrainian heritage here on the prairies of Western Canada than there actually is in Ukraine.

So it's kind of exciting to think that we may now be giving back to the country where many of us came from by preserving this heritage and, again, in the Manitoba spirit, sharing it even across the waters and into the steppes of Ukraine.

I also wanted to close by saying that one of the most endearing features for me is the beautiful statue that we have on the grounds of the Legislature, a wonderful Ukrainian poet who has shared so much and who has given the beauty of poetry in another language to Ukrainians.

Perhaps I could close with the memory of those who suffered during the Holodomor, and thank so much those who had the courage, the survivors who had the courage to speak when the world did not want to hear. And I can't imagine what that would be to have survived that, to have gone through that and then to have had the culture to relive it every time one is speaking about it—and the incredible photo—I often see it as I'm walking out of the House and I remember.

So thank you to those who have gone before, and we look forward to the vibrancy of the Ukrainian culture in Manitoba as we celebrate all. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): It is indeed a great honour to be speaking on Bill 214, The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, put forward by the honourable member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

I'd like to point out the honourable member for Russell has put a lot of important pieces of legislation in front of this Chamber, including the 2009 commemoration of the Holodomor, another tragic and evil act that was perpetuated against the

Ukrainian culture and people by Stalin and his minions.

This is indeed a very good piece of legislation. It sets the date when the first Ukrainians came to Canada as a date of commemoration. And I think it's a good piece of legislation, and I would hope that perhaps this Chamber could get together and perhaps work out some kind of a compromise, seeing as we seem to have two similar pieces of legislation.

In the very short time that I have, I'd like to just relate to this House that my grandparents, Albert and Natalie Schuler who were married in Königsberg, East Prussia, then moved with a lot of their family to Volhynia, Ukraine, where my father, Reinhold Schuler was born. And my father, unfortunately, passed young but it was his older sister, my stepmom, who talked to us a lot about growing up in Ukraine and said they were the best years of their life. They said it was like the open prairies in North America, beautiful, beautiful part of the world. The crops were just amazing. The ability to be able to earn a living in Ukraine was just amazing, and, like most things that get messed up, it was the Hitler-Stalin pact that absolutely messed everything up and they had to flee in some very—the beginning of some very dark and troubling times, not just for Ukraine but for all of Europe.

But just growing up in Ukraine, my father had the opportunity to run the fields and grandma and grandpa started off, first of all, having a mill where they made flour and they sold that and ended up buying large tracts of land and doing very well for themselves. And anytime we get together as a family, certainly still with the older generation, they talk about the years in Volhynia and the kind of experiences they had and how wonderful the area was, how wonderful the people were.

And you have a lot of individuals in Canada that come from Ukraine and will say one of the things about living on the prairies is it reminds them so much of the breadbasket of Europe, and that's what Ukraine was. Ukraine was the breadbasket of Europe. It's where a lot of the grains, a lot of the food, a lot of the meat was produced for Europe. And to commemorate those individuals who decided to leave, and they fled not because Ukraine was a bad place. In fact, it was a great place, it was great agriculture, great culture. Everything about it was fine. It was the politicians that messed it up, and made it a place where it was intolerable to raise their families, intolerable to make a living.

So they ended up packing up and they came to Canada, which reminded them a lot of back home. And that's where we have September 7th, 1891, the first Ukrainians came to Canada. And we know that Ontario has recognized at—that as a date. Now, hopefully, Manitoba follows suit and perhaps it's going to be something that will be followed suit throughout the country. Perhaps this Chamber can come to some kind of an agreement, some kind of a compromise. Thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker—

Point of Order

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, are you up on a point of order?

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, I've been listening to the debate on this bill this morning, this very important bill on the Ukrainian heritage act, and there seems to be an agreement for the substance of this bill. And perhaps there might be a willingness to reach some agreement on this and perhaps allow for further discussion without speaking this bill out.

So I'm just going to ask if there's leave to pass this bill to committee and allow opportunity for discussion and perhaps friendly amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, on the same point of order. I think there is a lot of goodwill and I think there probably is potential to discuss this bill, but there are many of our members that still wish to speak on it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Opposition House Leader, this is not a point of order, but it is a request to seek leave for a vote.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Having heard that there is not leave, the honourable member for Burrows.

* * *

Mr. Martindale: Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill, Bill 214, Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, has been introduced by the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), and I know that the honourable member for Russell is proud of his Ukrainian heritage. And we have a number of things in common and one that he mentioned in his speech, but another one is that we were both election observers in Ukraine in the presidential election, December, 2004. And it was quite a thrill a couple of years later when President Yushchenko came to Manitoba, and he was in the Legislative Building.

And Premier Doer introduced him to the member for Russell and myself and told him that we were election observers there. And he stopped right in front of me and he grabbed me by the arm and he said to the member for Russell and myself, he said, through the translator, I understood he said: Thank you for being there when we needed you. And that was really quite a heart-stopping moment because I never dreamed that I'd ever get to meet President Yushchenko. But then to have him thank us for being election observers was quite a thrill.

In fact, one of the most amazing experiences of my 21 years as a member of the Legislature was being an election observer in Ukraine. There were 1,000 Canadian observers, 500 recruited by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of which I was one, and 500—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have eight minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

The time is 11 a.m., and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution under consideration this morning is the resolution on Purged Warrants, brought forward by the honourable member for Steinbach.

