

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

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authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): It is an honour and a privilege to stand here today.

I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), that Bill 213, The Civil Service Amendment Act (Employment Preference for Reservists with Active Service), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Curry: To put a few brief words on the record, in our society it is important that we recognize that preference can be afforded to many people and that veterans in our society can also be reservists. Unfortunately, as a reservist, I've learned that sometimes this cannot be done, and I'm very happy to bring many of my stories to the Chamber and bring this to a second reading.

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

**Bill 212—The Health Services Insurance
Amendment Act**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, universal public health care is the cornerstone of our province, and this government should do everything possible to protect that. This ban—will ban unfair health-care premiums that charge Manitobans for their care and keep low-income families from accessing the services that they need.

We know that other provinces like Ontario and BC charge families hundreds of dollars a year, but that's not the Manitoba way.

We urge the government to pass this bill and commit that health care in Manitoba stays public, affordable and universal for all.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

Third Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 25, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 8) – The Protecting Children (Information Sharing) Act/Loi sur la protection des enfants (communication de renseignements)**

Committee Membership

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government do all that is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

And this petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Union Certification

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba has benefited greatly from a fair and balanced approach to labour relations that has led to a long period of labour peace in this province.

Under the current legislation, if 65 per cent of workers in a workplace vote to join a union by signing a union card, then a union can qualify to become automatically certified as the official bargaining agent for the workers.

These signed union cards are submitted to the Labour Board and an independent review by the Labour Board is held to ensure that the law has been followed.

Provincial threshold to achieve automatic certification of a union is the highest in the country at 65 per cent. The democratic will and decision of the workers to vote and join the union is absolutely clear.

During the recent provincial election, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party announced, without any consultation, that it was his intention to change this fair and balanced legislation by requiring a second vote conducted on a matter where the democratic will of workers has already been expressed.

This plan opens up the process to potential employer interference and takes the same misguided approach that the federal Conservatives under the Harper administration took in Bill C-525, which was nothing more than a solution looking for a problem.

The recent introduction of Bill 7 by the provincial government confirmed this possibility by removing automatic certification and the safeguards in The Labour Relations Act to protect workers from employer intimidation during the certification process.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government maintain the current legislation for union certification which reflects balance and fairness, rather than adopting the intention to make it harder for workers to organize.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many hard-working Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Madam Speaker: The House will now consider the Opposition Day motion of the honourable member for Fort Rouge, and I now recognize the honourable member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Flin Flon, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the federal government's inaction in equitably funding social services for First Nations people.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kinew: I'm pleased to stand before you in the House today and make a 'simple'—simple request of my colleagues, once again, that we demand equality for First Nations people in our country. Again, this follows a private members' resolution which dealt with a similar topic, but in a different manner. And I was encouraged to hear many members of the House speak in support of the principle behind that resolution, which is the same principle underlying this resolution here today, though I was a bit discouraged that the matter did not go to a vote at that time. And so I stand here before you again—once again, to bring the same matter forward and to present it in the form of a motion today.

Again, the reason that we are debating this today is because, for the first time in the history of this country, the character of discrimination against First Nations people living on reserve has been brought

into stark relief, thanks to a decision rendered by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Earlier this year, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the unequal funding for child-welfare services on reserve, for education to First Nations people and to child-to health services on reserve is tantamount to racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is not my word; that is the word that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal used in their decision.

And I feel the same way hearing that as you might, Madam Speaker, as any member of the Legislative Assembly would feel. It hurts me. It truly does. I'm a Canadian, like everyone else. I grew up singing O Canada in the morning in public school, and all those things. So to hear that our country is guilty of racial discrimination against one class of citizens in our country is actually deeply offensive to me.

And so people may—we heard the First Minister use the term accusatory, others may wonder about the harsh choice of language in calling on our colleagues to condemn this racial discrimination, but we must face facts and we have to accept that racial discrimination demands a strong response. Racial discrimination demands strong language. We can't pull our punches if we are to 'band'-demand justice, if we are to achieve justice.

So, again, this complaint was brought forward by Cindy Blackstock, who is a inimitable advocate for justice in our country, working along with her organization, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. And they also moved that complaint forward with the Assembly of First Nations. It took nearly a decade. They presented volumes of evidence. And the federal government, you know, filed their response. And, in the end, the Human Rights Tribunal, in a landmark decision, ruled that, yes, the unequal funding is real and that it is tantamount to racial discrimination.

Cindy Blackstock is actually in town tonight in the city of Winnipeg, so I invite any member who is free to listen to this great Canadian speak about her life's work, which is to fight for the most vulnerable in our society.

Again, there's a few responses that have taken place since the tribunal ruling was handed down where the federal government has attempted to argue that new funding that's been announced will remedy the situation. However, the tribunal has responded with subsequent clarifications, and said that this newly announced funding from the federal

Liberals is not enough. It is not enough to rectify the situation.

And, really, any reasonable person, when looking at what the federal Liberals have announced—this funding that's rolled in—rolled out in stages, going up to 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021. Any reasonable person should ask, why should First Nations kids have to wait for equality until after the next federal election? It doesn't make any sense. We should have equality now. We should have had equality a generation ago. And yet we have an opportunity with this tribunal ruling to move forward in a good way.

* (14:40)

So the child-welfare funding was the focus of the complaint. I was pleased to put some words on the record yesterday about the private member's resolution brought forward by my sister from Kewatinook which dealt with child-welfare services in a few First Nations communities in Manitoba, Nisichawayasihk and some in the west region. So I'm sure that given both that bipartisan gesture, but also her interest in ameliorating First Nations child-welfare services, that she will be happy to support this motion here today.

And, again, it was child welfare that formed the basis of the complaint. Though, in subsequent rulings the decision was clarified by the Human Rights Tribunal to extend to the areas of health and to extend to the areas of education as well. And so the tribunal said that the idea behind Jordan's Principle, that various levels of government should provide services that are reasonably comparable across First Nations, provincial-federal jurisdictional boundaries should be interpreted broadly.

In the area of education, this principle is known as Shannen's Dream. It's named after a wonderful young woman from Attawapiskat, whose name is Shannen Koostachin, and her community had their school closed as a result of a diesel spill. There was diesel spill, so the school was unfit for kids to go to school and, as a result, she had to travel many miles away, many hundreds of miles away to pursue her education. And so she began to demand the federal government provide Attawapiskat with a new school. Eventually, this campaign launched into a broader call for justice for equal funding for First Nations education right across the country.

And so that—the principle, again, advocated by Cindy Blackstock and others such as our federal

colleague, Charlie Angus—has been named Shannen's Dream. Sadly, Shannen left us too soon. She was actually killed in a car accident while she was away from her home community, while she was away from her family attending high school in a far-off community. So we pursue Shannen's Dream in her name, and this tribunal decision and, indeed, the motion that we're considering here today, would bring us a step closer to where Shannen's Dream would be reality.

And then, of course, in Manitoba we know that in the area of health that there is unequal treatment of First Nations people, particularly those with complex medical needs. This was highlighted by the case of Jordan River Anderson from Norway House, who is—as I've shared with the House before—the young boy who spent nearly his entire life in hospital awaiting the home care and support services which would have allowed him to return home. Sadly, while the challenge of providing cross-jurisdictional funding was being sorted out, he left us. He left this world too soon, and so we talk about the same principle when it applies to health as Jordan's Principle.

And we know it by these different names: Jordan's Principle, Shannen's Dream, the fight for child-welfare services to be equitably funded. We know it by all these different names, but fundamentally, Madam Speaker, it all boils down to the same principle, which is equality for First Nations people and, indeed, equitable funding for the services rendered on reserve.

We must note that this is not merely an indigenous issue. We will all be better off if we rise to the challenge of delivering equality for the kids. We know that right now there is a kid in Garden Hill who has the intelligence to become a medical doctor. A young girl in Garden Hill right now has the intelligence to become a medical doctor, and yet she's being held back by the unequal level of funding being provided on reserve. There are kids in the constituencies of my brother from Flin Flon, in communities like Nisichawayasihk who have the ambition to become CEOs of large companies, but they are being held back, again, by the lack of opportunity, the lack of an equal start at life. And, indeed, Madam Speaker, we are all poorer for that. We are all poorer for that.

And, as a result, in a province like ours with a large indigenous population, in a province like ours where a higher segment than is typical across the country of that population lives on reserve and

where, indeed, indigenous youth are an important part of the future workforce, we must all stand together on this. So, again, in my mind, this is not a political issue. Simply, this is a moral issue. This is about rectifying one of the great challenges that has been left undone by previous governments.

We all, in this House today, have an opportunity to stand together, do the right thing and send a message to the federal government in Ottawa that is time to end the racial discrimination against First Nations people on reserve.

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I sit right next to the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief), and for the last five minutes, I haven't been able to hear a word of—coming from the speaker. There is just so much noise in this Chamber. I wonder if you could bring everybody back in and to attention.

Madam Speaker: The—on a point of order, the member does have a point. There have been a lot of conversations going on in the last five minutes, and it has been—made it difficult to hear members speak. And, again, I would caution members, again, we're here to listen to debate, and I would encourage members to be respectful of what's supposed to be happening in this House. If people do want to have conversations, there are the loges, or people can leave the Chamber and have their conversation in the hallway.

So, out of respect for all those that are debating a very important issue today, I would ask that we show each other the respect that this issue deserves.

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister of municipal and—or Indigenous and Municipal Relations.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I'm very pleased today to speak about some very important issues confronting Manitoba's indigenous people and communities, and I'm very excited to have this opportunity today.

What today's motion really highlights is the reality that there is a lot of work for all of us to do as Manitobans and as Canadians to ensure that indigenous peoples have the supports and opportunities that they need to achieve a brighter

and more prosperous future, as has already been indicated.

