

First Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	PC
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	PC
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you see if there's will to proceed to Bill 301, followed by Bill 209.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 301 to be followed by Bill 209? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 301—The Young Men's Christian Association
of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call second readings, private bills, Bill 301.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), that Bill 301, The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation «The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon », now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Thank you.

Motion presented.

Mr. Caldwell: I very much appreciate being able to put very few words on the record in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, like generations of young people in Brandon, I learned to swim at the Brandon YMCA. It was my first experience with a real gymnasium. I grew up close by the YMCA in downtown Brandon.

Today the Brandon YMCA's undertaking a multimillion-dollar expansion of that facility, the Dood Cristall Family YMCA, as it is now being known. The construction of that facility is well under way; it's about halfway complete.

This bill will put into place the framework for the Brandon family YMCA to own and operate a multimillion-dollar facility. It supports the YMCA in their very good work in Brandon and western Manitoba and is a step, another step, towards the redevelopment of downtown Brandon into an arts entertainment recreational hub.

And I'm very pleased, and I know my colleague from Brandon West will be speaking to this right away, very pleased for us to be able to support the work of the YMCA, the tremendous expansion that they've got under place and—under way in Brandon right now, and it will put them in very good stead for decades into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm indeed pleased to rise and speak to, in favour of, this Bill 301. The Brandon family YMCA has played a central role in the lives of many in Brandon since 1886, and while the facility has been through several changes and renovations, the basic principles have remained constant. The mission statement reads, the YMCA of Brandon is a charitable association dedicated to providing quality programs and services for all individuals in the development of spirit, mind, and body.

It is by far the most inclusive organization in which I have had the opportunity to belong to, and, in turn, to participate in their redevelopment. As my colleague from Brandon East said, the Y is currently in the midst of construction of its new facility, and this amendment will allow the Y to finance its development. And it will also bring into—bring the legislation up to date for the Y's current circumstances.

There are many partners involved in this facility, and many came to the table with large contributions. The Province of Manitoba, the federal government, the City of Brandon are all important partners and contributors. The fundraising campaign was christened Strengthening our Core, and a very strong

team of volunteers led by Ron and Don Kille have raised almost \$5 million from private sources. There have been many, many donors, both large and small, and every single donor is just as important as the last. I'm pleased to note that every board member, every fundraiser, and every staff member of the Y has donated to this campaign.

The Y is able to provide programs for youth at risk, and is open to all 'regardness' of economic ability. They always find a way to be accommodating and inclusive, and I am very pleased that this bill will allow them to proceed with their development, and to continue to serve Brandon and area for many years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 301?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 301, The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act.

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

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 209—The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act (Cooling-Off Periods Related to Independent Officers)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 209, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act (Cooling-Off Periods Related to Independent Officers).

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good morning, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that Bill 209, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act (Cooling-Off Periods Related to Independent Officers), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to bring forward this bill for consideration of all members of the Assembly. And it truly is a bill that does affect all members of this Assembly, maybe

more so than other bills, Mr. Speaker, that we bring forward which have a more of a general impact on the population as a whole. This one specifically impacts us as members and the rights that each of us hold.

This bill, to some extent, Mr. Speaker, came forward as a result of an independent officer being hired into government on very short notice, i.e., no notice at all, and moving directly from the position that was held by this independent officer right into a government department, a hire that seemed to be made directly by the minister. And why this raised concerns by members of the opposition, I think, is obvious. It is that there might be an appearance—and in this particular case I don't want to cast aspersions on any motives, but, certainly, there might be an appearance of a conflict. Whether there is a real conflict or a perceived one, when it comes to independent officers, really, they're the same thing, because they both impact the confidence that members of this House and the House as a collective body has with those independent officers.

And I don't have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, or I don't have to tell most members of this House, that we rely very critically on independent officers, who perform a number of functions, some of which are more specific to the roles that we have as MLAs, and some of them are more general to the—or more specific to roles that impact others outside of this building, whether it's the Child Advocate or the electoral officer or the Ombudsman or other independent officers.

*(10:10)

We've all valued those roles, we all think that they're critical. We've had numerous debates in this House about some roles of independent officers, about certain appointments, about how duties were carried out. And I would say why we may have differed, Mr. Speaker, on some of the substance of those debates and whether or not we all agreed on the facts or not, I think what we all did agree on is that it's an important role each one of these independent officers has. It's an important role to us, it's an important role to Manitobans.