RESOLUTION

Res. 8—Purged Warrants

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good morning, Madam Deputy Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), that:

WHEREAS the provincial government purged from the records a number of active warrants in the summers of 2009 and 2010; and

WHEREAS the Attorney General called the warrants that were purged minor but has failed to specify the exact nature of the offences or the number of cancelled warrants; and

WHEREAS the Winnipeg Police Association has said that purging warrants prevents police from solving dated crimes and could even affect cases in the future; and

WHEREAS purging warrants sends the message to criminals that if they avoid apprehension long enough they can have their warrants wiped from the record; and

WHEREAS purging warrants sends the message to victims that crimes committed against them are not taken seriously by the provincial government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government consider immediately indicating the number of warrants that were purged in 2009 and 2010 at what—and what offences those warrants were related to; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the provincial government consider requiring the Attorney General to apologize to Manitobans who have been the victims of crime for diminishing their faith in the provincial justice system through his action of purging warrants.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Steinbach, and seconded by the honourable member for Springfield, that:

WHEREAS the provincial government purged from the records a number of active warrants in the summer of—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to not only sponsor this particular resolution this morning but to also have the opportunity to speak to it and to try, in my own way, to convince the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), to do what I think is the right thing, not just for any political purpose but for those men and women who are on the street today, who are out there protecting us, even this very morning, as we speak about this resolution in the Manitoba Legislature.

In fact, it was the police, through the Winnipeg Police Association, who brought this issue to the attention of the public just a couple of months ago. They indicated in an article that the provincial government, through this Attorney General, this Minister of Justice, this NDP soft-on-crime government, was deleting warrants, warrants that were on the system for individuals who had committed crimes, who had impacted Manitobans, who had created victims, Madam Deputy Speaker; that, simply, the Attorney General instructed that those warrants be deleted, removed from the record, sending a message to all of those who had those warrants, who had committed crimes, that, in fact, those crimes would no longer be pursued, that they would no longer be pursued, and, just as concerning, sending the message to all of those others who have committed crimes or who might be considering a life of crime, that if they would avoid the police long enough, that they, too, might get the reward at the end of the day of having their warrants deleted by this soft-on-crime NDP government.

Now, the Attorney General, in his attempted defence—a poor defence, I might add, of his decision to delete these warrants—said that they were simply all old and dated. Now, I understand that if somebody has passed away, has died and they had a warrant, obviously, it makes good sense to delete that kind of a warrant from the system. But when somebody is still with us and still at large and hasn't dealt with their warrant, it sends all the wrong message.

Now, I know the Attorney General has said that this relates to minor crimes. Now, I know he doesn't take minor crimes seriously. I know that when somebody has their home vandalized or if there is some sort of a property that is stolen from an individual, this Attorney General thinks, well, that's minor, we don't have to worry about that. Oh, sure, it might cost somebody a little bit of money to have to replace something that they've had damaged in their home or on their property or at their business. Oh, sure, it might add to the feeling of these individuals that they're no longer safe in or around their home or their business. But to this soft-on-crime NDP government, those are just minor things, things not to be worried about. They can just be deleted from the system as if they never happened.

And, in fact, a couple of days ago, the member for Minto, the Attorney General, said to me that they certainly didn't want to offend any of the victims, but it doesn't appear that they actually contacted any of

the victims that were related to these warrants. I asked the Minister of Justice, well, before you went onto the computer system and hit the delete button on these active warrants, did you speak to the victims? Did you say to them, do you want this warrant to go away because it's been a few years since the crime happened against you? Is that what you want?

An Honourable Member: How do you feel about it?

Mr. Goertzen: How do you feel about it, as the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) says. And the Attorney General said, well, no, not really. He didn't think so.

And so I said to him, well, you know, why don't you tell us how many warrants there were deleted? You know, was it a dozen? Was it a few dozen? Was it several hundred, as the Winnipeg Police Association said? And he said, well, he didn't know. He had no idea how many warrants had been deleted in the summer of 2010 and 2009.

This is clearly an Attorney General—and, of course, the fault also falls to the previous Attorney General, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak)—who just simply don't care about certain kinds of crime in the province of Manitoba, don't care about the victims. They both sat by in their time as Attorney General, as Minister of Justice, and just let it happen.

And I would say to these individuals that when you classify things as minor and you can just delete it, you send a very concerning message. Because when you look at the pattern of crime, almost all individuals who end up committing a serious crime, whether it's a stolen vehicle or whether it's a violent crime, started off with a more—to use the terminology of the NDP—a more minor crime. They didn't start off with a violent crime, or with an auto theft that ended up with somebody's father or husband being killed; they started off with a smaller crime. And they—to use the vernacular of many who study crime—they graduated to more serious crimes.

And so by, you know, classifying things as minor crimes or saying that it's not important, what this government is doing is simply supporting that system where individuals start off with small crimes and then go on to higher crimes. And they do that because they've learnt that there are no consequences for a crime at a very early level, and they figure that

that's going to continue on as they graduate to other crimes.

And that's the message that they've sent to these individuals who are criminals, who might be thinking of the criminal lifestyle, by deleting these warrants.

And, of course, the other message that I mentioned to some extent is what it says to victims. It says to those victims, the crime that happened against you doesn't matter to this soft-on-crime NDP government. We don't care that you were the victim of a crime.

And I would challenge any of these NDP MLAs, whether it's the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), or the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), or any of the other individuals to go out to their own ridings, and to say to individuals in their ridings: we just are going to delete warrants against criminals because we think it's minor. And see what the response is, see what those Manitobans would say. And I think that they would be shocked.

But that's what this government not only did, but continues to defend. They won't tell us how many warrants there were. They won't tell us how many—or the nature of those warrants that were defended. And, you know, sometimes, I know, in the context of this Chamber—even though I think Manitobans generally would be on side with us on this—but in the context of this Chamber it may just seem like a dispute between politicians, between partisans who have a partisan interest.