Unlike the previous NDP government that politicized indigenous issues and failed to deliver tangible results, our government is building new partnerships with our First Nations and Metis communities, and we're working collaboratively to deliver real social and economic 'progress'. We want to build trust and mutual respect, and I feel that in six short months, we are well on our way with that. I'm very proud to have been appointed as the minister that will work with indigenous relationships, and we will continue to create an atmosphere where there will be a government that they can trust.

I've had the opportunity within that six months to visit many First Nations and northern communities and, to say the least, it has been a very rewarding experience, one that I shall not forget and one that I have learned from. As I indicated, we have been building relationships with our regional chiefs, grand chiefs, the president of the MMF and also the president and councils of the northern communities.

I'd like to share a few of my experiences today, some of them very positive and some of them that—very concerning to me as a new minister.

My experience in the first few weeks was with blockades in northern Manitoba where they were having very serious road issues, being spring. And, typically, in the past, it seemed that's how they handled any issues that arose; they went directly to a blockade and protesting on the front steps of this Legislative Building.

The first day that they were protesting and I was made aware of this, in the second incident, I asked my colleagues what was the issue. What was the reason for them to be protesting on such a cold day in front of our building? And it was brought forward that there was a road situation and it was—they were very concerned at the risk of driving on this road and the positive outcome of accidents and lives lost.

*(14:50)

I suggested that these—this group be invited into my council—or my chambers the next day so that we could discuss it. And my deputy immediately called them and asked them to come back to the Legislature, to come inside so that we could discuss the issue and hear from them what, actually, the problem was rather than hearing it through the media, et cetera.

I was very pleased that the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) as well as the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) joined me at that meeting, some of their staff. I believe we had probably 12 or 14 people come to that meeting the following morning. As I put into the record yesterday, a very humble group of people. Considering they were so frustrated, they were very humble. They brought an elder with them, a very lovely woman that we respected so much throughout that particular meeting.

After introducing all ourselves and they introducing themselves to us, we asked each and every one of them there—there were several chiefs, I believe, from five different reserves from northern Manitoba. We asked them to speak, and we would like to hear from each of them what their concerns were and how we could help. They did that and, again, as they started out they were very quiet; they were extremely respectful, and we went through every single one of them: those that were sitting at the table, those who were sitting to the side. When they had completed, I asked the elder next to me to speak as well, and she seemed quite taken aback that she would be allowed to speak, and she spoke so well. She spoke about their past in their northern communities. She spoke about the children and the children's future and how much it worried her, and what would happen in the future with all the issues that they were facing.

I was so proud of our ministers and their staff that sat and listened, and throughout that we came up with what we figured would be an achievable remedy to this situation. I'm happy to say, by 3 o'clock that afternoon they were all on their way home. We had—the issue had been corrected. But, before they left, I asked them to—could we get a picture? It became very clear this was a first time for them to be invited into the office of the minister to actually talk about what the problem was. And I don't know how many phones were out at that time to get this historic picture of our First Nations—probably five to six different First Nations communities in our office speaking with three ministers, not talking about an issue over months and months and months through the media. It was literally resolved in a matter of a few hours. And everybody went away happy, respected and feeling—the look on their faces when they left that office, they felt they had really achieved something. As ministers and staff, we felt that we had done something very

historic, because they were not accustomed to having the ear of government.

Sadly, in the past six months, we've gone through many more—those type of exercises. We did it with the East Side Road Authority, the same situation: three separate meetings bringing in First Nations to listen to what was so troubling to them. Again, very humble, very respectful and very disappointing when they are telling us the same concerns that we are dealing with.

I totally agree. We have to work with our federal partners on not just these issues, but when it comes to education, health care, all the different issues that—economic development—that are affecting our First Nations in our whole province. But we need to have these partnerships and, clearly—they very clearly have not been there in the past.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Just a couple more examples to go forward on this.

In the summer my staff and I went up to a general assembly in northern Manitoba. We decided to visit some First Nations communities en route, and coming back we visited some municipalities. And we were at one particular reserve and sitting with some of their council at the table. They have a councillor there; he's 72 years old, great personality—actually, a residential school survivor with a very positive attitude. He had been to what he had called a class reunion that morning in Brandon. We didn't understand, and then he explained to us that's what his residential school gathering—a group was now gathering to support each other, and he called it a class reunion. Also told us that they had not been able to talk about that for years. That was not their way to talk about things like that. But how beneficial it was to go and meet with his former classmates, and now they were talking. That was one of the highlights of that meeting.

The other highlight was when he would look up, talking about the various issues that they brought forward that they had never had the chance to discuss with government, and he would look up and he would look at me and he'd say, never had a minister here before.

And that happened three times in one meeting, and he said, just can't believe it; have never had a minister here before.

This is the message that we are hearing from out—throughout the province of Manitoba, not just in the further northern communities but in the local areas. Like, it's so frustrating as the new minister to think that these First Nations communities have been under-represented, and clearly they haven't been heard. And it's also frustrating for me when I have First Nations sitting in my office and we're talking about issues and funding, for sure, and they say it's not just about the money. Like, why aren't things happening? Why is nobody listening?

Well, you know what, I have a department and I have colleagues here that are committed to making sure that things start to get done, that our First Nations and all indigenous people have a voice. It is so lacking, and I agree the issues are so—have surmounted to such ridiculous levels that it's going to be a big job, but we are up to this job.

Also going to their special events, I went to some powwows this summer with my colleagues, and sometimes on my own, but so proud to walk with the chiefs into their grand entries and that, and, again, same message; sure nice to have someone from government here. So I was very proud to say the least.

This isn't just on First Nations. I, in our very early weeks, was with MMF and they had not met with the minister in 10 years, very unfortunate. Northern various communities, same thing—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time is up.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm—both feel humbled to get up to speak on this motion brought forward by my colleague and my friend from Fort Rouge, and I applaud him for his wisdom and for the guidance that he provides for our caucus each and every day.

In the same manner, my friend from Point Douglas, who's been such an inspiration to me, we've been friends for a lot longer than just having arrived in this Legislature at the same time; my sister from St. Johns, who has provide such incredible leadership, not only on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls but on a whole range of issues that relate to our indigenous peoples in Canada and in Manitoba and, in particular, for indigenous women, of course; and, of course, my sister from The Pas who is such an incredible advocate for her people and her community; I learn so much from them each and every day.

And I want to thank my friend from Fort Rouge for bringing this motion forward here today.

In saying though that I'm humbled and honoured to get up to speak to this very, very important motion, I want to also say that I am, as a Canadian, as a Manitoban, I am hard to believe that in 2016 we still need a motion of this kind to ensure equality among all Canadians, be they indigenous or otherwise. It absolutely is a terrible circumstance in situations that we find ourselves, as Manitobans and Canadians, in a situation we ought not to be. And then to have a situation in which it's characterized, as my friend from Fort Rouge put it, and as the human rights tribunal put it, as a matter of racial discrimination.

Well, what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, could we possibly be thinking in 2016 that we still need to address racial discrimination in such a profound sense when it's something that really we should've put behind us a long, long time ago? I'm embarrassed and I'm ashamed as a Canadian, as proud as I am of this resolution today, that we still need it in order to get the kind of equitable treatment for First Nations people in this country.

* (15:00)

And I want to say that what New Democrats have always believed, as J.S. Woodsworth so—put it so well, what we want for ourselves we desire for others. It's that simple, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's that simple that what I desire for my children, equitable treatment with every other child, it's—that's what ought to be happening for every child. And yet we find ourselves in the second decade of the 21st century still having to press some governments in this country to do the right thing. That makes no sense. It makes no sense to me. *[interjection]*

I want to point out to my friend from Emerson here—*[interjection]*—my—no, he is my friend, for sure—want to point out to my friend from Emerson that my friend from Fort Rouge said this is not a political issue; it's a moral issue. It's not something to laugh about. It's not something to make partisan jokes about. It's not something that we should just have a bit of a send-up about. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's something that all of us, every 57 members of this Legislature, need to concentrate on today because it is the central moral issue of our time. And yet—yet—it can be resolved in such an elementary fashion: simply ensure that every child be treated equitably. How difficult is that? For those of us who parent, how could it be otherwise? Why would we live in a

society that tolerates it? Why would any of us in this Legislature allow it?

That's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, despite the—some of the good words put on the record by the Premier (Mr. Pallister) today, that it is a very strong resolution with strong language: the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the federal government's inaction in equitably funding social services for its First Nations people. It is condemnation. That's what we're saying here today. And to the degree that we're all Canadians, then we're all complicit in it, I get that. I'll take my responsibility. But I do want to condemn the federal government, and federal governments since Confederation in 1867—and even before Confederation, quite frankly—although, arguably, the historian in me says me—says that there was some—a more reasonable negotiation between the two contacts of cultures prior to Confederation, and Confederation actually made it worse, not better, which is a terrible shame.

And so it's simple. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal delivers an order to the federal government and it says make sure the funding is equitable, and what has the federal government done since? Nothing. But, then, that would be consistent with federal government inaction on these questions for many, many generations.

When indigenous children were dying in residential schools because of tuberculosis, federal governments didn't do anything. In fact, they created the residential schools that created the conditions for the deaths of those children. But when it was put in front of them in the first two decades of the 20th century that they ought to be addressing those issues, did they? No, they didn't. And then when—and then you fast-forward to almost 100 years, to 2007 when this complaint was first put before the Human Rights Tribunal, what happened? Well, the federal government first ignored it. Then they cut funding to many of the organizations that were involved in it. They didn't react. They didn't respond—and, by the way, that was the same federal government that cut the Kelowna Accord that might have actually been a step toward some difference, something better. And that didn't happen, either.