And so this bill, we believe, would actually strengthen the role by ensuring that independent officers would have to adhere to a cooling-off period of three years before they would be able to take a government position. The rationale for that, Mr. Speaker, is this. If you are an independent officer in certain roles, then it's certainly your job, it's your

duty and it's your expectation that you are going to be—and I'll use the word "watchdog" because that's the word that's often used in the media—a watchdog of government, that you're going to be ensuring that certain programs are run correctly, that people's interaction with government is done in a way that we would expect in a modern, democratic society, and that they are done without, as is sometimes referred to by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), without fear or favour.

And that is important, both in perception and reality. I think that the perception gets stretched when one of these government watchdogs is able to move directly into government without any time in between. It certainly leaves one to question whether or not or how long negotiations may have been going on with the government, whether or not even the expectation that you might be able to move directly into government from your role as watchdog would taint any of the things that you might do in terms of evaluating programs, judging things on behalf of Manitobans. Not that—I'm not bringing forward any sort of suggestions that that has happened but, again, the perception is as important as reality, as often the case in politics and in other fields, Mr. Speaker.

So this is about adding strength to the role of our independent officers; about saying that we value them so critically that we value the role of independent officers so dearly, that we want to ensure that no one could suggest that there were motives other than pure motives by independent officers. And this cooling-off period would, in fact, allow that, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't have any suggestion, then, that somebody was maybe not doing their job to the complete fulfillment of their duties, with the hope that they might be able to move into a government position, the very people, the very entity that those independent officers are often called upon to be watchdogs for.

Recognizing that this door swings both ways, Mr. Speaker, there is a provision within the bill that would prevent high-ranking civil servants from going directly from government into roles of independent officers with the same time frame. And the reason for that is the same reason that we'd be concerned about independent officers moving directly into government. And that is, there are individuals, of course, within high-ranking positions in government, who would have put in programs, who would have put in different policies, which they might very well then be asked to scrutinize as an independent officer the very next day, perhaps, if

they're able to move directly from one position to the next. They might very well be asked to judge whether or not a program that they were instrumental in setting up, in a very recent history, was doing the job that it was supposed to.

And, certainly, I think that Manitobans wouldn't expect that independent officers would have that sort of a conflict, Mr. Speaker, and this cooling-off period, I think, adds confidence that they wouldn't have that conflict.

Now there's an exception to that, and that is where the Legislative Assembly committee—sorry, the Legislative Affairs Committee of this House would make a unanimous recommendation that a deputy minister, for example, could move directly into the role of an independent officer. And there we, then, would be making that decision that this particular person couldn't be in conflict, or that they wouldn't have the conflict concerns or even the perception of a conflict concern, and that all members of this House, through all different parties, who are represented on the Legislative Affairs Committee, would agree to that unanimously. So that would take away the concern of a conflict in that situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, as my time draws short on the—on this particular bill, I just want to emphasize that we have great respect for the work that our independent officers do. As much as we have respect for the individuals that often occupy those positions, we have even more respect for the office itself. For the office, beyond whoever is in the position of independent officers, we believe that the office itself needs to be defended, not just for us as MLAs here in the Legislature, but collectively for Manitobans because it's a critical part of ensuring that government operates properly, that the executive of government is held to account and that Manitobans feel that they have someone and some entities to go to beyond those that are directly tied to government. And strengthening the independent officers office means ensuring that there is no real conflict—and that's an obvious, Mr. Speaker, and certainly there are laws that have some pertinence to that, but also the perception that there would not be any conflict of interest, because in the game that we are in in the world of politics, perception is reality, and it's often said in the media that perception is everything.

So we think that this bill is a valuable one for the Assembly, is a valuable one for the office of independent officers and one that's reasonable. It

doesn't say that individuals who are independent officers can never go and work for government. It simply puts a buffer, if you will, Mr. Speaker, between the time when they are being asked to be the watchdog of government and when they might actually be in that government serving in a particular role.

So we think that it's balanced. We think that it's reasonable. We think that it strengthens the role of independent officers. It strengthens the office of independent officers, and I know that all members will benefit by this legislation, Manitobans would benefit by it and I look forward to the government adopting the legislation and passing it this session.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): I welcome the opportunity to join this debate on this particular bill in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, the member spoke some very, I think, fine words and extended what amounted to, by words, an olive branch with respect to their view—his view of independent officers. But, quite frankly, the—my experience in this Chamber with members opposite has been anything but that.