But I would ask the Attorney General to think about the comments of the Winnipeg Police Association representing the thousands of men and women who are out there each and every day trying to protect us. They said that this sends a message to criminals that you can simply get out of jail free, that you can just avoid us, avoid the law and you're going to be A-okay, that at the end of the rainbow there's going to be a prize for you, the NDP prize where the minister sits and deletes your warrant.

* (11:10)

That's not what I am saying, Madam Deputy Speaker. I agree with those sentiments, but those are really the words of the Winnipeg Police Association, representing the fine men and women of the Winnipeg Police Service. They have said, and they raised this issue, that this is wrong, that it's not acceptable.

So when the Attorney General—and I'm not always good at predictions, but I'm going to predict that the Attorney General is going to get up in about two minutes and tell us how this is all okay and how we shouldn't have to worry about it because, while this is minor, and it's not really a big deal, and, you know, some of the people had passed away, and, of course, they all didn't. But, I mean, he'll say that and he won't give us the details. He won't tell us how many or the nature of their crimes; he won't give us that specific list.

I would say to him, he's not making those comments to me. Oh, he might be directing them to me across the floor. He may be looking at me when he's saying it, but I would remind him, he's saying it to those men and women who are in the police cars today out on the streets trying to protect us. He is saying it to them. He disrespects them, just like the former Attorney General, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who sat at his desk in 2009 and deleted those warrants. He disrespected the police officers; he didn't care about the men and women who are protecting us or those who were victimized. That's his legacy. That's his record of not caring about the victims, not caring about police officers, and I understand—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I just want to remind all members that we do have loges if they would like to have private conversations.

Mr. Goertzen: I understand why the former Attorney General is very sensitive about this. He should be sensitive, because he was wrong. And so he should feel ashamed and clearly he is by his comments.

But to the current Attorney General, the member for Minto, when he stands up in a few seconds, and he tries to deflect, and tries to desperately come up with an excuse, I will remind him; his very words are the words that are going to the victims and to the police officers. And we will ensure that they hear that this Attorney General, when he had the opportunity to choose between standing up for law-abiding citizens or standing up for those who would commit crimes, that he chose, along with his colleague, the member for Kildonan, stood to—chose to stand up for criminals who commit crimes, by deleting these warrants. And that was his decision. By his act of deleting the warrants, he didn't stand with Manitobans, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Deputy Speaker, and I am glad to be able to stand up and speak to this resolution. I'm always happy to discuss justice issues with the member for Steinbach or anybody else, for that matter. And it's a chance to speak a little bit about a balanced approach to law and order in this province and to compare and contrast some of the ways that we deal with issues as opposed to what the members say that they would or would not do.

Building safer communities in Manitoba is about cracking down on crime. It's making sure Manitoba families feel safe in their homes, and that's why, as a government, we've taken a number of measures to make people feel safer. That's why we've invested in improved policing. That's why we've passed tough laws that we have the ability to pass here in Manitoba. That's why we've been a leading voice across the country at calling on Ottawa to pass appropriate laws to deal with individuals. We've also, of course, invested in effective prevention, which is something you'll never hear one single word about from the members opposite.

Now, of course, we look at some of the choices that members opposite would have made. Of course, we almost don't need to put on the record anymore the fact that they have voted against every single additional police officer that this government has added since 1999. Year after year, they get up, they stand in their place, and they vote against more police officers. They vote against more Crown attorneys. They vote against more correctional officers. They vote against more probation officers. They also vote against the specific provincial units that have been created to assist the police, to work shoulder-to-shoulder with police and Crowns to make our streets safer.

And, of course, it was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) who, just a few short months ago, said he would cut \$500 million out of the provincial budget, which would result in cuts in every department, including Justice. Not only did they vote—not vote to support more police officers. By their words and by their actions, they want Manitobans to know they don't stand with the police. They would be standing aside as police were cut by Winnipeg and by other communities across this province.

Back on April 5th, to deal with the warrant issue, we announced we'd be creating a special provincial warrants squad that would be dedicated to tracking

down individuals with outstanding warrants. We would actually have these—this unit working side by side with the Winnipeg Police Service, the Brandon Police Service, other police services across Manitoba, and, of course, the RCMP, our provincial police force, at assisting in bringing those individuals who actually pose a threat to our communities, to track them down and to make sure that they have to answer in court for their outstanding warrants and, most importantly, their outstanding charges.

As I've said, we've made numerous investments in police in Manitoba: 255 new police officers since 1999; support for the City of Winnipeg police helicopter; support for the new police cadet program, which is now in place in Winnipeg, that, again, the members opposite voted against.

I can talk about other measures we've taken, such as The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, an act which the Leader of the Opposition said would have no impact on organized crime. Well, I can tell the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) he can pass on to his leader that that act has already resulted in more than 40 claims being brought against property. More than \$9 million is now in the queue. We are hitting organized crime where it hurts, in the pocketbook, and we are doing that not to replace the work police officers do but to enhance and strengthen the work that police officers do across this province to make our streets safer.

Now, with respect to the warrants themselves, the member opposite should know, although I know he doesn't—I just suppose he doesn't want to admit that we have independent prosecutors in this province. The Prosecutions service is comprised of tremendous men and women, our Crown attorneys, who act independently of the Attorney General. And I know the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), in many spirited exchanges with the member for Steinbach, explained so clearly why this is absolutely necessary.

And, of course, the member opposite, in his usual exercise of hyperbole, suggests that, as Attorney General, I tell prosecutors what to do in specific cases, that I tell prosecutors to stay charges, that I tell prosecutors who should and who shouldn't have cases remaining. The member opposite either knows or ought to know that that is not how it works in this great province. That's not how it works in this great country.

