

**Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
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SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	
<i>Vacant</i>	Lac du Bonnet	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 12, 2011

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, we will deal with condolence motions—motion of condolence.

## Sterling Rufus Lyon

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen),

THAT this House convey to the family of the late Sterling Rufus Lyon, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, former Premier Sterling Lyon wanted Manitoba to achieve its fullest potential. He was devoted to this province and its future. It is with deep regret that I extend my condolences to his family and friends, particularly to his children—Nancy, Andrea, Peter, Jennifer and Jonathon—and their families.

Born in 1927, Sterling Lyon passed away at the age of 83 on December 16th, 2010, after a brief illness. He served as Premier of Manitoba from 1977 to 1981, but his public service to the Province extended over four decades as a Crown attorney, a member of the Legislature, Attorney General, Leader of the Opposition, Premier, and as a judge on the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

His passion for public service was only surpassed by his devotion to his family. His family was his foundation, and he treasured the opportunities his political life gave him to expand his children's experiences and perspectives on the political process.

After working for a year as a reporter for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and practising law for four years, Sterling Lyon won his first legislative seat in 1958, representing Fort Garry. He had a wide variety of roles while he was serving with Duff Roblin's government, including Government House Leader, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Public Utilities and Minister of Mines and Natural Resources. He was Duff Roblin's youngest Cabinet minister at 31, and also became Manitoba's youngest attorney general. He distinguished himself early as a dedicated worker and, as his family remembers, was known for his strong will in pursuit of the public good.

Sterling Lyon was a loyal member of Cabinet during the Duff Roblin era and was widely respected for his ability to keep his cool. During this time of growth and exposure to a wide variety of roles, Sterling Lyon developed his own brand of politics, often described as solitary, combative and self-assured, derived from a lifetime of self-reliance. He believed in bringing out the best in his colleagues and often spoke of the strengths of his team.

Paired with his loyalty and leadership were his ethical principles, which shaped his political ideals to his personal conduct. He refused to sit on the fence on important issues, and he often said, if you can't do it on the post office steps, don't do it anywhere else.

After some time off from politics, Sterling Lyon returned to lead the Conservative Party in 1975, and became first minister in 1977. As a freshly minted premier, Sterling Lyon wished to seek alternative energy sources, develop a new charter for the city of Winnipeg and develop incentive programs to encourage young people to stay in the province. He wanted to improve home ownership for the young and the elderly, and was open to discussion with his ministers when developing his plan of action.

It is important, at this very moment in our province's history, as we face one of the greatest

floods on record, to note that Premier Lyon also dealt successfully with a major flood of the Red River in 1979, a flood that reached similar levels to the flood of 1950. We also need to remember the pivotal role Sterling Lyon played in defending the national disaster assistance financing formula that we still have in place today.

It is virtually impossible to remember his vast contributions to this province without mentioning his invaluable contributions to securing the equalization provision in our Constitution that has proved so important in the overall unity of this nation. Near the end of his term, Sterling Lyon's government was investing in several megaprojects, including plans to develop a western power grid to sell electricity to our prairie neighbours.

Sterling Lyon was also a supporter of Manitoba Public Insurance, developed our funding structure for schools and provided public funding for parties and elections. Following the 1981 provincial election, Sterling Lyon served as the opposition leader until 1983. In 1982, Sterling Lyon was appointed to the Privy Council of Canada. He served on the Manitoba Court of Appeal after his retirement from politics in 1986 until his retirement in 2002. In 2002 he was given Manitoba's highest honour when he was invested into the Order of Manitoba.

In 2009 he was made an officer of the Order of Canada for his contributions as a judge and long-time politician in Manitoba where, as premier, he extended social services for the elderly and for low-income families, and he led the expansion of community-based health and social services and modernized governmental financial procedures.

Sterling Lyon's passion and commitment extended beyond politics. After graduating from the University of Winnipeg, he remained involved with the university and served on its board of regents from 1972 until 1976. In recognition of this, he was awarded with the University of Winnipeg's annual Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2004.

Throughout his life Sterling Lyon had a keen interest in watershed management, water stewardship and in conservation. He was equally involved with wildlife preservation and served as a trustee of the North American Wildlife Foundation, a long-time member of the Delta Waterfowl Foundation and was an honorary life member of the Manitoba Wildlife Federation.

\* (10:10)

Sterling Lyon was widely respected for his deep convictions, which made him a true champion for Manitobans. His intense nature, unflinching adherence to his principles made a deep impression on the history of this province, and he will remain a role model for generations to come.

Again, my condolences to Sterling Lyon's family, friends and followers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to second the motion tabled by the First Minister, and I want to thank the Premier for those very fitting words and that fine tribute to somebody who was, by any measurement, a great Manitoban.

As is known, Sterling Lyon spent 83 very active and productive years on this Earth and contributed a great deal to our wonderful province of Manitoban—of Manitoba. He was somebody that I first had the opportunity to meet around 1979. My grandmother, Gwen Laughlin, served on his staff at the time, and it was my grandmother who really was my inspiration for getting involved in public life, and for becoming a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. Her inspiration came from her boss, Sterling Lyon, who she held the highest regard for, in terms of his incredible personal honour, his style of leadership and the warmth that he extended to everybody who operated within the circle of people who surrounded him.

I remember, in my youth, hearing stories about the incredible speeches that he gave, the hard decisions that he made, the—his gregarious nature, the way in which the office operated, which was a very collegial place, and it was a collegial Legislature, as well. Even members opposite and from different parties recall that time as a time when members knew each other both professionally and personally, spent a great deal of time together, and engaged in vigorous debate over competing visions as to what was best for our province.

I had the opportunity just last night, Mr. Speaker, to speak to J. D. Lees, who was a member of Mr. Lyon's staff. He was one of the young members of that staff-team at the time that my grandmother used to speak of in glowing terms, and there was just a tremendous, vibrant, intelligent group of people who worked along with Sterling Lyon during that period in our history. It was a testament to his leadership that such a talented and

committed group of people came to serve in public life along with him.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has outlined some of Sterling Lyon's remarkable contributions in public life. I want to just focus on a couple of those. One, which is not, I think, as well recognized and recorded as perhaps could be the case, is the innovations that he brought forward in social policy to support the working poor in this province: changes to marital property laws to provide for more equal treatment for women; changes in other areas of social policy, in particular, in health care, that were forward looking and progressive in every sense.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, he made incredible contributions, not just to our province, but to our country through some of the major debates that took place during his time in office over the future of Canada, the sort of constitutional legal framework that this country would have. Prime Minister Trudeau, as we know, patriated the Constitution of Canada, put in place the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a fundamental part of the Constitution of Canada. And, at the time, there was vigorous debate, not so much over the principles that were contained in the Charter or the values that it contained, but over the implications of changing the Constitution in ways that could transfer power from elected legislatures to unelected courts. The concern that was raised at the time by Premier Lyon and others, including Premier Blakeney, was that the transfer of power away from elected bodies toward unelected courts could result in laws that were out of step with what would be in the best interests of the majority of people in the country.

As I said, it wasn't the value so much, but the implications in terms of decision making, concentrations of power and accountability to the public that were quite rightly raised at that time by Sterling Lyon. There was a vigorous debate that took place nationally at the time, and, in the end, as is the Canadian way, an honourable compromise with the insertion of the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is a singular achievement on the part of Sterling Lyon and is a testament to the enduring legacy that he has left to our entire great country of Canada.

I learned, just the other day from the member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie), that, in fact, the member was also a supporter of the insertion of the notwithstanding clause at the time, and I'm not 100 per cent certain that I'm right on this point, but I

am willing to hazard a guess that it would be one of the very few points of agreement between the member for Elmwood, the current member for Elmwood and Mr. Lyon. But those disagreements would have been expressed, I'm sure, very directly and vigorously and the debate would have happened, certainly, respectfully and in a way that was designed to advance the best interests of the country.

Mr. Speaker, there are other remarkable achievements as well. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) has touched on some of those in terms of hydroelectric development, a big, bold vision for the economic future of Manitoba that was advanced by Mr. Lyon during his time as premier and during election campaigns in 1977 and 1981. And these are ideas that continue to be valid and important as we look to the future of the great province of Manitoba.