And so we're left in the terrible situation in 2016 where we're still addressing these kinds of issues. And I have great respect for the minister of indigenous and municipal affairs, although to this day I cannot understand how those two things have been put together in Cabinet. I find that utterly

appalling and part of the problem, frankly, of how we understand these issues, how we contextualize them, that there's no degree of nuance involved that respects nation-to-nation relationships.

But more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's time for this group of people, this group of men and women, these 57 members of this Legislature, to speak with one voice to the federal government that in Manitoba we're not going to tolerate that kind of inequality anymore, especially something that's characterized as racial discrimination. That pierces my heart to hear that. It's like a stake through the heart to hear that in 2016 we still have government policy rooted in a system of racial discrimination. It shouldn't happen.

I said earlier, as a Canadian, as a Manitoban, as a dad with three children, I'm ashamed of that circumstance. And so my friend from Fort Rouge, and working with other members from the indigenous community in our caucus and then all of our caucus, but beyond that, with our brothers and sisters in the indigenous community, and then beyond that, all working together, all rallying together to make sure that Manitoba's voice is clear, and that was speak with one voice on this issue and to say, quite clearly, to the federal government and to Canadians from coast to coast to coast: We will not tolerate this circumstance any longer, and we're calling on the federal government in the same way as the Human Rights Tribunal did, to get in the game, equalize funding, get kids out of poverty, provide them with the education that 'sey' so desperately need, and give them—give those kids the same opportunity that those from—those of us from privileged backgrounds enjoy.

It's not hard, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not difficult. It only takes the willing resolve of 57 members in this Legislature to do the right thing, and I'm calling on all parties in this Legislature: do it now, do the right thing, do it today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): Thank you for allowing me to put a few words on the record regarding this motion, and thank you to the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for bringing it forward today and giving us that opportunity.

The federal government has a responsibility to work together with the provinces and with indigenous people to ensure that adequate levels of

funding for social services are in place. When the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was a Member of Parliament, he fought for increased funding for education for indigenous people on reserve. The previous federal government called for \$200 million in funding for indigenous education, a commitment that our Premier said did not go far enough.

As a Member of Parliament, our Premier spent over a decade working on improving property rights for Aboriginal women on reserves. The indigenous population is the fastest growing 'demograph' in our province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that in my private sector business, for 30 years I was honoured to have a workforce of front-line workers that consisted of almost 60 per cent of indigenous workers, hired in here in Manitoba and in Brandon and Winnipeg. And I can also tell you that my employees were the most dedicated employees that I've ever had in 25 years in business. We worked with them; we worked with their families; we saw some of the challenges that they had on a day-to-day basis. And, quite frankly, I can tell you, even today, as the member opposite had mentioned in his comments, that those challenges are there today, and I, personally, and along with the members opposite, cannot believe that they're still there today. And there is a lot of work, definitely, to be done on this motion. And, again, I thank the member for bringing it forward.

Jordan River Anderson, of course—Jordan's Principle—was a First Nation child born of a rare neuromuscular disorder who required hospitalization from birth. The provincial and federal governments could not agree on who was financially responsible for Jordan's care and medical foster home. Both governments were attempting to find a resolution. However, Jordan's condition deteriorated, and he passed away in a hospital before a resolution was reached.

* (15:10)

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that patients first is definitely a No. 1 priority for this government and, I'm sure, along with our members opposite, that that has to be a definite concern as we move forward. Here we are in 2016 still talking about these issues.

In opposition, we were proud to support Jordan's Principle which, of course, states that jurisdictional disputes arise over who's responsible for the services for First Nations child. The government with the initial contact pays the services without delay.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, to me, is common sense. We're here—we're elected here to come to this Legislature to protect Manitobans abroad: north, south, east and west in this province. And, of course, if there is an issue like this that arises, we shouldn't be sitting behind closed doors and trying to determine who's going to pay for a service while one of our loved ones, one of our family members or friends are stuck sitting there on life support wondering who's going to pay for the service.

And, you know, quite frankly, that just—I can't compute that. It just does not make sense to me, how we can be living in today's world and have our children—and, in particular, in this case, our indigenous children, in Jordan's case—having to suffer and having to go through this while governments decide who's going to pay for it. Shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, totally shameful.

Under—another shameful that is that under the NDP, Manitoba has the—had the highest childhood poverty rate in Canada. Totally shameful, 17 years, and look where we are today.

Our new government is working to put together a budget that includes all Manitobans. With the consultation process, this is the broadest in our province's history. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we've talked about over the last couple of weeks, our government has been out, in collaboration with the members opposite, the Liberal Party, and, of course, we've invited our members opposite in the opposition, the NDP party, to join us at these consultations and be a part of the solution and not hold back the challenges that Manitobans face today based on a decade of decay and decline and, of course, a decade of debt.

So we've been out to—*[interjection]* Exactly, as my member from Lac du Bonnet says, the three Ds.

We've been out in Winnipeg; of course, we've been out reaching out to Manitobans in Brandon; and we've been reaching out to Manitobans in Thompson and Swan River, and I can tell you that this is going to help with the overall conclusion to what we're talking about today with respect to this motion because we have to make sure that we have a full and inclusive approach to moving forward with all issues in respect to Manitobans and their concerns.

During the NDP's decade—again—of decline, debt and decay, the previous government had 17 years to bring it forward, effective legislation for child

protection, but chose not to do it. Totally shameful. This government is working towards that goal and this government will get that done.

Is important for us to learn from the past to take positive steps to ensure we can move forward. Our government is in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. We are focused on results and partnerships with our indigenous community. The NDP has never focused on results. That, after 17 years, has put us in the position we are today as Manitobans.

By working collaboratively with all stakeholders we can find real solutions that will lead to positive, lasting results for all Manitobans.

Rather than building relationships with indigenous people in our province, the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, decided to throw money at problems instead of dealing with the root causes. While Aboriginal children account for 26 per cent of all children in Manitoba, around 90 per cent of these children are in care—are indigenous. Shameful. A most recent report by the C.D. Howe Institute showed that under the previous government nearly 63 per cent of Aboriginal—pardon me, 63 per cent of Aboriginal high school students in Manitoba did not graduate. While less than 2 per cent of non-indigenous children in the province have contact with CFS before the age of 15, for First Nations Children, more than 22 per cent have contact with the system. That's one in five First Nations children who have contact with CFS before their 15th birthday.

According to an internal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development report, 2012 to 2014 Manitoba was one of the worst places for First Nations people to live in Canada under the NDP. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know, with collaboration, perhaps with the government—former government and this government, we will be able to change those issues to a more positive result as we move forward collaboratively as a province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm running out of time, but I do have a couple more areas I'd like to get on the record if I may. A most recent—pardon me—a Manitoba—in Manitoba, under the NDP, 44.3 per cent of all food bank users are children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important for us to do all we can as a government to ensure the safety of our citizens, especially for those who are most vulnerable. Throughout our consultations, we have

heard that the national inquiry must be culturally respectful, emotionally supportive and must also reflect the wisdom, experiences and recommendations of many individual Manitobans, local families, indigenous community leaders and relevant organizations to have contributed to our province's unique volume of experience on this issue.

We also believe that it'll be important for the commissioners of the national inquiry to review good work that has already been done in advance of this inquiry. Our citizens remain committed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to working with all our partners to ensure they're going to do everything to protect all our citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, I'd like to say: Our government has begun the hard work required to repair the damage, correct the course and move towards balanced, sustainable ways. We are focused on fixing the finances, repairing their services and rebuilding our economy. We believe in the strong collaboration with our stakeholders and actively listening to Manitobans to deliver those results.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the time to put these notes on the record. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): I'm proud to stand with my brother from Fort Rouge, very proud that he's brought this motion forward, equality for First Nations people. It sends a strong message to the federal government that they must uphold their commitments to equally fund and support health care, education, housing, infrastructure and communities in our First Nation communities. It's a motion that sends a strong message, and we're hoping that we get the support of the—and unanimous support from the entire House to send a strong message to the federal government to hold them to account on how important First Nations people are to the economic, the social, the health and prosperity of all of Manitoba.

We have a blueprint in front of us. We have seen tremendous momentum built around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A motion like this continues to help build on the calls to action and helps build on the momentum that we see and the conversation and discussions that are having—that we're having throughout the country on how important it is to invest in First Nations communities. The motion also sends a strong message that we fully support and respect the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and urge the provincial government—and all members of the House—to work

with the federal government to take action in addressing the chronic underfunding of First Nations.

I do want to acknowledge the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinev). There is a lot of things he does on top of bringing important motions like this forward. One of the things that he has done is clearly—and sent a strong message to all Canadians, but certainly Manitobans, of the important work of Cindy Blackstock. She is seen as a hero in—not only in First Nations communities, but for Manitobans and Canadians for the tremendous work that she has done. And I know that the member for Fort Rouge has always taken the time to make sure he's highlighted the work of people like Cindy Blackstock. The path to the work that she has done has not been an easy path. In fact, it's been very difficult and, in the face of tremendous adversity, has scored huge wins. But her work isn't done. And, when the member Fort Rouge takes the time to highlight that work with motions like this, it's a testament to not just her work but the important investments that we need to continue to make for some of the most vulnerable children in our country.

* (15:20)

I did listen very intently to the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Affairs (Ms. Clarke), and she talked about meeting with First Nations people and local leadership and people that she saw, and she told some stories and she used words like trust and mutual respect.

Well, you know, what I could tell the minister is if she supports a motion like this and she goes back and tells those very people that she highlighted here today, I can tell her they will respect the decision for this government and her as the minister to support motions like this. They would be proud that she stood up in support of motions like this, equally that she stood up and talked about how important that is.