Our independent prosecutors began a process, first of all, in 2009, to review and to stay some very

old charges. And the first round in 2009 dealt with a number of charges, and there was three criteria that the Crown attorneys took into account: first of all, it had to be only charges—warrants stemming from charges laid before 1989 that were even considered; secondly, there could be no charges that involved serious bodily injury; and third, no one reinvolved in any criminal activity in Manitoba since the warrant was issued could have their charges stayed.

So, just to summarize, the prosecutors decided they would only deal with pre-1989 cases, and these had to be individuals who had not had any further contact with the law for two decades. These were individuals who had not even had a traffic ticket or been stopped for a burnt-out tail light that was being dealt with by the prosecutors.

In 2010 prosecutors dealt with a further series of cases, dealing with those cases from before 1999. And what the prosecutors have told me is that although it's in the public interest to consider pursuing these cases, practically speaking, first of all, it's nearly impossible to prosecute because police officers retire, witnesses pass away, individuals leave Manitoba, change their names, can't be found, and, even beyond that, the experience of our prosecutors—and I'm not saying it's right, I'm not saying it's wrong—the advice of Crown attorneys in Manitoba is that there is no successful opportunity to prosecute cases which have been outstanding for a decade, for two decades, for three decades.

Now, I should mention that very serious old cases are taken extremely seriously by Crown attorneys in Manitoba. And I can highlight the very recent Mark Grant murder trial, a 26-year-old murder of young Candace Derksen. That was pursued to the full extent of the law. In that case there was a reasonable chance to have a successful prosecution, and, frankly, I'm pleased that prosecutors were able to secure a conviction in that case.

But let me just contrast, again, our approach. Our approach is investing in more police, investing in a warrant enforcement squad, investing in Crowns, so that we can deal with those individuals who actually pose the most risk on our streets, to our communities, to our neighbourhoods. And the police and Crown attorneys, we know, are busy. That's why we're adding more positions, which the members opposite vote against. But we want to focus our efforts, and, frankly, prosecuting and using time to try to deal with property offences which happened in the '70s is probably less important than giving the

police the tools they need to go out and deal with individuals who are truly creating havoc and danger on our streets. And that's why we support the police. That's why we add to the police resources. That's why we continue to pass laws within our control here in Manitoba to deal with these issues.

* (11:20)

Now, as we talk about warrants, of course, we are working with the police service and the RCMP to keep developing this squad, and we want to make sure it's most effective at targeting those high-risk offenders that I just spoke about. Our new legislation will give these warrant enforcement officers access to information contained in government databases, such as employment income insurance, such as Manitoba Public Insurance, so they can have the best available information to try and track down individuals with outstanding warrants and get them off the street. But, again, I don't expect warrant enforcement squads, I don't expect police to work on the oldest, most minor cases. I expect our police to be out there doing the greatest good they can, which they do day after day after day, to make sure that they're taking individuals who pose the greatest risk to our communities.

And I know the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is chattering from his seat, and if he wants to put on the record that police are actually more interested in going after individuals with 28-year-old charges against them rather than individuals from last week, let him do it. The fact remains that we have been adding to police resources in Winnipeg, adding to police resources across Manitoba. And the member for Steinbach, the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), who seconded this resolution, can go back to their communities and they can explain to their constituents why they voted against every single measure we brought on to make Manitoba a safer place.

So, indeed, if there's anybody who needs to apologize to the people of Manitoba, it's the member for Steinbach. The member for Steinbach will have to explain why he doesn't support police. The member for Steinbach can explain why he doesn't support Crown attorneys. The member for Steinbach can say why he doesn't support the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit, which is on the trail of a property owned by organized crime, by sexual predators, by others who prey on Manitobans. He can explain to his constituents. He can explain to Manitobans why he doesn't stand in favour of a safer Manitoba.

So I'm very pleased to be able to put some comments on the record to provide some context and to contrast the difference between a government making meaningful differences and an opposition who's more interested in 30-year-old property cases. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Just before recognizing the honourable member, I want to remind all honourable members that we do have loges. If they wish to have a private conversation, please take advantage of those loges.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I'd like to put some words on the record with regard to the member for Steinbach's private member's resolution and the concern that he has raised and we have all been concerned about with regard to purged warrants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in February, the Winnipeg Police Association revealed that justice officials had deleted arrest warrants, and we know that that is a very concerning situation. We don't know how many warrants were deleted and the Justice Minister won't say how many were purged. It could be hundreds; it could be thousands, and I guess the message that this is sending to criminals, first and foremost, is that the Justice Minister has told criminals that, if they hide out long enough, they would not have to be responsible for the crimes that they've committed.

And I think that this also sends a very, very concerning message to the victims of crime. Victims of crime have to be commended for coming forward. Being violated, being put in a situation against your will, being put in a situation that you are—that you have no control and are being violated is devastating. I think what is actually even more devastating is knowing that when you go to the police and you ask for their help and you get what you believe is justice by having the police press charges and move forward on a warrant basis to get these individuals off the street or to pay for the crimes that they've committed, the victims are learning that that is not going to happen.

There's hundreds and thousands of people who have come forward, who have put forward cases to the Justice Department and have asked for the help of government, have asked for the help of the police, and actually are being turned away. So what this does to a person who has been a victim of crime, it raises a lot of questions. But it definitely provides a loss of confidence in the system that is supposed to be there to protect the victims of crime.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we all know of people who have been in situations where they have been a victim of crime. And we understand, through Stats Canada, that about 30 per cent of these victims of crime do not come forward, but we do know that there are a significant number of people who'd have come forward and significant number of people who are victims who have come forward and have asked for justice.