I, Mr. Speaker, had the great honour shortly after becoming leader of our party in 2006, and I believe it was the summer of 2006, to go and spend just a little bit of time with Sterling Lyon and Jonathon, my friend and his son, at the family home on South Drive, and we had a very modest amount of Scotch on a warm summer afternoon. And I was treated to a recounting of Manitoba history with all of the great colour and inflection and saltiness, in some instances, that were the hallmark of Sterling Lyon, his recall of some of the details of the debates that took place that he had with Ed Schreyer at the time over economic and social policies in Manitoba, his discussions with Pierre Trudeau, his debates with other great Canadian premiers of the past, and public figures who made an incredible mark on the history of our province, including Peter Lougheed, Allan Blakeney, René Lévesque, and others, Bill Davis, and others. It was just an incredible opportunity for me, and I'm incredibly grateful that he made that time to share his experience, to provide his advice and share much of that incredible wisdom that he had acquired over his years in public life and during his time on the Court of Appeal and through his involvement in so very many activities that have shaped the community that we all love so much today.

The last opportunity I had for a lengthy conversation with Sterling Lyon happened to be at the funeral of Duff Roblin earlier in the year last year. And he, at that time, shared some of his recollections of that—the time serving under Duff Roblin and the inspiration that he drew from the leadership of Mr. Roblin, the debates that he was part of, the projects that they undertook together,

including the floodway which is serving our city and our province so very well today. And I was absolutely humbled and honoured to be privy to that kind of discussion and his very sage thoughts about that era in Manitoba history on such a momentous day as the funeral of another great Manitoban, Duff Roblin.

\* (10:20)

Mr. Speaker, I want to just thank and acknowledge members of Sterling Lyon's family who are with us today in the gallery. It is a remarkably talented group of children that he and Barbara brought into this world who have done incredible things in different walks of life.

Mr. Speaker, Jonathon, who, of course, does the most important job of all of them as chief of staff within the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition—[*interjection*] Maybe I should say—correct that—and perhaps not the most important but certainly the most challenging, and so I want to acknowledge Jonathon.

As well, we have with us today Jennifer Lyon and her partner Amanda. Jennifer is a remarkably talented performer and singer who at one point briefly—and I won't belabour the House with too much detail—provided me with just a small amount of voice training, which I will be incredibly grateful for prior to an event that I would rather not get into any more detail in at the moment, but Jennifer has performed on the international stage and we're very proud, as Manitobans, of her incredible talent and her achievements.

In addition, I want to just acknowledge Bonnie Staples-Lyon who's here as well, perhaps the second most important job in the province today, challenging as the chief of staff within Mayor Katz's office. Bonnie and Jonathon are just a terrific couple, and I know Sterling and Barbara were both important people to Bonnie, as well as the other partners of the Lyon kids.

In addition we have both Jonny and Kathryn in the gallery today, Sterling's grandkids, who are great kids and people that I've really enjoyed getting to know as they're growing up.

Mr. Speaker, there are three of the Lyon children who are not present in person today but who have—I know will be greatly interested in the comments made today in the House; those are Nancy, Andrea and Peter, all of whom are doing really important things within their own realms. And I want to just

extend my condolences to all of them as well and their partners Doug, Denyse and Alex, as well as the remaining grandchildren, Alexandra, Calum, Kerry and Fraser.

This is a talented, vibrant family—extended family. I've really enjoyed my opportunity to get to know each and every one of them to various degrees, and it is just a great tribute to Sterling and Barbara Lyon that this group of children have gone on to do so much, as have their partners, and the great promise within all of these wonderful grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to, in closing, thank members opposite for the opportunity today, on Manitoba Day, to extend our condolences to the Lyon family. It's an important day today for Manitoba, our 141st birthday as a Province, and it's fitting that on a day like this we would honour a great Manitoban like Sterling Rufus Lyon. It's also fitting that we would have the opportunity to look back on his leadership and his achievements at a time of great challenge for our province, a challenge that we acknowledge is being met by everybody. And I want to just acknowledge all members who are present in the House today and thank you for making your time available on this motion during such a significant period of time, and in the midst of some very significant and challenging and difficult decisions that are currently facing the government.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, in closing, again, what an honour it has been for me to meet Sterling Lyon, to acknowledge what an important role he played in inspiring members of my family and myself, as a leader.

Mr. Speaker, we were just incredibly grateful. We acknowledge the very significant contributions he's made.

We know that members opposite have, at various points, had the opportunity to debate with Sterling Lyon. I've heard some of the tributes come from members opposite about what a vigorous and talented debater he was, and the very kind and generous comments made by members of all parties have certainly been noted, appreciated and form an important part of the record.

And so I just want to thank everybody for the opportunity today to pay tribute to this great Manitoban and this great leader for our province and somebody who I have been very, very privileged to get to know.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very honoured to second this motion to extend the condolences of this House to the family of Sterling Rufus Lyon and also to thank and acknowledge them, and, finally, to extend our condolences on the passing of their wonderful mother, Barbara, who was so important to Sterling Lyon and who predeceased him by a number of years. And I know that he certainly missed her and dealt with his own series of challenges after her passing that really are a reflection of what an important role she played in his life and in the life of the Lyon family.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity, and I want to thank the Premier (Mr. Selinger) for bringing forward this motion.

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development):** It's an honour to stand up and to speak about former Premier Sterling Lyon.

I had the privilege of being his MLA for the last eight years.

Former Premier Sterling Lyon was a dedicated Manitoban with a keen intellect and an intense loyalty to his principles. He is an important part of our province's history and we regret his passing and give our sympathy to his friends and his family—particularly to his five children, Nancy, Peter, Andrea, Jennifer and Jonathon and their families.

Sterling was raised on the homestead in Portage la Prairie where he learned the value of hard work and self-reliance before moving to Winnipeg for his post-secondary education. He was a quick study from his earliest years and won both the Governor General's medal and the Isbister Scholarship to the United College, now the University of Winnipeg.

He became involved in university political clubs and graduated with a degree in political science and history from the University of Winnipeg in 1948.

He went on to earn a law degree from the Manitoba Law School in 1953, where he was president of the Manitoba Law Students Association. After graduation he worked as a Crown attorney for four years.

Sterling Lyon was hand-picked by Duff Roblin to run in Fort Garry constituency in 1958. He did become the second youngest MLA elected. And in 1975 he became the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and in 1977 Sterling became Manitoba's 17th premier.

In the Legislature, Sterling Lyon was considered a spellbinding speaker with a nostalgic and old-world attitude. He was known as a talented and quick-witted public servant. Sterling Lyon was the chair of the Council of Premiers from the summer of 1980 until the summer of 1981, and he was appointed to the Privy Council of Canada in 1982.

He stepped down as the leader of the Progressive Conservatives in 1983. Sterling Lyon is strongly remembered for his contribution to the 1982 patriation of Canada's Constitution and the development of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the inclusion of the notwithstanding clause in the Charter which preserves the supremacy of Parliament with respect to constitutional matters.

His family remembers him as a man who squeezed as much as they could from life. On election day in 1981, once campaigning was over, Sterling took his son out duck hunting for the afternoon. Nancy remembers that dad would faithfully watch Bugs Bunny Saturdays at 5 p.m. with his young family. His favourite character was the rooster, Foghorn Leghorn. After the show, he danced and sang for them in the family kitchen, remarking that, perhaps, he'd missed his calling.

Mr. Speaker, he also had an interest in military history—sometimes dragging his young daughters to the movie house. Sterling loved spending time with the family at his cottage. His son, Jonathon, has been quoted saying: For dad, the perfect day was at Delta Beach when the north wind was blowing whitecaps on the water, swimming with the kids, enjoying the glow of the sunset, enjoying a wee dram of Scotch.

\* (10:30)

He was known as Red to his family and close friends, tended a vegetable garden and indulged in political history and biographies, particularly of his icon, Winston Churchill. A true Conservative, I understand, that if something could be reused he'd keep it around, from rubber bands to plastic bags and twist ties.

I can assure the family that the home on South Drive will always be known as Sterling's home. No matter who will go and live into that home, we will always know that that was where Sterling Lyon lived and raised his family very proudly.

They have said about Sterling Lyon that you always knew where he stood. Well, today, we now stand in memory of a powerful member of the Legislature, and we stand in support of his family

and friends who lost a beloved father, grandfather and a fellow advocate for Manitoba.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak this morning. I want to extend, on behalf of the residents of the Steinbach constituency, our condolences to the Lyon family. The residents of my constituency were always strong supporters of Mr. Lyon and some of the initiatives that he brought forward.