I do want to acknowledge the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). I was able to do work with him long before I got into politics, and he has been a champion for First Nations and our indigenous community long before he entered the Manitoba Legislature, and, you know, one of the things that the member for Fort Rouge or any of us or any of my indigenous colleagues will tell you is how important it is to have non-indigenous champions on issues like this. It's very important that we look at this motion as supporting all Manitobans, all Canadians, and we want to build on that.

You know, I took the time, of course, to listen to the member for Gimli (Mr. Wharton), and I'm very proud that he stood up and he talked about his work in the private sector. And he said that 60 per cent of his workforce was of indigenous people. And I could tell you that if he took the time to go back and talk to those indigenous workers, I can tell you that those indigenous workers would be proud if he stood in this place and voted in support of this motion to send a strong message to the federal government. I'm glad that he took the time to highlight the important—the work around Jordan's Principle. And the spirit of this motion will continue to highlight how important Jordan's Principle is to us and the full implementation of it.

One of the things I want to say is that, you know, me and my friends, we grew up in Winnipeg's North End. We've welcomed people in the neighbourhood I represent from all over the world as well as from all over Manitoba. And when people come and they move into a neighbourhood like mine, they don't have a lot. Me and my friends, we didn't grow up with a lot of wealth, but people were able to look past the hardship. They were able to see potential when they saw us as young children.

Our schools—we saw that in our schools. If we got hurt, we got the same kinds of services and health care. And because we had those kinds of supports in place living in the city, living in Winnipeg's North End, and the people who came from all over the world had those kinds of supports, when you're young and you're growing up, you feel like anything's possible. Even if you're poor, you feel like anything is possible because people are willing to make that kind of investment.

And, you know, the member for Gimli talked about—he was proud of coming from the private sector. Well, one of the things that we know is where we see great potential. Sometimes the greatest potential is where we see some of the greatest struggle. And what you do is you make an investment. You make an investment because that is where you're going to have the greatest impact. And if you look at the demographic of our province, we have one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics here in Manitoba than anywhere in the nation. And one of the reasons that we have one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics here in our province than anywhere else in the country is because we have one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics of First Nations people.

And it's important that if we want to maximize that potential, if we want to make sure that every child, no matter who they are or where they come from, feel like anything is possible, then we have to support a motion like this, a motion that says that we need to invest equally into health care, into education, into housing, into infrastructure, no matter where you live. If you're a young child you should have the same opportunity in Steinbach as you do the North End, and the North End as you do in Pukatawagan.

That's what this motion's about: making sure that we can maximize that potential. In fact, if you were to take any indicator of success in our province—you could take an economic indicator, you can take a health indicator, you can take an education indicator—the only way that we are going to have success is if we make the investments into our First Nations community. If we want to prosper economically or socially or through health, and the prosperity of our province, we need to make sure that we invest in our First Nations community no matter who you are or where you live.

As a former minister travelling the province, as somebody where my mom lived at the Waywayseecappo First Nation, getting time to spend—a tremendous amount of time in First Nations communities, celebrating treaty days. I'm very proud that I'm a square dancer and I get to go up and celebrate things like treaty days.

When you talk to young indigenous people, when you talk to kids, when you talk to young people, the message is always clear. No matter where they live in this province they will tell you they are proud of who they are. They are proud of where they live. They're proud of their home towns. They're proud of their home communities and they want to have the opportunity to give back. They want to have the opportunity to feel generous, like all of us do. We stand up and we represent our neighbourhoods. We get a sense of contribution when we do that. A motion like this sends a strong message to the federal government that says: No matter who you are or where you come from, you should be able to say you're proud: you're proud of where you live, you're proud of your home town, you're proud of your home community and you have that opportunity to give back. That message has to be loud, strong and clear.

And there is, really, no partisan rhetoric on this whatsoever. This is an opportunity to continue to build on the tremendous momentum of truth and

reconciliation calls to action. It continues to build on that momentum. It gives us the opportunity to stand with and say that the decision that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal made was, without question, the right decision, and in Manitoba we will send a strong message to the federal government that we support that decision. It says to First Nations children and communities, and champions like Cindy Blackstock, that we are proud of the work that they have done, that there are a group of people in our province that will proudly stand with them, that we understand. A motion like this says that maybe, sometimes when you show leadership it shouldn't be our voices heard, that we step back and we strengthen the voices of others. That is the work that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) has done before he came into the Manitoba Legislature. That is the work that he is doing while he's here, and I guarantee you that will be the work that he's doing long after he leaves. I think we should have unanimous support and continue to build on the incredible work that we see around truth and reconciliation.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution.

Our Liberal caucus will support the resolution because we feel very strongly that there should be equitable treatment for First Nations children. But we disagree, strongly, with the word condemn; and I will talk about that in a few minutes.

Myself and the MLA for Kewatinook have, for a very long time, been very strong advocates and supporters of Jordan's Principle, which calls for equitable funding for First Nations children. We have followed closely the efforts of Cindy Blackstock in taking this issue to the Human Rights Commission. We have followed the attempt by the former Conservative government to silence Cindy Blackstock, and the eventual win by Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. We have seen the ruling of the Canadian Human Rights Commission that supported the efforts of Cindy Blackstock. We have seen that the panel has ruled in April that the federal government is not in compliance, and we've seen that the panel in September, again, sent out a note that the federal government is not yet in compliance.

It is an urgent matter. The federal government needs to move with the utmost speed to be in compliance and to ensure that First Nations children

are equitably supported. The member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) buries children at an alarming rate in her community and other communities in her constituency due to inequities in funding.

I want to say that we strongly agree with the need for equitable treatment of children in First Nations communities.

*(15:30)

I also want to say that the word condemn is very wrong. We believe it is wrong to use the word condemn in this context. I believe the NDP should have called on the federal government to act in the quickest possible way to address this and to deliver equitable funding for First Nations children instead of trying to politicize this resolution in a way that creates problems in a variety of aspects. We know that there are some complexities involved in what has to be achieved, but there needs to be quick progress, and we recognize this. And that's why we're supporting the resolution, even though we disagree strongly with the word condemn.

It is true that there are instances where the word condemn is appropriate. The former NDP government, for example, should be condemned for the 2000 scoop which drastically increased the number of kids in care. The current Conservative government should be condemned for not having even started the work of task forces and committees to reduce emergency room wait times and to review the mental health system.

The federal government has made major moves which include calling the inquiry into missing and murdered women. They have announced \$8 billion in new funding for First Nations. They have announced \$380 million funding in July in Norway House to address Jordan's Principle. The announcement was made in July at the same time as there was announced funding for Cross Lake and Norway House hospitals. And the federal government has done a lot to advance the cause of First Nations issues.

It needs to be added that the federal government, in its budget, announced significant investments to increase support for First Nations education, significant investments for support for housing in First Nations communities, significant investments for infrastructure in First Nations communities, significant investments for recreation and cultural centres in First Nations communities, significant

investments for running water and water treatment in First Nations communities, a significant investment committed for funding of Freedom Road, although I have to admit that right now it seems to be going slow because the provincial Conservatives are equivocating on whether they're actually going to also support Freedom Road.

But for these very positive moves that the federal government has made for First Nations people, the federal government should be strongly supported and helped, but the federal government—and we agree—has not yet fully addressed the inequitable funding for First Nations child welfare, First Nations children with disabilities or First Nations children in schools. But we are hopeful that that is what is going to come. We see this as a work-in-progress by the Liberal federal government, and we see that the Liberal government has good intentions and is working very, very hard in this area. The NDP made a mistake trying to politicize it.

I want to comment that, though we want equitable funding, we've raised strong opposition to the funding model based on funding based on the number of children in care. This is an old model, and it needs to change, and I'll go into part of the reason why. The model based on the funding the number of children in care provides, sadly, an incentive to put children in care when we need to drastically reduce the number of children in care and much better support families. And there are reports calling for this change going back more than 25 years. And it hasn't been done, but it needs to be done.

Using a funding model based on the number of children in care could actually have bad consequences for future funding. If families are much better supported, the goal of drastically reducing the number of children in care is achieved. For example, if Manitoba were to have a reduction in the number of children in care by 90 per cent, which, interestingly, would reduce the number of children in care per capita to what many other jurisdictions have—Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, New Zealand—that 90 per cent reduction could translate into a drastic reduction in funding for First Nations communities if the funding was solely based on the number of children in care. It has to be changed because what we want to do is to support children and families so we have fewer kids in care.

In fact, the MLA for Kewatinook and I, at noon, had a chance to hear Cindy Blackstock speak and to talk with her. She agrees with our position that the

goal is to provide the supports for children and families so that many fewer children need to be taken in care, and that the federal government has to provide the resources to communities to do the work and get this done, not just based on the number of children in care.

So we believe there needs to be consideration of what equity is, how we achieve it. We need to achieve that equity by funding the services in First Nations communities so that children don't need to be taken into care. This means funding models like the one in Nelson House where they have drastically reduced the number of children in care, where they have reduced crime, where they have reduced addictions and where they have reduced the incidence of FASD.

So, Madam Speaker, Liberals recognize that this resolution is not well-worded, that it should never have used the word condemn. But we will support the equity for First Nations children because we have worked very hard for many, many years to try and achieve this. And we hope that the passage of this resolution will help move the day forward when this equity is achieved.

Thank you, miigwech, ekosi, mahseecho, miigwech, thank you, merci.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I thank you for the opportunity to stand in the House today to put a few words on record. We have much work to do, and it is going to require a lot of collaboration and effort on behalf of everybody. I thank the member from Fort Rouge for bringing this forward.