The—I recall being in opposition for a period of time and I don't ever recall attacking independent officers as opposition, but I certainly—it certainly changed when we became government, Mr. Speaker. And some of the attacks on independent officers in this Chamber by members office—by members opposite belies—belies—the words of the member of Steinbach, who spoke of respect and who spoke of support and, yet, some of the discussion in this Chamber of independent officers, be it the auditor—*[interjection]*

And I—and there's chirping from the seats now. As I said, this is a debate. I am entitled to an opinion and my opinion is very influenced by attacks that I've seen on the auditor, on Elections Manitoba, on virtually every single independent office. Every institution has been attacked by members opposite to try to gain a political foothold.

The member for St. Ron—I mean St. Paul, smiles at this notion. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, it was the *Free Press* that said, and let me quote: Whining about a genuinely objective process to redistribute electoral boundaries as, quote, politically unseemly and as a sad commentary on the state of the PC Party.

I wish the members words were true to the actions of members opposite. And I don't want to be negative on this particular issue. I don't want to be negative on this issue, but there's been so many attacks on the auditor. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) provided misinformation with respect to the Crocus Investment Fund about the auditor having access to a file. The auditor said, no, that the auditor had that information. We never heard any reaction from members opposite on that. There was no retraction. In fact, I don't think I've heard one apology from members opposite on that regard ever—Mr. Speaker.

* (10:20)

And the members opposite—you know, let me talk about degree, and one of the hallmarks of members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they go over the top. There's no such thing as boundaries or subtlety on the part of members opposite; it's over the top.

So in 1995 when the report came out and the commissioner into the Conservative vote-rigging scandal said he'd never seen so many liars in his wife—in his life—so many liars in his life—as the Tory government when they tried to fix an election—now, no criminal charges were laid. The justice said there could have been criminal charges. There was intention—there was intention, Mr. Speaker, to do a criminal act—to do a criminal act, and a criminal act requires intention—intention.

And the members opposite—again, they go way over the top, so they are trying to capture the fact that they went way over boundary, the worst scandal in the history of Manitoba in 1995. Ever since then, they've never retrenched, never recovered, and have attacked political—independent officers in this House day in and day out.

I was so ashamed at times when we would sit in the chief electoral officer committee and have the attacks that were made on the former chief electoral officer. I was ashamed of the behaviour, Mr. Speaker.

Now, members opposite are self-righteous now. You know, there's been some findings by electoral—by the chief electoral officers about issues with respect to last election. The very independent officer who said there was no intention—there was no intention—to mislead or to create the action, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite are making it

sound like it was a first-degree murder in the 10th degree. They go over the top all the time.

Now let us return to the bill where they say, now we want a three-year cooling-off period. Mr. Speaker, this is a small province in terms of a lot of the people that do the work. A lot of people do jobs in this province—we have an exceptional—we have an exceptional civil service. There was a time when—well, we still believe in this public service of Manitoba. We still think they're terrific. And, you know, they're not the highest paid. They're probably the hardest working, and they're probably the most efficient civil service in the country. And we believe that, but I get the impression that members opposite do not, and I think that's a sad commentary.

And, you know, the introduction of this bill, I suppose, has some merit. A cooling-off period has some impact, but, you know, the larger issue of when and how these matters have done and the experience that I've had with members opposite on independent officers, I mean, they're so—the goalposts, they're so far removed from how they act towards independent officers towards what they're saying in this bill leads me to believe that there's not a lot of thought behind this bill other than to deal with a, quote, political issue, Mr. Speaker. And that's how they've dealt with independent officers from day one. And I don't have a lot of confidence that this is a genuine attempt to deal with the issue.

And, you know, they stand up every day and they talk about laws being broken, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's so easy to say that someone had a press conference unintentionally—*[interjection]* Well, they—let the record note that members opposite are hilarious—are laughing hilariously, but the—that's the—the chief electoral officer said there was not an intention to break—there was not intention. That's what the—well, you know—now let me contrast that with an—let me contrast that with the 1995 election, when they—when the premier's office fixed an election campaign and was found guilty and the chief justice said he had never seen so many liars in his life as the Conservative Party. Contrast, Mr. Speaker, breaking election laws, facing criminal charges, versus having a press conference.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the degree to which members opposite react is—you know, it makes my point. It makes the point. Any objective observer would see they're laughing hilariously and they're trying to compare fixing an election in 1995—fixing an election where they could have criminally—people

could have gone to jail, but for the Chief Justice saying, you know, these people have suffered enough; I've seen—never seen so many liars in my life.