I had the opportunity, a handful of times, to meet Mr. Lyon, the first going back to, I believe, 1994 or 1995, when I was an intern here at the Legislature and we extended an invitation to then, Justice Lyon, to meet, and he graciously accepted. And, some of those in the Chamber will know that I'm not often at a loss for words, but I certainly was when I met with Mr. Lyon. I developed a strong love for politics and for the law, and it was a great opportunity for me to speak with him and he, in his own way, made us feel very much at ease as interns. At the end of that meeting we asked if we could take pictures, and he very graciously accepted, and I still have that picture framed in my home and it offers—or it occupies a special place, not only in my home, but also in my memory.

I also have another reason to be thankful for Mr. Lyon and for what he's done in the province. In 1986, when I was starting high school, there was a teacher then who saw that I had something of an interest in public affairs, although not a very strongly defined interest in politics. But he sort of took me under his wing, and he encouraged me to get more involved in politics, and took me to some political events that were happening locally in our area, in our constituency. That teacher was J.D. Lees, already mentioned by the Leader of the Official Opposition. He was a former executive assistant to Sterling Lyon, and he was extremely loyal and dedicated to Mr. Lyon. Any woe was brought to anybody who would ever question Mr. Lyon or any of his initiatives in the province to J.D. Lees. They would never do it a second time, because he was always a very, very strong defender of Sterling. And he said it was because Mr. Lyon had convictions. But not only that he had convictions, but he was willing to express those convictions. He would say them clearly, and stand by those convictions and bring them forward.

I spoke with J.D. a few days ago and told him about what we'd be doing this morning, and asked if he would provide some remembrances of his time with Sterling Lyon, and he provided those, and I'd

like to read that into the record this morning, Mr. Speaker.

This is written by J.D. Lees.

As a young man I had the privilege of working for Sterling Lyon, while he was premier of Manitoba, from mid-1980 until the end of his term of office in November of 1981. Though I was his executive assistant I was the junior of two, so I functioned more as what I would call a personal assistant. As such, I had limited involvement with government policy or political strategy, but I had a unique opportunity to see Premier Lyon from as many angles, as anyone ever did, as he interacted with his constituents, his opponents, his fellow premiers, his friends and his family.

The man that I observed was one that I was always proud to serve, for whom I retain deep admiration to this day. Mr. Lyon's intellect and breadth of knowledge were widely recognized as having served in many Cabinet portfolios. He had tremendous command of the operations of government. He was philosophically well-grounded and highly principled. He always spoke clearly, and answered questions directly never evading an issue even when his response was not what his audience wanted to hear. In short, he had the courage of his convictions.

Sterling Lyon enjoyed being premier. He came into office with a vision of what he wanted to accomplish and quickly set a course to make it happen. He was both a big-picture guy and a details man. For example, he was ahead of his time in recognizing the need to rein in government spending and debt in his focus on reducing the tax burden on Manitobans, and his conceptualization of a western power grid and other megaprojects that, had subsequent governments followed through and brought them into fruition, might have lifted Manitoba out its perpetual have-not status.

At the same time, Mr. Lyon enjoyed exercising his premier's prerogative in such manners as selecting the wine for premiers' conferences, or inquiring if a Hydro-owned right-of-way might be made available to nearby homeowners as garden space.

Premier Lyon possessed a great sense of humour, and it was evident whether on the job or at home with his family. He held a positive view of life, and others were drawn to him because of it. He had a vast number of friends, many very long-standing.



Camaraderie was something he very much enjoyed and it played an important role in maintaining unity when he was chairman of the premiers during the constitutional dealings with Mr. Trudeau's government. He could use his wit to skewer opponents in political debate, but the attacks were never personal.

Mr. Lyon was not one to denigrate his opponents, even in private. To the contrary, he was more likely to speak of them respectfully as fellow public servants. For example, I recall his expressing high regard for Sid Green's intelligence, despite the fact that they were politically opposed.

Above all, Mr. Lyon was a people person. He regarded public service as a high calling, and he saw the people of Manitoba as individuals worthy of his respect. He initiated Cabinet tours to bring the Cabinet into contact with the regular citizens. He made it a point to converse meaningfully with those that he met, and he remembered what he heard. I was always amazed at the wealth of detail he retained about the people that he encountered. He was a thoughtful man, forever sending handwritten personal notes and responding genuinely to people's concerns. I'm sure both his empathy for individuals and his amazing memory for detail were invaluable assets in his later career on the bench.

Premier Sterling Lyon was a truly significant political figure and a genuinely fine man. Our province has benefited greatly from his service in his many positions of leadership he held over his long and very distinguished career.

And, Mr. Speaker, that was written by J.D. Lees, his former executive assistant. Mr. Lees and I sat together at the funeral, but—Mr. Lyon—he was directly impacted by the man. I was indirectly impacted by the man through the inspiration that J.D. gave me to run for politics, and J.D., of course, was inspired Mr. Lyon. We both owe the family of Sterling Lyon a great sense of gratitude for sharing the man publicly and impacting so many Manitobans.

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, it's with the feelings of great honour that I rise today to pay a few words of my tribute to our 17th premier of Manitoba, Sterling Rufus Lyon.

Elected as second youngest MLA following another great premier of Manitoba, Ed Schreyer, speaks volumes of the passion of such people who are born to serve people and represent them. Politics

is one of the toughest jobs, Mr. Premier—Mr. Speaker, as I experienced for the last eight years, and particularly being the leader of political parties and being premier, how tough it can be that only experience can say.

But I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to rise and experience some of my own experience with the late premier, but before that, I would like to give my greatest sympathy to the friends and family, particularly five children: Nancy, Peter, Andrea, Jennifer and Jonathon, their spouses and their great-grandchildren. I know the grandchildren would be missing their grandfather because I have five and I know how much loving and caring they are, and at times when I imagine when I'm gone, how they will feel. So I have my sympathies to those grandchildren that are missing their grandpa.

\* (10:40)

Born in Windsor, Ontario, in 1927, he moved with his family to Manitoba at a young age. And looking at the history which my colleague has already said, about how he attended the school and how he graduated from the law, and in 1953 he was the president of Manitoba Law Students' Association which, again, gives the indication of leaders who try to lead. They are from the very, very early childhood, they have this quality of leadership. So I feel very happy to be part of this particular motion that speaks on the leaders of our province that have led, sacrificed, and made our province far, far better.

I think, as it was said, that he was a great speaker and he, with his nostalgic and old-world-attitude speeches, he was known throughout the province and perhaps throughout the country, to be a very solid, very principled politician that would not deviate his ideals and principles on any pressure except his own ideal beliefs.

And I recall, Mr. Speaker, my first encounter. I had my children studying in Tuxedo Shaftsbury School. My eldest son was a student, very motivated, a good debater he was, champion of the debate, and he came one day to me. He said, dad, I'd like to go to University of Manitoba where the premier is speaking and I'd like to see him. So I said, fine, let me take you there. So I took all my children and went to—he was inaugurating some functions, and when he was coming out, Piyoosh ran to him, shook hands, and then said, can I have an interview with you, Premier, because my school project wants me to do a piece on that. So Premier Lyon was very, you know, very, very honourable man. He said, yes, of

course, and he mentioned to one of the staff that grant him an interview. Within three days, Piyooosh went to the office and got him an interview and recorded.

Before he went, coming from a socialist-minded father, I prepared him a series of questions to ask and tough questions, and I said, now this kid will go and try to get him to answer. It will be difficult but, boy, when he returned, he said, dad, the premier is a bright man. He has answered every question you asked me to, and on top of that I asked a few other questions, and he was very, very satisfied.

So this speaks again volume of a man who stands with his principle, understands the politics, understands the dynamics of the answers and beliefs, but one of the things that I have always enjoyed in my life, Mr. Speaker, is the value of democracy and freedom, and that makes me really highly respectful to those leaders that they stand on principles that they believe in for the betterment of society.

And then when I met him once, right here at the Legislature, there was another event and I came. I used to be in my business at the time and then because I admired Ed Schreyer, and I saw this man had really got into the premier's chair and what kind of Manitoba he will bring was my question of the time. So when I met him, he gave something that still is in my head that made me feel so honoured. He said, listen, young man, politics is about debates, discussions; otherwise it would be kingdom. Let us debate. Let us discuss. I don't discourage you in your principles but let us keep talking about how these ideals, different ideas, work together and then we can build.