The federal government has a responsibility to work together with the provinces and with indigenous people to ensure that adequate levels of funding for social services are in place. When the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was a Member of Parliament, as mentioned from the member from Gimli, he fought for increased funding for indigenous people on reserve. The previous federal government called for \$200 million in funding for indigenous education, a commitment that our Premier said did not go far enough.

The indigenous population is the fastest growing demographic in our province. I think back at the—in my home constituency, and I see the number of—or, single moms, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. And if it was not for the daycare within the school these students would not be given the opportunity to get that education. It's very rewarding to see their

young—these young children interacting with other children in an educational setting that pays dividends.

In opposition, we're proud to support Jordan's Principle which states: When the jurisdictional dispute arises over who is responsible for services, the government with initial contact pays for the services without delay. When Jordan's Principle legislation came before the House on numerous occasions, the NDP decided not to support this legislation. Jordan's Principle states that when a jurisdictional dispute arises over who's responsible for services for a First Nations child, the government with initial contact pays for the services without delay. If that government feels it's entitled to compensation from another level of government as a result of jurisdictional responsibility, they can seek to be reimbursed after the fact, solidifying the child-first health-care policy. And I thank the honourable member from River Heights who worked very hard in supporting this principle.

The NDP refused to provide formal support despite agreeing with the intent.

Our government is working together on a budget that includes all Manitobans. Tonight being the final opportunity, I invite all members opposite to cross the line and join us in this final opportunity in prebudget consultation.

* (15:40)

Also, the member—when I listen to the members from Kewatinook and also from The Pas, I am—I've just—it warms my heart to be able to see them share their stories in their communities, because they know first-hand and they've seen these, and they're role models for their communities. The member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen), you know, getting upon the leadership, I congratulate her, and she is truly a role model for her community.

During the NDP decade of decline, debt and decay, the previous government had 17 years to bring forward more effective legislation for child protection, but chose not to. It's important to learn from the past and take positive steps to ensure we can move forward together. Our government is in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. We're focused on results and partnerships with our indigenous communities.

Just recently, the initiation of a trades building in my home community of Swan River began. There's some great outlook for this community, because

partnerships are being formed with the surrounding Aboriginal communities. It's going to give students the opportunity to Red Seal in the carpentry, plumbing and electrical areas.

One of the goals here is that some of the students from the nearby reserve of Sapotaweyak are going to be able to get involved, and they would be able to build houses on the site and then be able to go back to their home communities and erect these houses and put some of the electrical, plumbing needs that are required. It's all about engaging, involvement, partnerships and working together.

I talked to many students in my 35 years as an educator, and many of them always looked back and they just said they just wanted to be treated fairly. And this is the—this is one of the things that really stands and resonates in my mind.

Many times when we look at some of the key concepts in education, many Aboriginal and indigenous people have their own aspirations for education. Every one of them have their dreams, just like every other person. And I recall just last weekend, one of the young guys stopped into my office that I had the honour and opportunity to teach many years ago, and he was sharing there with me. And I said: Well, have you gone into the field of resources, and he said: I can't do it. And I says: Well, why not, and he says, I'm just—he says: I'm stuck in where I—on the community where I came from and I don't have the opportunity. And I said: No dream is too high from achieving.

And when you hear those words and the want, you know we have to do everything possible to be able to provide this equality in education for these people. In addition, one of the key concepts in education is: all Aboriginal indigenous people exercise rights of self-governance and self-determination. Some Aboriginal indigenous people have guaranteed education rights under treaties, and we are all called to action in matters of truth and reconciliation. These all became—or, become very important. By working collaboratively with all stakeholders, we can find a real solution that will lead to positive, lasting results for all Manitobans.

I always look at one quote that I picked up last night and I found really interesting. It says: In attempting to enhance relations between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, it's important for all public school boards to recognize that tensions within such relationships will often occur naturally,

owing to the long history of Aboriginal indigenous communities with education systems. Too much tension or too little engagement relationships requires careful correction.

And we have got to work—I think we heard our minister of indigenous affairs when she was talking and sharing ideas. It's that inclusion—part of the decision making, part of giving them the opportunity to speak and to be able to relate and have input. And if we can accomplish those, we will win.

This side of House, we talk about teamwork every day. On the other side of the House, it was a buzzword. There, for about a week, we heard the word team, and then all of a sudden, it's disappeared.

The most recent report by C.D. Howe showed that under the previous government, nearly 63 per cent of Aboriginal high school students in Manitoba don't graduate. And I seen time and time again where students—I had so many of them would go ahead and say, you know, I'm going to be leaving on Monday and I don't want to leave. And, you know, to no fault of their own, because of a situation arising, they were quite transient, where they would come into a school and we were taking that opportunity away from them. They very much wanted to stay. They very much wanted to get that education.

According to the international Aboriginal and northern affairs development report, Manitoba was one of the worst places for First Nation people to live in Canada under the NDP.

Our government is committed to working with everyone. Manitobans are telling us they can't afford another NDP decade of debt, decline and decay. The only way to empower people to be part of Manitoba economy is to ensure there is equal opportunity, and that is why we are committed to working with the federal government. Our government is focused on fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding the economy. We're committed to making Manitoba Canada's most improved province, making Manitoba families—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I want to thank the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for bringing forward this important resolution this afternoon.

You know, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: The time is always right to do what is right. And that time

is this afternoon. And what is right is to stand and, unanimously, as members of this Legislature, to support this resolution, to make it clear to the people of Manitoba, especially indigenous people in Manitoba, but all Manitobans, that we stand together in calling on the federal government to move forward at a much faster pace than has ever been the case in our country's history.

You know, there's a lot of ways that you learn things as a member of the Legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sometimes, it's from—most times, it's from talking to people in our communities or talking to people elsewhere in the province. Sometimes, although people on the outside of this building may not appreciate it, sometimes that's by listening to what all of us have to say in this House. And sometimes, it's by other ways that you learn things and gather information, even if it's things you didn't want to learn in the first place.

I recommend to every member of this House a book written by Charlie Angus, who's a Member of Parliament from northern Ontario. It's called *Children of the Broken Treaty*. And this book is not easy for anyone to read not because it's not well written but because of the content. And Charlie Angus talks, first of all, about the shameful history of residential schools, provides more details than many of us may have known before, and goes on to talk about Shannen's Dream, which my friend the member for Fort Rouge talked about. Charlie Angus actually had a very close relationship with Shannen. In fact, Shannen lived with him when she had to come south to go to high school because there wasn't a school in her own community.

And Shannen Koostachin, of course, had a dream that she would have a school for her and her community to go to in her home community that was safe, that was nice like the schools elsewhere in Ontario. Unfortunately, she lost her life in a motor vehicle accident, but her dream has continued to shine bright.

And I say those as opening comments because I would hope every member of this House believes that everyone in Manitoba, wherever they may live, whatever their heritage might be, should have the opportunity to have a successful future. I would hope every member of this House believes that all students, wherever they may live in Manitoba, deserve to have a high-quality education. They deserve the skills they need to get a good job right here in Manitoba. I would hope everybody agrees

that all children and young people—well, all people—should have access to quality, affordable health care that meets their needs as close to home as possible. And I'm certain that every member of this House agrees that people have the right to be safe in their homes, in their schools, in their workplaces and in their communities.

* (15:50)

And, put most simply, as the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) has in his resolution, the federal government must uphold its commitment, must uphold its responsibility to fund and support health care, education, housing, infrastructure and safety in our First Nations communities.

You know, if you look at the Constitution, of course, it was written in 1867, so it might not use the same words that we would now, but it's clearly the responsibility of the federal government to take responsibility for Indians and Indian lands. Those words are in the Constitution. Those words should drive the federal government to continue moving.

And I do—although I agree with many of the things the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) said, I do take issue with trying to paper over the last 150 years of our history as a country. The member for River Heights said that the federal government complying with its responsibilities is a work in progress. After 150 years, how much longer do people have to wait?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, truly, it's not just the federal government; all governments, and I would hope all parties of all political stripes, have a responsibility to ensure the rights and needs of indigenous people are being met. And, put most simply, Manitoba needs to follow the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by former Manitoba Court of Queen's Justice Murray Sinclair, and move ahead to address the real challenges that First Nations young people face.

And we fully support and we respect the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and that is why it's important to speak with one voice today to call on the federal government to take action in addressing chronic underfunding of First Nations.

I wish it was only in the area of social services that we had to discuss these things. We know it's also the case in education. We know it's the case in health care. We know it's the case in justice. And I was interested, of course, the new Minister of Justice

(Mrs. Stefanson) went to her first national meeting, the federal-provincial-territorial meetings and more than half of her press release was complaining about the federal government's decision to take away the band constable program, which used to provide policing or public safety services in a number of First Nations, especially those not connected to the road network, where the RCMP have replacing responsibilities but don't have a detachment and have to fly in and, as we know, cannot always be in the community when needed. And that is just another example of an area where the federal government has not only not moved and kept its feet moving but has actually, in some cases, slid backwards.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision is quite clear and it's quite stark, and it tells the federal government they have to act and they have to start funding First Nations and start supporting indigenous people properly, which they're not doing. And the federal government, unfortunately, has refused to act on this decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which found the government systematically discriminates, as the member for Fort Rouge put on the record most eloquently, against First Nation children living on reserve by underfunding them.