And when you as a victim learn that the crime that was committed to you has been dismissed, has been wiped off the record, would be devastating, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think that what this government has done has set a precedent, has shown that they have very little care for the victims of crime by doing this and even less of a commitment to Manitobans by not telling us, not being public about what they've done and not letting the victims know that their efforts have actually been purged or dissolved. So I find that very concerning.

I spoke to two retired RCMP sergeants in my constituency and in the areas that I represent and I do business, and they both have put some words on—you know, forward for me to put on the record that I think are important, because I think that these two gentlemen who are sergeants who have retired, who have put their life on the line for Manitobans, to protect victims, I think their statements are important.

And one of them is a former police sergeant, a retired police sergeant, from the Minnedosa area, Duane LaCoste. And he has said that, I don't think that the Criminal Code offence warrants should be purged regardless, or warrants related to serious charges under other federal accounts such as drug trafficking, et cetera, but we don't know what type of warrants were purged, so we agree. And I think that—and he goes on to say that, I think that purged warrants should definitely be made public so that the public and police officers are aware of what is being forgiven. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's a good word, forgiven, because I don't believe the victims would believe that the crime that was perpetrated against them would be forgiven.

Victim Services are an amazing group of people that work with victims, and I believe that they, too, would find this in contradiction to what supports they provide for victims. I'm saying the member opposite, who is the former Justice minister, should actually pay heed and actually advise, as a senior member of his Cabinet, advise the member for Minto

that what has happened here is contradictory to the best interests of Manitobans and the victims within our province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is another police sergeant, a retired police sergeant, Helmut Neufeld, from the Shoal Lake area, who said that he found this action by this government atrocious, and by eliminating these warrants without contacting the police or asking local detachments where they were from as to whether the warrants were of value is a concern, and he would pursue this wholeheartedly and wholeheartedly.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's support from Manitobans. There's support from law officials, both in Winnipeg and outside of the Perimeter, who believe that this was a terrible thing to happen. It's disrespectful to the victims within—victims throughout the province, and I believe that it takes away from the integrity of the roles that law enforcement has.

I believe that when you do something like this without explanation, without the courage to stand up and explain why you did it, who the victims are that have been just dismissed in their claims of violence against them, is something that this government's going to have to live with, and I believe that the victims of Manitoba who see this happening, again, have lost confidence in the system.

And I believe that the resolution brought forward by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is a good resolution, and I believe that this is something that I believe the government side should support. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (11:30)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in this House to put a few words on the record, correct some grievous mistakes, factual errors by the member for Steinbach, which is not unusual, with respect to the over-the-top rhetoric that we hear every single day in this Legislature, and the member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), who also, in her own fashion, puts over-the-top statements as if they were facts.

I find it quite, quite disconcerting that the members who voted against the expansion of Victim Services—the members who voted against the expansion of Victim Services had the audacity—had the audacity to play the card about Victim Services

when, in fact, the program that we've put in place, Madam Deputy Speaker, they voted against.

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, and this whole Tory rhetorical discussion about apologies here and apologies there when in fact the Tories' one-trick pony, you know the one-trick pony, you go into the Tory handbook of how we're going to run an election, and it's you don't have issues, we're in trouble because we promised we would cut half a billion dollars from the budget. So the heading used to have a picture of the member for Steinbach, but that's been purged because of election purposes and now it's just on any issue, go to crime—on any issue, find crime.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members opposite, they have real short memories—they're real short memories. It was, what? Nine months ago, only a short time ago, when they voted against our last budget and said they would take half a million dollars—half a billion dollars out of the budget. Instantly.

Now, collective amnesia all of a sudden, Madam Deputy Speaker, collective amnesia. Where would you take that half a billion dollars from? When 80 per cent of your cost of your police, your teachers, your nurses are all costs that pay for people's salaries, that pay for our hard-working police purposes. The member wants to talk about talking to retired RCMP? Talk to working RCMP, talk to working police, ask them about the money, the resources that have been put in by this government, historical firsts. Talk to them about that.

No, they got to go to the Tory rhetorical book on crime. When we have no other issues, when we have nothing to do, when we want to play it safe, we just slam, bang and talk about crime. That's what we talk about. Even though we know it's federal jurisdiction, even though the federal government has said this province has done more on—to help with criminal legislation than any other province, they duck and they pretend they don't know that.

And the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is laughing, Madam Deputy Speaker. He thinks it's a big joke, because they have no issues. You know, there is—there are important things going on in the economy, there are important things going on in the education system, there are important things going on in terms of flooding, there are important things going on in terms of agriculture, and the Tory handbook says: Go to crime. We know that crime is a federal responsibility. We know that this

government has put more resources in preventative programs and more police officers and more prosecutors in place, but we don't have any issues. We don't have any issues, so we go to crime. Go to crime. It's a Republican strategy. We know that. We know that.

You know, if they could find a picture of someone wearing a helmet in a tank, Madam Deputy Speaker, they would do that. They—the Tories do not have any issues, and you know why? Because the public knows what their agenda is. Their leader's already said health care is not a priority. The public knows. They—the public knows.

The member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) is quoted in the newspaper saying health care is not a priority, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Senator has already told members opposite, he's already told members opposite who to speak, who can't speak, what topics they should talk about, and you go into that book and you open the page up. Education—talk about crime. Health care, don't let them talk about nurses, doctors and training places—talk about crime. Flooding—talk about crime.

And it's a one-trick pony, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a one-trick pony, and it's—when a party is devoid of ideas, devoid of providing hope, afraid of their record, they go back to page 1 through whatever it is and it says go to crime. Find crime issues and then attack.