So I was very pleased after his answer and I think that once I was talking to someone, he said that as far as the Constitution of this country's concerned, a great debate was going on and as the leader of the opposition put that the debate of not, you know, Constitution, Charter of Rights notwithstanding clause was debated all over. Even my children were talking about whether it is right or wrong. And I was opposed to that, Mr. Speaker, but he, with his dynamic personality and with his conviction of the values got that embedded in our Constitution which today, when I realize the value of it, I think he did the right job and Canadians passed that.

So this again speaks that the man was a man with principle, vision, and he did lead Manitoba to certain aspects of his work which is long for me to list here, but I would like to quote something from the *Free Press* after his passing, on 17th of

December, 2010. And I quote: He was not opposed to—in fact, he enthusiastically endorsed—new ideas, but he did not believe in tearing something down until he was certain that—and he understood why it had been put to in the first place. In this context, the description right-wing that is often used to describe him and his one-term government—he was premier of Manitoba from 1977 to '81—is a sadly inadequate misnomer. He might be actually described as a man who was ahead of his time, a politician offering ideas and suggestions that people were not yet ready to accept. In his own way, in his small, provincial fiefdom, he carved out a path that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and former US President Ronald Reagan would.

I think it makes politics very interesting, as he mentioned right here to me, that unless you debate, unless you have different views, it will be a stagnant society and somebody will decide and there will be no opposition. So that's something that he said, we encourage good opposition to bring every possible move, very carefully carved out.

And I, when he passed, I thought that I would call him The Lion, a real lion in the jungle of politics, because he was bold, he was solid and he was courageous. So I, once again, I give my tribute and respect to the departed soul and give my serious condolences to all of you and particularly to the grandchildren.

And I would say that with that, I'm really honoured that we are doing it on the Manitoba Day, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) said, to a man that was really very tall in terms of his personality and values. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice on Manitoba Day to honour the life and the contributions of Sterling Lyon, who served as premier from 1977 to '81 and made some major contributions to Manitoba and certainly is an important figure in the history of our province.

I want to extend my condolences to the family and friends, those who are here as well as those who are not, to Jonathon, Jennifer, Nancy, Andrea and Peter on this occasion, and note that the children of Sterling Lyon and Barbara have in themselves made significant contributions in a variety of ways, which I'm sure in due course will be more fully recognized. Thank you.

From his early career as a reporter and then a lawyer, Sterling Lyon, of course, became a minister

under Duff Roblin, contributing in the area of Municipal Affairs, Public Utilities, Mines and Natural Resources, and then, in due course, in 1977 became premier.

I think I want to focus on two or three notable contributions: first of all, given the fact that we are in the middle of a flood at the moment, Sterling Lyon's contributions in the 1979 flood, and in particular to ensuring that the Disaster Financial Assistance agreement was in place and continued. That is an agreement which really, not only then but continuing to today, is really a bedrock agreement in terms of how disaster assistance is funded. And we would have been in great difficulty many times, but particularly, of course, in 1997 and this year, without having that agreement. And while there have been arguments back and forth about certain of the terms of the agreements, nevertheless, without that agreement and the financial arrangements, we would as a province have been in very deep trouble in—on a number of occasions. So a big contribution that certainly was.

\* (10:50)

Second, Sterling Lyon's contribution to the Constitution of Canada and to the debate which occurred at that time, because he recognized the importance of elected officials, the importance in a democracy of making sure that the say of elected officials not only continued but was not usurped by judges. Interestingly enough, he became a judge later on and contributed in that area as well.

But, nevertheless, the importance of democracy to our province, to our country, is vital, and I believe it was really due to Sterling Lyon more than anyone else that we had the insertion of the notwithstanding clause and the recognition that there need to be important checks and balances—checks and balances among federal and provincial governments, checks and balances among elected representatives and decisions made by judges. And I think that that is something very important for all of us to remember as we carry out our day-to-day work here in the Legislature, and we continue to do our best to promote and live the democracy we still strongly believe in.

I also want to briefly mention his work. It concerns his work as a trustee of the North American Wildlife Federation, his interest in the outdoors, his interest in area around Delta Marsh, an area that historically has been of major international importance, the marsh, and continues to be a

significant place in Manitoba, and, of course, in Delta Beach, a community which is an important community on the south part of Lake Manitoba and one which, as we go about the work of dealing with the flood, one that we need to be concerned with, indeed, today.

So it is a reminder of the important things that Sterling Lyon has contributed, and his role and his legacy lives on. I think that there has been much said already by members of the Legislature about Sterling Lyon's contributions, and I think that my contributions, you know, are, along with others, the recognition that the facets of Sterling Lyon's life and his contributions deserve to be recognized, to be honoured and to be celebrated. Thank you.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I think it's very poignant that today of all days, Manitoba Day, we are recognizing, celebrating the contributions of two former premiers, two people who have, in no small way, helped to define Manitoba itself.

I first encountered Sterling Lyon as a student of politics at the University of Manitoba. I was present during several debates, for example, debates with Sidney Spivak, first, and then, second, with Ed Schreyer. And after leaving those debates, of which I—and I taped them and I don't even know if I still have them—I thought, oh, my goodness, this is going to be interesting. There was a whole different take on Conservative politics that was emerging as a result of the leadership of Sterling Lyon. And I know that Sidney Spivak had largely taken a view that the debate between him and the government of the day—this was 19—well, the mid-1970s—was one of management capability.

And Sterling came in there saying, no, not at all: this is a very, very clear choice that Manitobans have to recognize that I'm going to present, he would say; there's a clear choice between what some would say is a right and left dichotomy. But as we all know, there are complexities to the terminology right and left.

So, of course, he ended up here in the Legislature, in this leadership role. And around that time, I had been hired by the Human Rights Commission and I got to know many people that were on—appointed by the Lyon government to the Human Rights Commission. And I think back with great fondness on many of those appointees and my relationship with them. Very soon, I came to become

the deputy clerk, and so, it really was in that role that I got to know who Sterling Lyon was, and I had a relationship with the premier during those years and when he went into opposition.

But I really have to say that I was struck by how amazingly articulate, how well-read Sterling Lyon was; he had a great depth. He had an understanding of history like no one I had ever seen come into this Legislature. He not only was great—was so well-spoken, but he had a beautiful voice, as well. But he elevated, I think, the debate. You can imagine having debaters like Sterling Lyon and Sid Green in here at the same time. Those were very interesting years in this Chamber.

The—he was the spokesperson in this country for the values of the supremacy of Parliament, and there couldn't have been a better circumstance of history that—than having Sterling Lyon there to represent that particular point of view, the role of Parliament. He understood where it came from, its history and its importance, so he certainly represented that point of view very strongly, and, of course, the Constitution is, in part, his shadow.

When—I recall I did an article on the history of this—of the Legislature in Manitoba and all the weird and wonderful things that happened here over the years, and as a result of reading that, he called me into his office and he wanted to talk about it. And it was at that time I realized what a history junkie he was. He just relished in history, but when it came to parliamentary history, he thought this was great, so I was very taken by that. I realized in the conversation, too, he had a profound distrust of people on the left, and it wasn't just reflected in his public sentiment. But I remember him saying something to the effect that, you know, you've sort of got to watch your silverware when they're around and—I think that those were actually his words.

When he went into opposition, we had a very early signal that things were going to be quite colourful in this Chamber, even more so than when he was premier. As he sat over here, on the first day after the Throne Speech, when the Pawley government was elected, there was just a little lull in things and, all of a sudden—and I bet you it was on *Hansard*, because every microphone would have picked it up—but there was this booming but beautiful voice from over here saying, day one on the garbage cycle, eh, Howard? So we knew where this was going.

So, I was sitting here. Every time Sterling Lyon stood up, I moved the chair a little closer to the table and I grabbed *Beauchesne* and had it ready. And I relayed this to Jonathon. Because it was vocabulary, he had an advantage over others, including the Speaker, who was also well-read. And I remember one time he called someone—oh, by the way, he had nicknames for—not very complimentary nicknames for most people on the front bench over here and—but I remember one time, he labelled someone over here, on this side, as venal. And, of course, I don't know venal—you know, doesn't sound complimentary, but I don't know what that means. So he would get away with unparliamentary language for—well, at least for a little while—but he did get caught on that one. The Speaker Walding, he had a pretty good command of the English language, too, so he did call him on that one.