The government doesn't have to agree with that decision. The government may not be happy with that decision. The government may even have stress of what that decision would mean because it's going to mean providing more funding to meet their obligations. But those are obligations and what is so disappointing, and I wish we didn't have to argue and debate this resolution this afternoon, what is frustrating is that despite the tribunal issuing its order, the federal government has not moved. And I don't know of another situation in Canadian history where the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has had to issue a compliance order, not just once but three times, calling on the federal government to get to work and start implementing the panel's findings and orders. And that is a problem. That is unconscionable, and frankly that inaction in the face of a clear order and direction from the tribunal is something that this Legislature should condemn, because when governments are subject to orders, they need to move. And it is abundantly clear that, unfortunately, the federal government has not moved in the way that they need to.

And the complaint, of course, did not just come about in the past few months or in the past year; this complaint came about as a result of dedicated work

by Cindy Blackstock, who we've heard much about this afternoon, who, indeed, is in Winnipeg, and she'll be speaking to a room full of helping professionals, of people who work in this area, who care about this area and who'll continue to do their best.

And we're disappointed to see the federal government dawdle on the result of Ms. Blackstock's work over many, many years, times when the federal government tried time and time again to shut down her work. The federal government went to court to try to shut down the complaint, to try and have it dismissed, and it didn't work. She and her team stuck with it and were able to get a very, very important decision which has to start moving the needle on making changes in our country.

And, today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Manitoba government must do everything it can to help indigenous people truly be able to enjoy all of the rights of citizenship, which I think we all know they have, and that includes putting pressure on the federal government to come through on their promise, to come through on their constitutional obligation and to meet the requirements of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal while at the same time making it clear we'll continue to partner with the federal government in implementing new initiatives.

As I said at the start, there's always the right time to do the right thing. We are in that time right now. Let's speak with one voice. Let's pass this resolution and let's continue bending the arc for indigenous people and for all people in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to be able to offer a couple of words in what is, actually, just a short couple of minutes to actually address what is something that has been ongoing for generations and generations and generations.

I do want to just take a moment to respond to some of the comments that I've actually heard in the last little while, and I want to specifically note the stories and the narrative the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Affairs (Ms. Clarke) shared with the House just about an hour ago. And the minister attempted to share stories in here about some of her meetings with indigenous peoples in the last six months, and what I found really interesting in her narrative was she attempted to portray the individuals that she met with as—basically, like

broken people, that they—and she kept repeating how humble they were and that they were just so shocked to be meeting with a minister. And she really tried to leave the impression in this House that the individuals that she's met with—either in the pow wow or in her office or on the steps of the Legislature or wherever—are all absolutely just broken indigenous peoples, and that somehow it was inferred that the folks that she's met with are broken because of their interactions with the NDP; so I'd like to just put a couple of words on the record for that.

First off, if you understand our people and you understand our culture and you understand our teachings, one of the core teachings, and it's manifested in a myriad of different ways, is the ability to be humble and to never situate yourself as if you're somewhat better than anybody else. I cannot tell you how many teachings I have been given about being humble and the importance of being humble. And I said this last week or this week—I don't know, whatever week it is—I had made reference to my first couple of weeks in this House and actually how as an indigenous woman it's—I found it very shocking to my system, the back and forth that goes on in this House, and I made reference that if anybody were to attend summits and assemblies, you actually never see those behaviours. Our people are so respectful and so humble with one another you would never do some of the things that actually occur in this House.

* (16:00)

So I take exception to the minister's portrayal of our people as being these humble, meek, broken people. And, in fact, we are the antithesis to that. If you have been, for generations and generations and generations, oppressed and marginalized economically, socially, politically and where you had survived genocide in this country, to imagine that we are anything other than survivors and resilient and courageous—we are not broken people.

And, you know, the more that I hope that non-indigenous peoples have the opportunity to travel to First Nations, they would come to understand that our people are the best and the quintessential example to Canadians and to the rest of Canada on our survival and how to survive and forgive and how to maintain integrity within your culture and within your ceremonies and within your spirit, no matter what is thrown at you.

I also want to talk about—or just quickly reference the member from—

An Honourable Member: River Heights.

Ms. Fontaine: No, this member.

An Honourable Member: Swan River.

Ms. Fontaine: Swan River. The member spoke about talking about, you know, the need to be inclusive and to be a part of those decision-making processes. I also want to just put it on the record that those are indigenous principles where—and if people understand our history and understand, actually, western history, you would know that prior to contact and after contact that everybody within the community or the nation or the family or the tribe had an equal opportunity and part in respect of decision making, and that, at its core, our people are inclusive. You can't even imagine it not being any other way than inclusive.

So to attempt to, in this House, to try and make it as if this is something new or something to be owned by members opposite, they are so far from the truth and they are so divorced from actually understanding indigenous culture and history and actually just ways of being. So I just want to just take a couple of moments to set that straight.

The other piece that I want to make note here—and I think that it is so important to make note in here—is that I don't know how many weeks we've been in this House, last session and this session, and every question period, every opportunity that there's a motion or a bill on the floor, the members opposite get up and start talking about, well, there's—we've had 17 years to do this, and it's 17 years this and 17 years that. I want to make it explicitly clear that the conditions in which indigenous people live is predicated upon generations and generations and generations and generations of both Liberal governments and Conservative governments, whatever they were called. So it is not just the last 17 years that has established these myriad of interconnecting and very complex situations and issues that we face.

So, I mean, I would hope that the members opposite would take a moment to reflect and be honest in respect of some of their responses and acknowledge that it is all of us and it is generations of government policies and myriad of expressions of oppression that have put us in where we are today.

I don't have much time. I do want to just say something in respect of the discourse on why this motion shouldn't have been politicized.

I cannot disagree with that in more—in any way in respect of if you understand that, for the most part, indigenous people say often and always that as soon as we are born, we are political. To be indigenous, it is political because of the myriad of assaults and oppressions that take place on us from the moment we take our first breath to the moment we take our last breath. We are political.

These issues—housing on reserves, overcrowded housings, mould conditions, social assistance rates, reproductive health for indigenous women and girls, missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, HIV/AIDS epidemics—these are all political issues. And it demands a political response. And it demands that we actually hold the government to account. And it demands that the government understands that, in Manitoba, we expect them to rectify these issues immediately and to cease their racial profiling and racial discrimination in respect of funding for social services on reserves. And that is nothing to be—I do not apologize for the fact that this is a political issue, and we should all take it as a political issue. And to utilize soft language that, well, if we get around to it, we encourage Liberal government to act fast—we're talking generations now. This is an urgent matter, a political matter that demands attention right now, right here.

Miigwech.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's always an honour and a privilege to be able to speak about the attempts of our society as a whole to re-establish our relationships with the indigenous communities.

The attempt at doing that started with the—I think, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry when there was somebody who got shot right on Logan Avenue near the corner of McPhillips. That same person—and I won't even mention the name so that, maybe, you will keep on asking who was that. There was a police officer who mistook an indigenous person as the suspect in some event where he was responding. And, instead of just arresting the person, there was a not-really-good interaction and the indigenous person died.

And I was still new in the country at that time, and I was amazed that the—there was that stereotype that I was being educated to learn about indigenous people. They said, don't go to the Main Street of Winnipeg. I said, where's that? They keep on telling me that's where you should stay away from. And I said, why? I have been there. Main Street, corner

Higgins. I was looking for a job and I saw people who are normal people who have problems sometimes. You could see them walking. And I said: I'm used to this. I am not afraid of human beings. These are human beings who have been sometimes pushed aside by our society. Our society has always been like that. We pick and choose those that we favour.

* (16:10)

I don't know if that's right or wrong, but now I know that it is ugly, very ugly for us. I want to say bad, just ugly, that in the context of our society as a whole, we have chosen to label people as all Indians or natives. And we choose to put them on one side and say, stay away from them. And I found that the best friends that I've made were those same people, because we were living right on Keewatin Street, right at the Weston area. And that's where I found that they share—[interjection] Thank you. They want me to repeat what I said.

The—I was living at the Keewatin and Logan area, and I found that when I needed coffee and we didn't have any, the first person that we could ask for was our neighbour, and they were on social assistance. And they would give me coffee. And they would share it with me in much the same way that I would share anything that I had with them. They said, that's the way we do it in our reserves. I said, tell me more. He said, in our area in the North, nobody goes hungry alone. If one is hungry, all of us will be. Every single morsel of food, we will share. And that's how I found that the culture is more benevolent than what I had before. They are so hospitable.

And now we have this resolution before us that says that the federal government has been underfunding the education of children. And it's part of what we need as a people to get up and show our abhorrence—we will show our dismay—no, we will show our anger that the unfairness has been perpetrated by a federal government—by a federal government that seems to be doing everything right for themselves. And this resolution is something that we could put all our collective affirmation as a people, and say this is good. We should support this, and we should make it as urgent as possible, that whatever funding is available, do it now during our lifetimes. Never wait for it, because if we did, as an immigrant, from my point of view, it will be the most horrendous sin that I could do if I don't speak out.

The relationships that we have—we have one of the most diverse caucuses, I think, in the history of the province. It is a claim, too, that the other side said they are the most diverse. Okay. Yes. Sure. I can accept that. And if I were to characterize what is diverse, I usually say—and I would usually characterize those that are diverse not by the colour of their skin. But then, tell me—tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how else can I label ourselves?

We can label ourselves as people, people who have—who will have the same pain and have the same hurt. So, when there is any injustice to the children of the North, we should all cry out in pain. We cannot afford not to say our umbrage and to show our dismay at the federal government for doing what it is doing to the children of our Aboriginals. And if there is anything that we could all do as a people, as a Legislature, is at least to not pretend that we're doing the best we can by just talking about it. We should do things. We should act on what we are talking about and not pay lip service to it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Fort Rouge for bringing this very important resolution and for the contributions of all of my colleagues have spoken already and will still continue to speak on this resolution, especially that of my sister from St. Johns, who gave a very passionate and informative lecture on history. Very important to know history of what happened in the past, because our future, our understanding of the future, will be dependent on it if we were to understand—if we were to succeed in the future.