They want to avoid, they want to avoid talking the difficult issues of how we deal—how you deal with gangs, how you deal with violence, Madam Deputy Speaker, how you deal with some of the disadvantaged, how you deal with poverty, how you deal with people in First Nations where there's 90 per cent unemployment. They don't even want to talk about that. I haven't heard a First Nation question in this House from members opposite on any issues relating to that. I have not heard any of them.

All I ever hear about, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the member for Steinbach coming up with some FIPPA or making up something like his famous 7-Eleven extravaganza. You know, he talks more about 7-Eleven and Slurpees than he does about the Criminal Code that needs amendment. We could've used some help when we were in Ottawa but we didn't have any members of the opposition of the Conservative for the big former—remember this is a Conservative Party. This isn't even a—this is a Conservative Party that only talks about crime and

only talks about the administrative aspects of crime—doesn't get into any of the issues.

You know the big issue in this Legislature for several years was car theft, auto theft. Now, when we brought the rates down 80 per cent, all of a sudden the benches were silent. First off, Madam Deputy Speaker, first off they complained. They said the immobilizer program wouldn't work. When it started working, they stopped talking about auto theft. Now when there's—anytime there's a—anytime anyone is tragically killed in auto theft, they act like it's a first.

You know one of the things I—Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't—I know that it's rhetorical from the member for Steinbach. I know that the members think that it's—that they can get by just by talking about crime but I know in my own constituency—I know the member for—the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) that said he was door-knocking in my constituency. I welcome the member for Springfield—I welcome him to door-knock in my constituency.

The more—it can only help but, you know, when a gentlemen who is—in 1993 who was going to a party and was killed by an auto theft driver in 1993, I didn't stand up and blame the Attorney General for—*[interjection]* I didn't, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker. I recognized that it was something that was tragic. I didn't make political head of it—nor with the woman who was killed subsequently did I make political head of it.

So, to return to auto theft—when we reduced it, you'd think members opposite would be onside—they'd help us with Criminal Code amendments. You'd think they'd be onside in helping us with some of the concerns we're trying to raise with respect to the two-for-one bail provisions, but, no, all they want to talk about is administrative issues that they get from FIPPA. They don't even do research. Their research is FIPPA, FIPPA information that we provide. They stand up like it somehow leaked out and then they pretend to be concerned and say they're not—they're non-partisan and they're doing this for the public good, when they won't talk about any of the substantive issues, and we know that they're ducking—they're playing the crime card.

They're playing the kind of politics that Republicans, Madam Deputy Speaker, play, which is hide from talking about the issues. Let's play the crime card and hope we can get through and protect ourselves from our leader—who our leader—we're having some issues in caucus. We're having some issues with our leadership issues but let's just keep it

quiet. That's what they're saying. And we'll go back to crime and we'll talk about the administrative issues of crime.

The member was wrong—the member was wrong, both the member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) and the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) when they characterized the issue of purging. They were factually wrong, Madam Deputy Speaker. That doesn't seem to matter in the debate. They should—they ought to apologize, as honourable members, and stand up and say—and reflect on what the Attorney General said about what issues were dealt with.

But the point of it all is—as we well know, and, you know, the Attorney General of Nova Scotia is a former RCMP officer who worked in Manitoba for years and, you know, we had a discussion about how the Tories play crime as an issue, and I think for the most part the police really resent—they really resent members opposite playing loose with the facts and not talking about the real issues, and frankly not supporting the increase in police prosecution, crime prosecutors, and victim services that have expanded under this government's watch—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

* (11:40)

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member for Steinbach for bringing forward this resolution, and a good one it is, and it has certainly elicited a lot of good debate in this House.

Certainly can't agree with the previous speaker; as entertaining and as fiery as it was, it was full of many factual errors, and we certainly don't agree with much of what he said.

In fact, I would like to point to members—out to members opposite that it was back many years ago a politician ran for mayor of New York by the name of Rudy Giuliani, and he came up with the policy called broken window policy whereby they would go after, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) calls it, minor crimes. And one of those, it was pointed out to me, it started by going after subway queue jumpers, and that's those individuals who would jump the queue, would jump over the turnstiles and wouldn't pay to get on the subway. When they went after those individuals first, they found that many of those were wanted by the law. And they went after them on a

small crime and found out that they were solving medium- and large-sized crimes.

Now, if we had the current government in charge, what they would then do is, first of all, put a warrant out, leave it for a long time and then just let it go and delete it. The minister would sit in his office and say, oh, we'll let this one go, this one go, this one go, this one go. And yet they found out that in New York, following Mayor Giuliani's policy—and, Madam Deputy Speaker, he was roundly criticized for this policy when he first ran. In fact, there were probably far more doubters and detractors than there were individuals that supported him and thought that this was a good policy, because he went after jaywalkers, he went after graffiti, he went after minor things like broken windows and things that looked unseemly. And the entire policy was predicated on the fact that if you cleaned up a small crime, if you got rid of the small stuff, it would expose the major crime. It would expose the big things that were going on.

And what we have is a minister, the member from Minto, and a government that believes exactly the opposite. They believe that you expose major crime by going after none of the minor crimes. It was actually shocking to have the Minister of Justice stand in front of this House and give his speech earlier on today and referring to these—and he would never mention how many—but he referred to them as minor as if they were insignificant, that they weren't important, that somehow they didn't have a major impact. And he went on and he told stories about other crimes that are currently in the paper.

Yet I would point out to him, that if you go back and look at what Mayor Giuliani did for New York, he brought one of the cities with the largest crime stats—almost bar none in North America and around the world, it was a city that had some of the worst crime stats anywhere—and brought those numbers down year by year by year, by going after what this current Minister of Justice calls minor crimes.