\* (11:00)

But, I just wanted to conclude that—you know, and I was sorry later that he and Barbara suffered in the—so much from the accident. And I understand, too, he had failing eyesight in his later years on the bench. But we really are talking about a Manitoban whose life, whose whole life was service to the public. He was a public servant extraordinaire. And I think it is certainly fitting that we are celebrating the life of Sterling Rufus Lyon here today, and my condolences once again to the family.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured and I'm humbled to stand here today in this Legislature on Manitoba's 141st birthday, Manitoba Day, and to pay tribute to a very special man that has certainly left a legacy for this province and for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the first time I met Sterling Lyon and it was the very first election campaign that I had been involved in, in 1977 and lived—living out in northeast Winnipeg in the constituency that was called Rossmere at the time, now called River East. I got involved in the campaign of Dr. Henry Krahn, who was running for the Conservative Party in Rossmere against Ed Schreyer. And it was a very exciting campaign, and one of the most exciting parts of that campaign, I guess, was a huge rally that we had in River East, that I was part of organizing behind the scenes, where we had Sterling Lyon, who was the leader of the party, come out to River East Collegiate. And so we worked extremely hard to try to get the rally put together, and I was just absolutely thrilled to meet

the leader of the Conservative Party when he came out to River East, and it was exciting.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will never forget, in preparation for that rally—and I'm not sure that we today would have the kind of campaign song that the Conservatives had back in those days, but I can remember the words very vividly. And, Jennifer, I would sing them if you had given me a bit of training beforehand but I will say the words because I really don't want to embarrass myself in any way here in the Legislature.

But the words to the song were: Eddie Schreyer is leaving the valley. I don't think we will miss him at all. There's a Lyon at the head of this rally that will lead to the socialists' fall. Start to clean out your desk, Eddie Schreyer; pass the word to the boys down the hall. There's a Lyon at the head of this rally that will lead to the socialists' fall.

And that song was sung to the tune of "Red River Valley." And we repeated it over and over and over again. It was certainly a song that was sung very robustly on the night that Sterling Lyon became the premier of the province of Manitoba.

And so that was my foray into politics. It was pretty exciting being in the backrooms and part of the organization behind seeing the Conservative Party come to power in 1977. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I've never lost my passion for politics. And I certainly respect the work that Sterling Lyon did, not only for the province of Manitoba, but for Canada, in helping to repatriate the Constitution and ensure that the notwithstanding clause was a part of that.

Mr. Speaker, I was also very proud of some of the social things—policies that were implemented. I know many have spoke about the disaster assistance program that remains in place today. I'm proud that we were able to pass in this Legislature at—under Sterling Lyon, property rights for women.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the family of Sterling Lyon, thank you for sharing him with us. And I know how very hard it is sometimes to balance life in the Legislature with family life, and Sterling Lyon was able to do that and to do a good job of both of those things.

I think much has been said today about the contributions that Sterling Lyon has made to our province and to our country. And I want to say thank you to him on both a personal note and a professional note, for the contribution that he made

to our province and for my ability to be involved, in some small way, in his success in 1977, and also for my ability to be involved in the political process today. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, am humbled to be able to stand here and speak today about former Premier Sterling Lyon and I'm humbled in many different ways. I'm humbled to make a statement about a great Manitoban on Manitoba Day, and I'm humbled to stand here to recognize another legislator who also represented Charleswood, and I'm humbled to speak about a Manitoban who so loved this province and this country.

I have to say I didn't really know Sterling Lyon at all. I'd met him a few times, but I didn't know him. In fact, the last time I saw him, he was walking down the hallway here in the Legislature. He was already older. He was walking a bit wobbly, and it was sort of hard to imagine, you know, this great premier, at one time, who had had such an impact in here and had, you know, a lot of strength as a premier and as a person, and then, you know, years later, to see an older man walking down the hall was certainly humbling. I helped him come into the gallery. He had a friend with him, and they came and they sat up there and they watched a bit of the debate. And I always wondered what he thought; you know, knowing how principled he was and how he liked to do business, I often wondered what he thought as he sat up there and listened to all of us down here at that time.

At his celebration of his life, I certainly learned a lot more about him than I knew before and I learned about his great sense of family and how devoted he was as a husband, a father and a grandfather. I learned about his great sense of honour and his love of reading of history and political biographies. I found it really funny at the funeral to hear about him taking his young daughters to see movies like *Patton* and *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and I thought that just sounds so interesting. He must have been quite the dad and got away with taking his kids, and they went along with him to see these kind of movies instead of the latest Disney film.

You know, you can tell that he loved the outdoors just by looking at his portrait here in the Legislature, where he is dressed, you know, like he is more of the outdoors. You could tell he loved the outdoors and he loved his dog. I was surprised that he liked to be a vegetable gardener. I had, you know,

never really thought about something like that. I, too, like to garden and I often say that I'd rather be digging in the dirt than throwing it, but he was probably a little bit better at carrying that out than, maybe, I am. But, certainly, his approach to politics was one that was very principled, and that's become obvious by everything that people who know him have said about him. He loved his time at the cottage at Delta, and I'm sure this would be a distressing time for him right now to see what is going on in Manitoba with the flood. So it was interesting to learn more about him as a person, and his funeral really was a celebration of a great life.

\* (11:10)

And it's also been interesting for me to learn more about this man who represented Charleswood, to learn more about his political life and how he conducted himself and how passionate and dignified he was and principled in terms of how he approached what he did. You know, and, as a Progressive Conservative, he left many really great legacies: the modernization of social programs, the expansion of community-based health care, which probably, in those days, was something that was not easily carried out, or I'm sure he had a lot of challenges in moving forward with that; you know, passing legislation to guarantee a woman would receive at least 50 per cent of property rights after a divorce, again, that was probably a challenge in that time; appointing a woman to the provincial bench, which I'm sure rarely happened in those days; he had a very strong commitment to government financial procedure modernization and worked very hard at that; you know, many of Manitoba's hydro projects that we rely on today can be attributed to Sterling Lyon; and others have made mention of his role in the creation of the notwithstanding clause in Canada, which is very significant to this province and to this country.

There was a moment in time where I was very, very connected with Sterling and Barbara Lyon, and it was a brief moment in time and it was after their car accident. And I was sitting in my backyard—and nobody had heard about the car accident at this point in time—and my husband came running out with the phone and he said there's an urgent phone call. And I thought, you know, what's happening, what's going on here? And it was the media looking for a comment that—because Sterling Lyon had once represented Charleswood, I was the current sitting member of Charleswood and they had heard about this accident. Well, nobody had heard about the accident at this point. It was, you know, breaking

news, and they were looking for a comment from me. I was very shocked when I heard about that, and you know how some moments in time stay totally with you? I can still totally picture that moment.

Sometimes when Jonathon Lyon is walking down the hallway here—he probably doesn't know that when you're walking behind him and you see him, it's like seeing his dad walking down the halls of the Legislature. Probably lots of people might have told him that, but, you know, it's like his dad is still here and it's amazing, the likeness between the two.

And I, too, would like to just say to the family, you know, thank you for sharing your dad. It really is a big commitment to get into politics and it does take a family effort, and this is all about a big political family. And sometimes that political family does take over more time than people can give to their own real family, and we always try to make a balance and try to do the best that we can, but it is a challenge, and have to thank the family for letting him do what he did and giving him the support to do his job.

So on behalf of my family and all the people in Charleswood, I would just like to wish our condolences to the family and say we were proud to have him in Charleswood for a short period of time, and as Manitobans very proud to have him as our premier, and acknowledge the significant impact, even in a short period of time, that he has had on this province and this country. Thank you.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** It is indeed a great honour to put a few personal reflections on the record in regards to the Honourable Sterling Rufus Lyon, former premier of Manitoba. And although this is a condolence motion, it's actually a celebration of his life.

My first knowledge of Sterling Rufus Lyon was the 1977 election. I was attending Elmwood junior high school—and, yes, at that time I was a conservative, a little bit of an endangered species. I used to take the conservative side of debates at the school—and on election night, I was incredibly happy to see Sterling Lyon elected premier. And I can remember watching TV and the morning's newspapers, seeing, you know, Sterling and Barbara and the kids, and Jonathon was probably about the same age as his kids are right now, and I couldn't help but thinking those have to be the luckiest kids in the world. I mean, can you imagine having a dad as a politician? It's something I keep reminding my

children of. And, you know, I envied you guys. You know, like, I was so envious of you.