As a first generation immigrant, I'm humbled and grateful to be in Canada. I and my family and many more family and friends who followed our family are truly grateful to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, people like the—the likes of Chief Peguis, who helped the early Europeans to survive their first winter in Manitoba. Without the hospitality and survival knowledge imparted on them, they would have lost their lives during the first winter and there will be no further settlers to have followed after them without First Nations hospitality and welcoming arms to those who are non-First Nations people.

In other areas of Canada, like the Maritimes, the Mi'kmaq First Nations people did the same. And many European peoples are indebted to them for

helping them survive their first and even succeeding winters in that part of Canada.

I came here in the early '80s with my family, my husband and two children at that time, and there were not as many Filipinos then as it is now. In fact, I learned that Tagalog, the native or the national language, is spoken by more people in Manitoba than French. So the Filipino community has succeeded and has thrived, and our numbers have grown, and I would still say we owe it to the hospitality and compassion of the First Nations people.

* (16:20)

In one of those house parties that I attended in the early '80s, there was this woman who was ranting and was saying: Oh, these First Nations people. And she even said: Those Indians, they are lazy. They're not working, yet they're receiving money from the government, and those are my tax money. Well, she's correct if she's paying the right taxes and everybody else was paying the right—was—everybody else was able, or also—and working—or also paying taxes. I felt so bad that she had the temerity to say those things. Coming from where she was, or—like, a first-generation immigrant like myself, we are all working hard. I recognized she was—she works hard, she came here earlier. But I—that kind of attitude is a little too much. If she knows the history of this country and how First Nations people were treated by succeeding governments, she probably would not say those things. And, besides—true, people who are on welfare receive support from the government—oh, I remember she was even saying: Those people are taking advantage of the government and of the system. There may be people like that, but I did also come across with a study that—most people who are receiving welfare are truly needy and should be helped, and not taking advantage of the system.

So that—oh, I did respond to that woman, when I said—and I was quite forceful to—when I said that: Personally, I don't mind paying taxes, even knowing that it will go to people on welfare, because those people—we don't know what their situation are, why they're on welfare, but if I, and my small contribution, will be able to help them survive, I would gladly—I'll gladly pay my taxes, knowing it will help those people.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

In my church, I am surrounded by many wonderful people. A couple—elderly couple are very dear to me. Jack and Grace Little. They're both gone

now, and they have golden hearts. They are not rich, but they had good jobs and they lived frugally. So they were able to save for their old age, and, probably, they invested wisely. And those money invested earned them good returns. But, instead of spending them just for luxury, they were simple people. They, rather, chose to give their funds graciously, willingly, and lovingly to an 'indulment'—endowment fund at the University of Winnipeg. And they made a particular provision that those funds—generous funds—will be used only for the—to help First Nations, Metis, Inuit people pursue higher education. And, when we asked them why, they said—the couple said: We believe these people were treated badly. They will dealt a bad hand and, if only they were given the chance to lift themselves up, given the help and the resources to pursue higher education, they will turn their lives around, they will make a name for themselves, they will be a role model for their family and their community, and they will be responsible members of society, contributing not just to the vibrancy of their community but to the economic and social well-being of society.

And I think their decision to invest their hard-earned money in that endowment was the best, and they think so, that their best decision in life. That endowment truly contributed—or made possible the education of many, many indigenous students, one of whom was a well-known grand chief. And Grace was very lucky to meet the grand chief when there was this party for her, and she was very happy and blessed.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, it's my privilege to rise today to speak this—to this very important motion before the House today. And before I begin my remarks, I did want to acknowledge, I think, the non-partisan nature of the debate here this afternoon. At least it's my hope that that is where we're headed. And, certainly, we'll have a vote this afternoon, an opportunity for us to all put clearly on the record where we stand there.

But it is my position, for those that know me, I'm not overly partisan. I am a strong believer in not politicizing those things that don't deserve to be politicized. We have the opportunity in this House—it's actually our obligation in this House, I think—to voice when we do disagree, to express that in absolutely every way that we can in words and in our actions and how we vote, but when we can agree—and there are opportunities in this House when we

can agree—then we should. And we shouldn't let petty politics, we shouldn't let, you know, individual words in a particular resolution get in the way of what we all know to be true and to be right. And so I hope that's where we're headed this afternoon.

I did want to acknowledge the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew)—no, the member for Fort—no, the member for—

An Honourable Member: River Heights.

Mr. Wiebe: —River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), thank you, who in his words this afternoon I think acknowledged his interest in sending a clear message to his federal cousins in supporting this motion, in supporting the ruling of the human rights tribunal, and I think he understands how important this is. I also want to acknowledge the Premier (Mr. Pallister) who, during question period, I think, as well, seemed to indicate his support for this motion and at the very least understands the necessity here of taking a stand on this issue.

So, when we have a chance to agree, as we do here today, Madam Speaker, I hope that we'll raise our voices, we'll stand with some of the most marginalized communities in our province and, at the very least, as a starting point, give them the dignity of affording them the most basic rights, that all Manitobans should have access to quality health care, education and housing and all social services in our province.

So I wanted to also, obviously, acknowledge, Madam Speaker—and I apologize for taking so long to get to this point—but to acknowledge my friend for Fort Rouge and his work here this afternoon of bringing this important motion to the House but also his work outside of this House, his work over many years in bringing these issues forward. His voice is a unique one in Canada. It's, I think, one that speaks to where we are as a country. And having him bring this issue to this House, I think, is an important step.

* (16:30)

I'm proud to be here at a time when I think we are beginning, as Canadians, to take ownership of the historical wrongs that have been perpetrated on indigenous people. And I think this is a unique point in history where it's our obligation to acknowledge those historical wrongs but also to seek out those new solutions and to really acknowledge the current issues faced by First Nations. And, as I said, I think this is that point in history when we can come into a place like this, and we can actually have that

discussion. And we can actually, hopefully, begin to rebuild the trust and respect between all Canadians and indigenous people. So I believe we're at that moment.

I'm also proud to add my support to the work of Cindy Blackstock and so many who have refused to stand by and let successive federal governments turn away from First Nations to, rather than acknowledge the hardships that they face and take on the tough problems, have instead run away. And I think that it's the work of Cindy Blackstock and others who have brought this to the forefront and continue to push this forward. So I commend them and I am proud to add my support here today.

I acknowledge I am just a very small part of this debate here this afternoon, Madam Speaker, but it's something that I feel very proud to be a part of, that we are moving this province forward, that we are moving this country forward, that we are acknowledging our indigenous brothers and sisters and that we are seeking those solutions that are so very important to moving our country forward into the 21st century.

With regards to this motion itself, Madam Speaker, we know that health care for First Nations is at crisis levels. We also know that the previous federal government was completely absent from the table. To most people, they may understand that it is the responsibility of the federal government to administer health care on—for First Nations. They may intrinsically understand that, but they may not exactly understand what that means and what the implications of that are.

What it means is that those First Nations operate outside of the provincial purview of health-care delivery in this province. And, while it's our obligation as a province to uphold the Canada Health Act, to provide health-care services to all Manitobans to a level that is acceptable to Manitobans in relation to Canadians across this country, First Nations are apart from that system. And so it does fall directly and squarely on the federal government to deliver those services. And what we've seen is that they have not stepped up to the table, that, as I said, health care on First Nations is at crisis levels, and it, again, falls squarely on the federal government to address that failing.

Now, I did want to acknowledge that it was this provincial government that has stepped up time and time and time again to fill those gaps and to try to acknowledge this particular difficulty in First

Nations for delivering health care, and to try to fill those gaps. We have tried. And we have pumped a lot of money towards helping to fix this problem, a problem that is the federal government's problem. But we as Manitobans understand that it is our obligation to First Nations people to do what we can as a province to make health care better for First Nations.

So we had a liaison. We had a liaison who looked at health on First Nations and looked at ways that we could step up as a provincial government and fill those gaps. And, you know, we certainly couldn't solve the problem. We couldn't address the entire issue. But what we could do is add our ability as a provincial government to try to fix that problem, to try to address that problem. And here we are today, Madam Speaker, looking to the federal government to stop dragging its feet, to step up to fulfill its obligation and take that burden off of the provincial government, allow us to continue to support Aboriginal health and First Nations health wherever we can. But the bulk of this must fall to the federal government to understand its obligation and its obligation to First Nations people.

So the Truth and Reconciliation Commission itself had seven recommendations with regards to health care and that everything from recognizing the unique challenges of First Nations health, be that, you know, in relation to historical wrongs in residential schools, to everything to the facilities that are available to First Nations communities, equipment, training. But it's the responsibility of this federal government to, under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, to recognize those gaps, to report those to Canadians and then to come up with a plan on how to fill those gaps.

So I ask all members in this House to stand together to say that we stand with First Nations people. We understand the unique responsibility of the federal government here, that we will continue to do our part as a provincial government. I think that's absolutely key that we do not back down from delivering proper health care, housing and any other social service that we can backfill as a provincial government, but that we recognize the federal government's unique responsibility here to provide health care to First Nations in a way that's in accordance with the Canada Health Act and that honours and respects our First Nations brothers and sisters and, frankly, honours all Canadians by giving

us an opportunity to give to First Nations an equal opportunity.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I'm very honoured to have a chance to speak a little bit to this very important motion. Of course, we might all wish that we didn't have to speak to a motion like this, that the systemic racial discrimination against First Nations and indigenous people in our country had been resolved. We are not there yet, not there by a long shot. And I want to commend my colleague the MLA for Fort Rouge for bringing this important discussion forward. I also want to thank and acknowledge the incredible advocacy work that my other colleagues, the MLAs for St. Johns and for Point Douglas and for The Pas, the work that they do as indigenous leaders and indigenous advocates, not just in this Chamber, not just in our caucus, but in our community as a whole, for the fights that they so bravely take on and do justice to.