Other speakers have also spoken about the impact of crime on victims. For anybody who's has—who's had their home broken into, car vandalized, whatever it may be which the minister or the current Minister of Justice, the member for Minto, would just slough off and say, oh, it's just a minor crime.

I know years and years ago—had my home broken into, and it was a very cold night, came home and the back door was open, so I automatically knew something was wrong. And a lot of items were

stolen, lot was stolen. Anyway, insurance company came around, had the doors repaired, got new doors with metal wraparound, went and—insurance company, I had a very good insurance company, I bought a new camera, bought a new TV, bought all those things new. Wouldn't you know it? Two weeks later, that's really what they were after, and they broke in a second time, and they were after all the new items.

And, now, if I'd have come to this current Minister of Justice, the member for Minto, and I would have told him this story, he would have said, oh, but that's just a minor crime. And you know what? If those perpetrators stayed under the radar screen and they don't get a speeding ticket or they don't get a parking ticket, you know, within 20 years we'll just let them go, and never taking into consideration what that actually does to the psyche of those victims.

Because I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I never felt safe for a long time in my own home. I ended up going out, I bought an alarm system, and I'd already had metal wraparound doors—had all new doors put in and started to spend a lot of money trying to get that feeling that somehow I would come home and feel safe again.

And the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), the member for Minto, stands in this place and just sloughs if all off with minor crimes of not much significance, and we're just going to let those individuals go. Well, I can tell members of this House, for anybody who's had one of the minister's minor crimes perpetrated upon them, that it is not a minor crime. If you have your car vandalized, often the Autopac, depending on your deductible, may not even cover what happened to your vehicle—the kind of damage.

In fact, I've often said, you know, I wish that if they broke into my car, that they would just take what they wanted. If they broke into the house, just take what you want. Please don't then vandalize or what the Minister of Justice would call minor crime my house even further. Because it's that which runs up the expenses, and that's what's so destructive, when they go around. And I know of individuals who've had homes broken into, and the amount of theft was not that great. But the damage, the kind of violence that was exhibited in the house, the kind of trashing of the house that took place, was shocking, and things were broken.

I know one individual had porcelain dolls made out of Dresden. Her grandmother and her mother used to make them. They both passed away and the dolls were all smashed. Well, insurance wasn't going to compensate for that, because: a) you can't get them any more, and they're handmade, and they're irreplaceable.

Now if that individual would have gone to this current Minister of Justice, the member for Minto, and he'd have said minor crime, insignificant. And yet to that family, that was a legacy, a heritage. It was something that they were so proud of. That means something to individuals and, you know, most individuals in Canada will either know somebody or have a neighbour or have themselves been a victim of a minor crime. And you know what? At that moment, it's not a minor crime; it's a major crime to them, to come home and find that the back door is open, and things have been broken and stolen and trashed in the home.

And to have the top law enforcement official stand in this place, in this House and say, but that's minor, that's not of great significance. In fact, if those individuals who perpetrated that crime stay below the radar screen, stay off the screen, don't have a jaywalking ticket or a parking ticket, we'll let you go.

That is the wrong message to send. And I would, in the strongest of terms, recommend to members opposite, go back and look what Rudy Giuliani said. Look at the kind of courage and conviction that that man had. And he said we must clean up crime in this city, we must deal with crime.

And contrary to what the member for Minto said, the Minister of Justice, contrary to what the NDP is trying to do, contrary to everything that's been said by them today, it's actually the minor crime that they went after. Rather than letting minor crime go, they raised it up to a status of—must go after. And it's a different of philosophy, and that's why we see crime going up in this city, and we saw crime go down in New York under the leadership of Mayor Giuliani.

I would suggest that it is very much warranted if we looked at: be it further resolved that the Attorney General apologize to Manitobans.

And frankly, the first thing he should apologize is by trying to slough off those individuals who've had crimes committed against their homes and themselves and their property, and just slough it off

as minor, Madam Deputy Speaker. That was actually shameful him—for him to get up and say that.

Minor crimes, when it happens to you, are major crimes. We must take all crime serious and go after it and not just hit the delete the button and hope it goes away.

And on behalf of the police enforcement individuals and all of those who are out there and talking to the public and dealing with these crimes and doing it, hoping that something will come out of this, our highest regards goes to those. It's the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) who is failing his job.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker, for my opportunity to speak to this private members' resolution brought forward by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). I listen very closely to the comments by all members of this House, speaking to this particular resolution, and I find some of the comments a bit disturbing, particularly by members of the Conservative party.

* (11:50)

I listened very closely to the comments that were just made a few moments ago by the member for Springfield, and the member for Springfield was talking about the Rudy Giuliani policy that had been put in place during this time as the governor—or the—involved in the government of New York. And I know—I'm somewhat familiar with that policy put in place to replace the windows that had been broken in the different buildings around the city, and the effect that it had on some of the minor crime that was going on in that particular city and, perhaps, some of the more important or serious crimes.

But, while the member for Springfield is talking about fixing broken windows, our government has been involved in arresting the Hells Angels of Manitoba. So, the Hells Angels came to the province of Manitoba in the 1990s and were well-established by the time we came into government in 1999. And now, the member for Springfield is saying we should be focusing, as a government, on broken windows, instead of dealing with the more serious crimes that we have facing us in this province.

Now, and that's not to downplay or to underestimate the importance of minor crime in our communities, because we all, collectively, together as a society, have a role to play in building our communities and to ensure they're safe. And now the member says we should be focusing on fixing broken

windows, instead of going after organized crime, gang crimes and the involvement they're involved in, other activities like grow ops, people that are involved as predators, whether they're sexual or otherwise. And those are the areas that our government has focused our energies and effort on, in addition to beefing up our police and prosecution forces in the province of Manitoba.