Anyway, time moved on. I went on to university. First year, I was an 18-year-old, and I took out a membership in the PC Party and got involved in the 1981 election campaign. And never one to take the easy path, I got involved in Eveline Holtmann's campaign in Elmwood.

Now, Mr. Speaker, things have changed since then considerably, but back then things were a little tougher. And two things really surprised me: number one, going door to door in Elmwood, people were as passionate as I was about Sterling Lyon and his government; the other surprise was they weren't as positive with their passion as I was.

But I want you to know, and I know we're not allowed exhibits, but I wore this proudly every day and the button says, Welcome to Lyon Country. It hangs very proudly in my office here in the Legislature. And I used to wear it to university, and it didn't always make me the most popular person on campus, but I wore it.

And the election itself was interesting. I got to go to a rally where Sig Enns, the former executive director of Concordia Hospital said to me, would you like to meet Sterling Lyon? Like, would I like to meet the premier? So he took me in and, of course, I always, you know, was under the impression he was probably about 6 foot 7, maybe 7 feet, because, I mean, he always looked very tall. And we went in, it was at a school, and we went into the classroom, and I could look him in the eyes, and he shook my hand, and what an impression he made. Like, he made such an impression that, at that rally, somehow I scored, it was about a three foot by five foot head and shoulders poster of him, which I took home and I hung in my bedroom.

Now, my family would walk by the room, look at the poster and they did that—which we know by now—that knowing look, you know, this whole political phase, you'll grow out of it someday. And, I never did. But, you know, Sterling Lyon certainly had an amazing impact on a lot of us in that generation. And there are a lot of my generation that are involved in the PC Party because of him and his leadership.

I was—just a couple of reflections of the campaign. I was able to canvass door to door, and it was a very tough campaign, and Felix Holtmann was, of course, there campaigning for Eveline. And I

learned an important lesson. Felix, one night, came back to the campaign headquarters at about 11:30 at night, and we were fairly worried, and he taught us an important lesson. He said, if you come up to a house full of NDPers partying and drinking, if you can drink a New Democratic under the table they'll vote for you. He said, I got the whole house voting for us. So, it was an interesting campaign and from—that was my introduction to politics.

On election night, as young people tend to do, I pushed my way to the front, and Sterling Lyon gave his speech of which was one of his most memorable quotes, and that is, I'd rather be right than premier. And what a difference when you look around the world, where you will see—politicians would rather do anything than give up power. And that means slaughtering their own civilians. And we see it happening today where there's democratic protests again leadership. Sterling Lyon was one of those individuals who so believed in democracy, who so believed in doing what was right. That had such an impact on me. And I remember he stood there, and I looked up at him, and he talked about, you know, greater men than I have been defeated, and he mentioned Churchill. Just an amazing impact. And, you know, those of us that got involved at that time, got involved under an amazing man who left just an incredible impact on us.

And I am fortunate to say that I got to meet him, I got to speak to him, and I would say to the family on this celebration, to all of you, you have something to be very proud of in a father and a grandfather. An individual who showed unbelievable leadership, but I would say even more so, he showed integrity and principle. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** And I'm also very humbled and pleased to be able to speak to this condolence motion today. And I do want to thank the government and the Government House Leader for agreeing to do this condolence day on Manitoba Day, which I think is a very fitting day to pay tribute to a former premier.

\* (11:20)

I also want to acknowledge the family in the gallery here today: Jonathon and Jonny and Kathryn and Bonnie and Amanda and Jennifer. It's very nice to have you here today. I'm sure you're happy to be out of school for the morning.

I just want to say, as well, I—we have a distant relationship in that my aunt was married to Charlie

Meyer [*phonetic*]; now, not the Charlie Mayer that we know as a former MP, but another Charlie Meyer [*phonetic*] and I think that he was a cousin to Barbara. So there's a distant relationship there, although I didn't find that out until just a few years ago, speaking to one of my cousins whose name is Meyer [*phonetic*]. So I just discovered that.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from a number of speakers about the education and the professional life and political career of Sterling Lyon. I just want to relate some more personal things, not that I—can't say that I knew him. I had met him, but I can't say that I knew him. So I know that my father-in-law, Marcel Taillieu, knew him, but Marcel passed away several years ago now, in 2006, so I wasn't able to ask him. He would have been able to provide me with many stories, I'm sure, because he made it his business to be a personal friend of every premier, whatever political stripe they may have been.

But not having the opportunity to speak with Marcel, I spoke with Wilf De Graves, Justice Wilf De Graves, who is my husband's uncle and my—Marcel's brother. And I just gave him a phone call the other night to ask him if he could just give me a few words. And he said, oh, yes. He said I roomed with Sterling Lyon and Joe Sullivan [*phonetic*] on Nassau Street. And he went on into a few of the party things that they had done which I'm not going to relate here, but it was certainly interesting.

He said he was impeccably—impeccable integrity is how he described him, a good student, very principled, known never to compromise those principles. And then he said, although I think he mellowed over the years. He was a fierce and excellent debater. And I said to him, well, Uncle Wilf, do you know that Jonathan Lyon, Sterling's son, is our chief of staff now. He said, I didn't know that, he said, but if he has the brains of his father, he'll be a great asset, and I assured him that both of those were true.

As I said, I didn't know Sterling Lyon. I did have the opportunity to meet him once, and that was at the funeral of Warner Jorgenson in Morris. And I walked into the church for the funeral and there sitting in the pew together was Sterling Lyon, Duff Roblin and Gary Filmon. So I was quite humbling to see that. And then, later, after, at the lunch which always follows these things, I had the opportunity to speak to all three of them, and that was my meeting of Sterling Lyon.

It's interesting, when the member from Charleswood mentioned when Jonathan Lyon walks down the hallway from—and you look at how similar he looks to his father. We were just looking at some pictures in the caucus room the other day and I pointed to the picture, and I said to Jon, that's you, but it, of course, was his father, Sterling Lyon. There is definite family resemblance there.

One other thing I just found interesting, and I think I've said this before, but during Sterling Lyon's tenure as premier, I was a young married woman living in Charleswood, and I didn't have any children then, so I was home on Halloween giving out the candies, and this young fellow came to the door, and he was all covered in tin foil, the shiny silver tin foil. And he said to me, do you know who I am? And I said, I'm sorry, I don't. Well, I'm Sterling Lyon, with this silver tin foil all over his body. I thought, maybe it was you, Jon, but I don't think it was. Anyway, I tell that to Jonny and Kathryn. Maybe they would get a kick out of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the many contributions that Sterling Lyon, Premier Lyon, has made to this province. I do want to just comment on the fact of his putting in place the programs for disaster financial assistance, as it is particularly poignant and important at this particular time, as many people in the western part of the province, from Brandon to Winnipeg, throughout Portage and my constituency, are going to be suffering huge losses and certainly will be very grateful for any of the programs that will be, of course, coming their way.

So, again, I just want to, again, offer my condolences to the family and certainly very happy that you could be with us today and certainly happy that we had the opportunity to do this condolence motion on a very significant day, Manitoba Day, and very fitting for a former premier of this Province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to put a few words on the record about our former premier, Sterling Lyon. And I want to welcome the members of the Lyon family who are here with us to day, to Amanda and Jennifer and Kathryn who's a good friend of my daughter, Victoria, and Bonnie and Jonny and Jon, and to all of those who could not be here with us today, of course, our deepest condolences to your family.



The history between my family, the McDonald family, and the Lyon family, dates back almost 60 years and goes back to my father, Hugh McDonald, who attended law school with Sterling at the University of Manitoba, where they graduated together in 1953. Both were history buffs and both were big fans of Winston Churchill, who they considered to be one of their political heroes together.

When Sterling won the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba in 1975 and started to form his campaign team, one of the people he called was my father, who ended up running for Sterling's team in the 1990s—or the 1977 general election, in the constituency of Fort Rouge. Dad, of course, unfortunately lost the seat narrowly to Lloyd Axworthy, but he was thrilled that Sterling's team was able to move forward and form government at the time. He even tried, when Lloyd Axworthy decided to step down from his seat to run in the federal election in 1979, my father ran again because he was quite adamant that he wanted to be in there and to support Sterling and his government. Unfortunately, he lost again but—and did—was not able to serve in a Sterling Lyon government. But, of course, he did try, so he did his part. But he was a big supporter of Sterling and considered him a very good friend.