I begin as well by acknowledging that, of course, all of us are here on Treaty 1 territory and the home of the Metis—the homeland of the Metis people. Ten minutes is not even remotely close to enough time to touch on even a tiniest fraction of the systemic injustices that have been perpetrated upon indigenous people in Canada. The fact that we could see tonight, tomorrow, the weekend, next week yet another story about how First Nations and indigenous people are systemically discriminated against, is just so saddening and so maddening at the same time.

How on earth can we believe that everyone in our society has equal opportunity when hundreds, if not thousands, of our own citizens in Manitoba do not have running water? They do not have access to healthy food; they do not have schools where their children can attend and receive the same level of financial support that other children, no different from them in any way that matters—other children receive more money at their schools than the First Nations communities do.

These are just some of the myriad of symptoms that still exist in our society, because the root causes have not yet been addressed. And it is incumbent upon our provincial government, the new one here today, and, even more so, the federal government, to finally begin real, systemic change in healing the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous people. And, at a bare minimum, Madam Speaker, I would suggest that means ensuring there's

equal opportunity for everyone, and these appalling injustices that exist in our society today are acknowledged. Their historical roots are acknowledged. The treaties are acknowledged and honoured. Only then could we possibly begin to have a real conversation about reconciliation.

* (16:40)

I cannot believe how patient the indigenous people in this country have been with the rest of us. For centuries they have been waiting for an honest conversation about what the treaties mean and when the rest of Canadian society is going to step up and honour them in the way that it should.

And lest people think that all of this is still just rooted in some distant, historical past, let me just simply point out—and I'm going to close my comments here because I want to make sure that other colleagues of mine have a chance to speak to this motion as well—but let me just make it very clear, Madam Speaker, that within the past year, we have had rulings from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal come down in favour of strong action in addressing the systemic discrimination against First Nations people.

This was a court case that was fought tooth and nail, of course, by the mean-spirited and dismissive Harper government. But the federal Liberals, so far, have been reprimanded no less than three times since the ruling came down for not enacting on the recommendations of the tribunal. The tribunal is well within its rights and its scope to continue putting pressure on the federal government.

I want to commend, again, my colleague, the MLA for Fort Rouge, for bringing this motion forward so that all of us can do the same, and let's keep working as positive allies in the support of indigenous people everywhere in Canada so that justice finally prevails in our country.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): First of all, I want to congratulate the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for this Opposition Day motion and his terrific speech that he made in support of it. And, at the outset, I'd also like to recognize the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) and the former premier of this province for his contribution to First Nation issues for the—not only the entire time he was premier, but when he was Finance minister for a number of years, and even before his being involved

in politics. He has certainly treated First Nation issues and put them at the top of his list of activities.

The motion itself reads that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the federal government's inaction to equitably funding social services of the First Nations people. And I found it interesting that, over the years, that the governments that have been largely in control of this country over the last hundred-and-some years have primarily been Liberal governments. And so I have to smile when I hear all their announcements about how they're going to lead the charge and take care of all of the problems in this country when, in fact, they were in control of the country most of the time a lot of those last bad hundred years.

As a matter of fact, it was the Conservative premier Diefenbaker who was the first to act on providing the vote federally. So I really think that the—it's very important, here, that the Liberals not only are here to vote in favour of this motion, but they actually take some action in trying to convince their federal cousins that it's time to act. I mean, we just heard a speech not long ago by one of those Liberal members who was talking about the great—it was—sound like a travelogue to me, but, like, what they did for summer vacation. They went down to Ottawa and they met with all these high-powered federal Liberal Cabinet ministers, and they are, like, on the inside, now. And they're going to get all these things done. So I'm looking forward to some results coming out of all that travel activity that we saw from them this summer.

Now, Madam Speaker, we believe that everyone matters, and that every child should have the opportunity to have a successful future. All students deserve to get a high-quality education and the skills they need to get a good job here in Manitoba. All children and young people should have access to quality, affordable health-care that meets their needs. The federal government must uphold their commitment to equal funding, and support health-care education, housing, infrastructure in communities on First Nations. We hope that all parties in the Legislature will hold the federal government account—to account to support this important motion. I'm very—going to be very curious to see where the government members stand on this. We are going to be finding out, I guess, in as little as 15 or 20 minutes from now whether or not this resolution will be supported by all three parties in this Legislature.

All parties and all governments have a responsibility to ensure the rights and needs of indigenous peoples are being met. Manitoba needs to follow the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and address the real challenges that First Nations young people face.

We also fully support and respect the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and urge the provincial government to work with the federal government to take action in addressing chronic underfunding for First Nations.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to point out that, in the federal Parliament, Charlie Angus from the NDP has a long, long history of supporting native issues and he is working very, very hard, I know, federally, at this moment, to push the federal Liberals forward on this. What happened to—in terms of Jordan's Principle, what happened to Jordan was tragic, unnecessary, and preventable, but we took steps to ensure a similar situation wouldn't happen again.

Under the NDP, Manitoba became the first provincial government to reach an agreement with the federal government to implement Jordan's Principle in September of 2008. We pushed the former federal government to formalize the case conferencing mechanism designed to settle funding disputes. We pushed the former federal government to involve First Nations representation and work with AMC to implement Jordan's Principle and ensure that it meets everyone's needs.

Our work to move this important legislation forward was slowed by frustrating inaction on the part of the federal Conservative government at the time. Our attempts to meet with the former Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs were rebuffed repeatedly until we were finally able to form a joint committee. Within nine days of the joint committee being formed, we named our provincial representative and the new federal Liberal government has made an historic commitment to fast-track Jordan's Principle and commit \$380 million to implement it.

We welcome this commitment, and urge the federal government to follow through on this commitment. We encourage the provincial government to do whatever is possible to ensure Jordan's Principle is implemented as quickly and as fully as possible. As one of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Jordan's

Principle is crucial to ensuring that the best interests of First Nations children are being considered.

In terms of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision, we've seen this federal government drag its heels with addressing commitments made to First Nations already. The federal Liberals refuse to act on the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision that the Canadian government systematically discriminates against First Nation children on reserve by underfunding them. Despite the tribunal issuing a compliance order three times—three times, Madam Speaker—the federal government has yet to implement the panel's finding and orders.

This complaint is a result of dedicated work by Cindy Blackstock who, I understand, according to the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), is in town tonight with the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

We're disappointed to see the federal government ignore in addressing serious human rights abuses and discrimination. The federal Liberals must be more transparent to Canadians and must partner with the indigenous community to reform the federal First Nations child welfare program. The Manitoba government must do everything it can to help our First Nations achieve equality, including putting pressure on the federal government to come through on their promise and partnering with them to implement new initiatives.

The New Democrats are committed to repairing and healing the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, the '60s scoop, missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, the ongoing effects of development on treaty lands. We're committed to a new relationship. We fully support the work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the recommendations made to advance the lives of indigenous Canadians. We're heartened by the new federal government's commitment to acknowledge past wrongs and take action to reverse them. We urge the provincial government to hold them to account for this.

* (16:50)

Our NDP government implemented the findings of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry that was actually begun way back in 1987. We were working on an historic First Nations, Metis and Inuit education policy framework document. It was meant to ensure that all Manitoba students learn about the histories,

cultures and traditional values, knowledge and contemporary lifestyles of indigenous peoples, the legacy of residential schools and the significance of treaties. It would also have updated current provincial curriculum to reflect indigenous history and perspectives including the 1960s scoop.

As government, we called for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, and that was long before the federal government of the day would make any efforts in this area. We want a correct government to—of this current government to fully co-operate with the inquiry and to bring healing and justice to these families.

And, Madam Speaker, my time is running short here, but I can tell you that certainly in the area of, you know, economic development, we have the Wuskwatim dam, which, I believe, was the first hydro dam in probably 20 years that proceeded on the basis of a partnership between the Province and indigenous people and Manitoba Hydro. So, certainly, from the NDP point of view, we've certainly done as—a fair amount to further these files, you know, even though the federal government holds a large responsibility here. And, therefore, on that basis, I go back to my original argument that we would like the Liberal members of this Legislature to put up a bigger effort and a bigger fight with their federal cousins to make certain that there's progress made on these files.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking on this bill—or this resolution. It was my honour, it was my privilege, to second it for my brother from Fort Rouge, and it's my honour and my privilege and, in fact, it's my duty, to stand with him and to stand with all members of this House in condemning the federal government that's in place today, that was in place yesterday, that's been in place for 150 years that continues to systemically conduct racist discrimination action against our brothers, against our sisters, against citizens of this country.

We should all be ashamed of that, Madam Speaker, and we must all stand together with this. And to use the word condemn is not too harsh a word. I'm sorry that my friend from River Heights thinks the word condemned is too strong a word. It is not too strong. And he should go to his federal counterparts and demand that they live up to their obligations and condemn them for their inaction.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion in the name of the honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew).

Do members wish to have the motion read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense?

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

I declare the motion carried.

Recorded Vote

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

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

The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the federal government's inaction in equitably funding social services for First Nations people.

* (17:00)

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Chief, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 50, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), on a point of order.

Mr. Kinew: I would ask that a copy of the motion be sent to the Prime Minister and the leaders of all federal parties.

Madam Speaker: Are you asking leave to do so?

Mr. Kinew: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the information as requested to be sent to the Prime Minister?
[Agreed]

The hour being past 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>