I know, as the MLA for Transcona, I have spent a good part of my career, as my career, in office. And we'll see how successful that member is with respect to the crime that is going on in the city of Winnipeg here. Time will tell how successful you are. And I say to the members opposite, don't quite measure up the drapes yet because there's a lot of water to flow under the bridge yet before we move into the election mode here.

And I want to tell the members that our government has made successive investments and announcements with respect to the role that we play. And I take my role as the MLA very seriously. I work very closely with the police force of Winnipeg and the police officers that serve my community. And I have many times told the constituents in the community of Transcona, listen, if you have an issue with respect to community security and safety, call my office. I will talk to the police and we will make sure that we take care of that. And I have worked, over my years in office, to make sure that the police officers are aware of the information that has been brought to my attention. I take my role in that very seriously.

Now, with respect to the member for Springfield saying he doesn't feel safe in his home in East St. Paul. Well, that might be news to the people of East St. Paul, because knowing—I have many friends out living in East St. Paul and they've never once said to me that they felt unsafe in their home. So I find it passing strange that he would say that he feels unsafe in his home in East St. Paul. I wonder if his constituents feel the same way because they have—people that I know in his community have never said that to me.

Now our government has brought forward the criminal property forfeiture law in the province of Manitoba. I know I've talked with the residents of my community about that law and the effect that it's had upon the safety of our community. And I know that our government has taken and put in place the criminal property forfeiture law to protect our community. And we know that it has—had met with

significant success as a result of that law becoming into effect and into place.

Our government has to—our police forces and our court systems, now, seized or in the process of seizing some 49 homes that are involved in criminal—where the people within those buildings are involved in criminal activity, to the value of some \$9 million in revenue that we have generated by selling those properties and reinvesting that money back into police services in the province of Manitoba and into Victim Services. So it has met with continued and ongoing success as a result of our Minister of Justice's (Mr. Swan) effort, and our government's effort, to bring about accountability among those in our society who would think that they can thumb their nose at the laws, especially the criminal laws, of this country and this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our government has made investments into our police forces, the various police forces around the province of Manitoba, to the amount of 255 more police officers serving our communities, supported by our provincial government. And the part that is most distressing to me is that the members of the Conservative Party, and for members of our public who are listening here today, the NDP government of Manitoba, since 1999, has invested in 255 more police officers to serve our communities around Manitoba. Every single time our NDP government brings in the budgetary amounts to support those police officers, the extra police, the Conservative Party of Manitoba votes against every one of those initiatives to support the police and every one of our anticrime initiatives that we have brought forward to make our communities safer. Now, that distresses me, that the Conservative Party who tried to spin here today somehow that the—they're the crime-and-punishment party of Manitoba when they have voted against—their actions speak a lot louder than their words do. They have voted against every one of our measures as a provincial government to put in place the police officers for the province of Manitoba, and in particular, for the city of Winnipeg, for a community that I represent. And I think that's shameful, that the members of the Conservative Party would think that the public was going to buy into their argument that they are the crime-and-punishment party when everyone in my community knows that they have voted against the budgetary considerations that we've put in place to support police.

Now, if you look towards the resolution that's here today before us, the members don't talk about

the charges that were before the courts, going back to the 1990s, that they never pursued. Why do you never talk about those ones that were some 20 years of age, that the Crown attorneys would look at and say that, well, these are pretty dated, some of the witnesses have perhaps died, some of the police officers may have retired. Why did the Conservative Party of Manitoba not talk about those charges that were laid during the 1990s and never proceeded with? Why do you not talk about that?

An Honourable Member: There was a warrant. The police were supposed to get them.

Mr. Reid: Oh, it's the police's problem now. So, the Conservative government of Manitoba in the 1990s was responsible for prosecutions, but they decided, oh, it's a police problem. So now you're blaming the police.

I'm actually surprised at the member for Steinbach's (Mr. Goertzen) comments, and he wants to be the minister of Justice, and he's now blaming the police for the—he says it's a police failure to bring about charges. *[interjection]* And I hope he will put that on record, Madam Deputy Speaker.

It's interesting to know that the member for Steinbach, when his Conservative Party of Manitoba was in government, talked a bit about the cut. And maybe people in the public—

And I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should be addressing my comments through you, and I'll attempt to do that. Yes, and I recognize my time is down to a minute or so.

And I know that our government has talked to the federal Minister of Justice, and we have asked the federal Minister of Justice through our member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who's our Minister of Justice here, and the previous ministers of Justice the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), when they were ministers of Justice, we went to Ottawa and we asked the federal government to beef up the Criminal Code of Canada, *[interjection]* to put in place a mandatory—

Oh, so now you're blaming other political parties. First you're blaming the police and now you're blaming the federal NDP and the federal Liberals. When do you take responsibility for your actions if you're in government in Ottawa?

We asked for mandatory minimum sentences for premeditated knife crimes. We asked for separate

offences for home invasions and carjackings, with mandatory sentences. We asked for criminal penalties for possessing body armour and fortified vehicles.

And we've also asked for the elimination of the two-for-one credits that were in place, and that only just recently did the federal government listen to this government and the request we had made to eliminate those. That's one positive thing that has happened as a result of that.

And I hope—I hope—that you will now consider very seriously supporting our government's amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, because we think there needs to be significant changes to that act to protect our communities and to make those that are involved in crime more accountable than they currently—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to talk about our government's accomplishments, especially when it comes to crime suppression, because I think that my constituents would like to know what we have been doing.

So, for example, our auto theft suppression strategy is working. Auto theft is at its lowest point since—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. When the matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have nine minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 5, 2011

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