My parents loved having Barbara and Sterling over to our place and when I was growing up, I can recall many a political discussion in our living room. I learned a lot from these political discussions and will cherish them always. I found a photo the other day while going through an old box of things of my parents' personal belongings, and I scanned the photo in and I sent a copy of it to Jon. And it was a picture of my mother, Diane McDonald, with Sterling Lyon and Duff Roblin and Gary Filmon. It was definitely a photo to cherish, and it was really neat to come across that photo.

Shortly after Sterling was appointed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal in 1986, my mother became a citizenship court judge and, of course, the judges used to get together, and so that ended all political discussion, of course, between them, or at least in public anyway.

\* (11:30)

But it's great the history that we have as the McDonald family with the Lyon family. I can recall growing up and going to various—and running into the Lyon family at various Highland dance

competitions growing up in the '70s. And what's great about that is that the tradition continues in both of our families where Kathryn and my daughter, Victoria, we still run into the Lyon family at Highland dance competitions, and it's great to see them there because both of our daughters are Highland dancers. And it's a great tradition that continues in both of the families.

Mr. Speaker, Sterling Lyon was a man of principle. He was a man of honour, a man of vision. He knew what he wanted for Manitoba and he wasn't afraid to stand up for what he believed was in the best interest of our province. I consider it an honour and a privilege to have known him.

To all of his family in the gallery today and to those that could not be here, on behalf of my husband, Jason, my daughter Victoria, my son Tommy, and to the—and the entire McDonald clan, Liz and Gord Gage, Don and Teresa McDonald, Gillian Quinn, Heidi and Michael McSweeney, I want to extend my sincerest condolences to all of you. Thank you.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I want—on behalf of my wife, Gail, and, of course, the people of Lakeside—pass on my condolences to the family. Mr. Speaker, 1927 was a fantastic year. That was the same year that my father was born, and also my father passed away last year as well so I can feel the connection of some of the loss that the family's going through. So I feel a connection that way.

Although I did not know Sterling Lyon on a personal level, I got to know him a lot better today and some of the things that he stood for and, of course, some of the values that he had. And it takes a strong family to support such a person as that, and I want to commend the family for their efforts in order to help that man accomplish as much as he did while he was here with us on—in Manitoba.

And, again, what an opportunity to celebrate such a leader on Manitoba Day. It's a great honour to be part of that celebration of life. I know a number of my colleagues did put on the record a number of issues that was important to them and members on the opposite side of the House, but we are also very fortunate to be able to have his son as our chief of staff. And I know a lot of the experiences that was passed on by his father certainly will be useful to us. And I know that the leadership that Jonathon shows within our chief of staff and our staff itself, the connection on the personal level he brings—and professional level to us in our caucus.

Also, I know that Premier Lyon made the province of Manitoba a better place to work and play and raise a family and also Canada as a whole. So I know that whenever these opportunities come along to pay respects to those that will make Manitoba a better place to live in the years to come. So, again, once, on behalf of my family and, of course, the people of Lakeside, we wish the family all the best and certainly proud to have you here in this Chamber today.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great honour to stand today in this House and speak to the life of Sterling Lyon.

My involvement with Mr. Lyon happened more by accident than by design and little did I know that—how much it would have an impact on my life, personally, and those of Manitobans. Mr. Speaker, as a farm boy turned construction worker, and then turned farmer-rancher in the early '70s, I realized that the cattle industry in the province of Manitoba had no voice and that we needed a very strong voice to represent us in government and in policies that they would be forming. And so one rainy afternoon my neighbour Betsy Friesen and myself sat down with some bubbies and decided that we were going to organize the province. And as the day wore on, it became a simpler solution and it was quite easy to do this.

So the next day we started out to do it. It became quite a challenge and—but we embarked on this. With Betsy's fierce determine and my Irish stubbornness, we organized the province into 14 different districts, and in that process we encountered Sterling when he was out running for the leadership of the party, and he encouraged us that we were on the right track. And so then, of course, when he ran for—in an election in 1977—we also were very, very fortunate in the constituency of Emerson that it became a Conservative constituency and hasn't changed since 1977, I might add.

He set the basis for that but he also—he'd also encouraged us to the point that we needed to come and talk to their caucus and we did that, and the cattle producers have been very, very fortunate since that time. He enacted the act that allowed us to have a check off that financed us in a proper, stable way and gave us the opportunity to lobby for what was best for the producers of this province.

We've heard many times today about his integrity and his principles but also his compassion, Mr. Speaker, which was demonstrated when he

formed or developed the department of immigration, which allowed the Vietnamese immigrants to come to Canada after the conclusion of the Vietnamese war, and my wife and my family and many, many of our neighbours got together and we sponsored a family. So, at any rate, it gives me a great opportunity—or gives me great honour to bring condolences from the constituency of Emerson and from my family to the family of Sterling Lyon.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to offer my condolences to the family of Sterling Rufus Lyon today. On this occasion, I think it's very fitting, as has been said earlier, that we're doing this on—paying this tribute on Manitoba Day, May 12th, here in Manitoba and in the Chamber.

I have a few personal experiences that I could relate later but I just—I want to say that it was a tribute—just a pleasure to know the gentleman because of his, as I came to know more in later in life, his stature in the province of Manitoba and how—and, I guess, the zeal with which he felt Manitoba could develop. And he played a key role in making our province a better place.

And I guess one of the first places that I ever met him in that regard was in rural Manitoba, as he was, as I find out now—not many of us have the opportunity to represent one seat in the Legislature, never mind three. But after Fort Garry, he represented the Souris-Killarney riding in that area as he became leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba and won his election there in 1977, represented those people. and my father was a diehard Conservative in that part of the region who had helped a gentleman by the name of Allan Rose seek the nomination in that area earlier in his life and in the late '60s, and his brother Bob Rose came—eventually became the member of the Legislature for Turtle Mountain in that area, living in Souris.

And I remember meeting Mr. Lyon first in the streets of Souris, Manitoba—was probably the first encounter that I had with him with my father in that area. And I always believed strongly that he had a great impact on rural Manitoba as well. And my family spoke highly of him throughout the years of his premiership and his time in the Legislature.

I just wanted to say as well that, of course, he had served with other members from Arthur-Virden

in the name of Doug Watt, who had been an agriculture minister previous to that time in the Legislature, and of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention his friend, Mr. James Downey, who was elected in 1977 at the same time and became Sterling Lyon's agriculture minister in Manitoba at that time as well, Mr. Speaker.

And so I say that I believe that he had a deep conviction for all of Manitoba including all of rural Manitoba, as any premier would, Mr. Speaker, but the connection that I felt he had with rural Manitoba and later finding out about his efforts in conservation and environmental issues, you know, were key to, I think, his feeling for the land.

\* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, I note with interest his, of course, career in both politics and in serving in the justice system in Manitoba. His commitment, I think, is unquestionable in regards to that of being a public servant, whether it was in the Legislature or outside the Legislature. I know that, you know, his years as a Crown attorney were years that he, I guess, learned some of the—cut his teeth, if you would, on some of the politics of Manitoba as well and how to make Manitoba a better place. I wanted to say that he might have had the opportunity, I guess, as premier to work in many areas.

I see as well that he ran, of course, followed that leadership here as a federal Conservative in 1974 in Winnipeg South, and I guess I had the same opportunity happen to me, if you want to call it an opportunity. I lost a seat in Brandon-Souris in 1993 and, probably, wasn't thinking that there might be an opportunity to run in politics again, Mr. Speaker, until that opportunity arose in 1999. And I'm certainly glad that I grabbed that opportunity to do so, and I know that Mr. Lyon went on to have more successful years in the provincial election after becoming the leader of the party in 1975 and then coming into the Legislature in 1976, as I said earlier, when he won the by-election in Souris-Killarney.

I note with interest the number of the things that he tried to do to make Manitoba a better place, Mr. Speaker, and some of those have been recorded here earlier. Certainly, the fiscal responsibility that he felt strongly about was—has been well-renowned, but also the prudent public investments; the balance of, if you will, the social needs of our province, along with being responsible. And I note with interest a number of the hydro projects that were taken on.

And I note with interest the one that affects my family as well now. One of the areas that he was instrumental in was establishing the department of immigration to bring Vietnamese refugees to Manitoba, which impacts my family greatly now in that I have a nephew who is married to one of those refugees that came from Vietnam in those days, and we've enjoyed many family relationships and many family get-togethers with her family over the last 10 or so years as well. And these are the things that maybe don't pop out as large items that impact—that Sterling impacted Manitobans' lives on, but it's one that's very close to me in these years as well.

I guess I would just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that from myself, my family and all of the citizens of Arthur-Virden and all of southwest Manitoba, I'd just like to pay tribute here today, and it's—I find it a privilege, after all these years of knowing him and yet not really having spent much time in his persona, that he has impacted Manitoba in such a great way in the whole province and, on behalf of the citizens of southwest Manitoba, just to pay tribute to him here today and thank his family for the years that they allowed him to be a part of our lives in making Manitoba a better place.

**Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie):** It is with regret and a great deal of respect I rise today in recognition of a former resident of Portage la Prairie and in the name of Sterling Rufus Lyon.

Mr. Speaker, there has been many discussions this morning about political associations and, as many opportunities as I had to speak and be in the company of Mr. Lyon, it never was on a political setting. Our family cottage at Delta was only a few doors down from the Lyons' den on the southern shores of Lake Manitoba, and it was on numerous occasions we had opportunity to walk to the store for a few groceries or to just share the sunset on the beach as a walk that he did almost any time that he was at the cottage at Delta. And he talked of numerous events that had taken place, you know, in and around Delta, but the one that was most notable to me was he talked about how, when a Cabinet minister of the Premier Duff Roblin, that he was at his cottage and he heard about a pending sale of the McBain [*phonetic*] Estate, which was a sprawling cottage of—and with lots and lots of property west of the Delta Beach cottage area. And this pending sale was going to have the property move into the hands of a number of Americans that were avid duck hunters. And that this particular property was something that he felt very passionately about that

should stay in the hands of Canadians, and that the preservation of the Delta Marsh, as it was by nature, it was very, very important to him. So it was he that, on the weekend, decided that this property should maintain a Canadian ownership. So he, on behalf of Premier Duff Roblin and his Cabinet colleagues, made an acquisition of the property known as the McBain [*phonetic*] Estate for a sum of about \$250,000. Well, Mr. Speaker, he had to tell the premier on Monday morning that he had spent some of the Treasury's money, and to this very day, the Cabinet ministers across are limited to \$25,000 of discretionary spending. That particular sum was the amount that Premier Duff Roblin prescribed as adequate for all Cabinet ministers' discretion, not \$250,000 as Mr. Lyon had expended on behalf of the Province.

But I will say that that acquisition and—is something that not only is playing a part in the flood-fighting efforts as we see taking place today with the diversion channel being located through the property to which Mr. Lyon acquired on that—with that purchase. But also, too, the expanse of that estate is now home to the University of Manitoba Delta Field Station, and persons across the world have come to know Delta Marsh and—as through their studies and research that is ongoing today, and the field station has a very, very notable presence in the world for the study of birds and biotic life. So that acquisition by Mr. Lyon, indeed, tells a lot about the man that we all have spoken of this morning.

The last meeting I had with Mr. Lyon, though, was—as our leader mentioned, we seem to gather at funerals—and a family friend by the name of Mr. Geoff Heal had passed away, and Mr. Lyon and I were in attendance to that funeral and shared, not a cup of—not a shot of Scotch, but a cup of tea on that occasion. And it was then that he told me that coming back to Portage the memory that still haunted him as the—he told me was his—where he suffered his only electoral defeat, and that was at the hands of Mr. Cliff Bagrie when he ran for the position of president of student council at the Portage Collegiate, the high school to which he graduated from before going on to his studies at the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba.

And it is with fondness that I remember Mr. Lyon, Mr. Speaker, because he was a man of integrity and understanding, passion and compassion, and I have the utmost respect, Mr. Sterling Lyon. My condolences to the family. On behalf of all the

residents of Portage la Prairie, we, indeed, remember with fondness. Thank you.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I'm also pleased to rise today to say a few words about the Honourable Sterling Lyon.

\* (11:50)

And I want to begin by, first of all, extending the condolences of my family and myself to the Sterling Lyon family, and I want to say, in having extended that, that I enjoyed the time that I had in working with both Jonathon and Bonnie while we were government and, indeed, it's good to have Jon back on board and working with us at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, I met Sterling Lyon in 1978 for the first time. In 1977, I had the pleasure of working in an election campaign. But I have to say that, during that campaign, I still wasn't sure that the time had come for the Progressive Conservatives to take government, because previous to that we had a number of years when there was kind of a lull out in my constituency because we were represented by a Conservative member, but, indeed, the Conservatives had not been in government for some time. So, during the '77 election, I think some of us who were still fairly young and involved in the community wanted to make the change and we worked very hard and, indeed, it was very rewarding to see a new premier take office.

Shortly after that, though, the premier and his Cabinet came out to Russell for a two-day meeting, and it was at that time that I had the privilege of meeting the new premier and his Cabinet. And I think it was Keith Cosens who actually introduced me to Sterling Lyon at the time, and that solidified my thinking and reinforced what I had believed in for many years. And it was Sterling Lyon who planted the seed, if you like, for me to become a politician down the road.

He was a man of integrity, but he also—when he spoke to you, he looked you straight in the eye and he didn't mince words, but you could see that the man was passionate about what he believed in. And that was something that left an impression, not only on me but on many people that he met.

And if you were to talk about Sterling Lyon in my part of the province today, he is still regarded as a man who left a mark on our province, a very positive mark on our province, and is still remembered by many, many people on the western

side of the province that I represent and throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sterling Lyon—his compassion in the House here was something that I observed in a debate in the House during his time as premier. And there was a controversial issue taking place in the House and it was then that Sterling Lyon showed that he was a true leader in his debate in the House. Because there was no question; even the Speaker of the House knew that this man spoke with conviction and with authority. And when you left the Chamber that day, there was no question about who had control of things in this House. And, indeed, he was a man who, through his conviction, expressed it very eloquently in words from his chair as the premier.

During his time as premier, Mr. Speaker, I had another occasion to meet Sterling Lyon and that was in the years of the constitutional debate. And he was more interested, in my view, in doing the right thing than simply the political thing. And it was then that I also gained a great deal more respect for this man, because our country was going through a very important period of time in its history, and Sterling Lyon, I think, made a contribution, not only to this province but to this country, that all of us should be proud of and, indeed, his family have to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, the notwithstanding clause and the fact that Sterling believed so much that it was the elected officials, elected people, who had to be accountable to Canadians and to Manitobans that set him apart from many other politicians across this land. And I think Canadians and Manitobans who know about the contribution that he made in this regard to this country and to this province will forever hold him dear to their hearts and, indeed, as a champion of democracy and a champion of human rights.

Mr. Speaker, under Sterling Lyon's leadership, this province achieved things that we should all mark and we should all remember and we should all be proud of. And many of those achievements have been spoken about today and I don't intend to repeat them. But this is a man that I think only in government for one term, and I always said that had Sterling Lyon been more political and perhaps not paid so much attention to the constitutional issue, he probably would have been more than a one-term government.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that Sterling Lyon's contribution and his belief in doing the right thing overshadowed the political aspirations that he may have had. And so, throughout his years in politics, Sterling Lyon not only made an impression on this province but, indeed, contributed richly to this province. And this—and he left our province a much healthier, a much stronger province than it was before Sterling Lyon came along.

And for that we will remember him, and, personally, I will remember Sterling Lyon for giving me a reason to run as a politician, to serve the people of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Would honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Would you canvass the House to see if it's the will to call it 12 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call at 12 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour now being 12 noon, we will recess.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, May, 12, 2011**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		Driedger	1905
<b>Motions of Condolence</b>		Schuler	1906
Sterling Rufus Lyon		Taillieu	1907
Selinger	1895	Stefanson	1908
McFadyen	1896	Eichler	1909
Irvin-Ross	1899	Graydon	1910
Goertzen	1900	Maguire	1910
Jha	1901	Faurschou	1911
Gerrard	1902	Derkach	1912
Mackintosh	1903		
Mitchelson	1904		

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