But for that, Mr. Speaker, but for—*[interjection]*

You know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) keeps yapping from his seat and will never take any responsibility—never—for any of the actions, and the member—the members—it makes my point. They're not even listening to what I'm saying; they're not paying any attention to what I'm saying. I said this is a debate. We are entitled to our opinion on this bill.

If the member really thought—really intended—that this should be a debate or a discussion about this, at—they—least—would have provide me with the opportunity to make my arguments which are as valid as their arguments, Mr. Speaker, and we're as entitled to those arguments without laughing hilariously and chiding me from their seats. That tells us right there, the—that talks about—you want to talk about intent—intent—intent.

The members opposite ought to, and I thought the member for Steinbach—I don't know if he went through law school or not, but there's a specific meaning attached to intent. There's a specific meaning attached to that and the members opposite ought to pay attention to that because in their allegations that they make in the House, they're wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we believe the independent officers do a terrific job. We have more independent officers than we've ever had. We have given them more ability to look at government options. The books have been open more than any other time in the history of this province. We think it's worked very well. We support their actions, and I say the actions of member opposite 'belile,' they 'belile' the words of the member for Steinbach and members opposite. They say they want to support and strengthen the office of independent officers, but every time an independent officer comes with a report that doesn't just fit their political agenda, they hound and harass.

They hounded the boundaries commission; they hounded the credit rating agencies; they hounded the Auditor General; they hounded the Elections Manitoba officer, Mr. Speaker. They act but don't speak—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable member's time is expired.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, the bill in front of us deals with integrity and honesty and transparency and the best the NDP can come up with is the member for—Kildonan who we're still waiting for an apology from. His Premier (Mr. Selinger) said he should apologize, and he isn't man enough even to get up and apologize for something that he should—his Premier, his boss said, he should get up and apologize for. That's the best out of the entire NDP bench. That's the best they can get up on, on ethics.

In fact, he was involved in the '99 campaign helping—he was the grise éminence. He was the grise éminence to that campaign that had more corruption involved in it, they had to give more letters of get out of jail free. In fact, the current Premier demanded, the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) demanded letters saying that they would not be held responsible for what was done in that election.

And who was in charge of that? Whose signature probably was on the letter? We wouldn't know, Mr. Speaker. We don't know because they shred those letters afterwards. They didn't even have the integrity to hold on to a copy for them. So we have no idea, but we can only 'sumize' that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the individual who the Premier said should apologize to this House and didn't, he's got the signature on those letters trying to absolve members of his own government of what happened in that election.

So to have him get up and give a lecture to this House about anything to do close with integrity, and I would like to point out it was also him who sat quietly when all kinds of accusations were going about, about getting freebies for professional games.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? It was his boss, the Premier of Manitoba who said the member for Kildonan should apologize, and maybe he should've taken a little bit of that coveted time he was talking about, maybe he should've gotten up and taken the letter from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), who, for the first time in the history of this Legislature, for the first time in the history of this province, we've had a minister had to get up and apologize, and the second one should've. Maybe he should just reach over and tap the Minister of Finance on the shoulder, and say, you know, could you please give me that letter. I think it's time I apologized. Member for Kildonan should be doing that.

* (10:30)

And talking about appropriate—you know, it's only fitting that the Conservative caucus would come up with a bill to help bail out a troubled socialist government that can't help itself—can't help itself—but get into trouble. This is actually an NDP protection bill. We're doing the NDP a favour. It's us helping out the NDP, Mr. Speaker. That's what the bill's all about.

You know what, I would like to point out to them there was a federal government trying to do what a federal government's supposed to do: provide services across the country. Or, as the now Minister of Agriculture said, not all partnerships are forever. He, the Minister of Agriculture, saw it.

So what did the NDP do? They tried to wind up a protest against the federal government, because they have no support amongst the public, no support amongst their own political party. What they have to do is they go to the public service, get a deputy minister co-opted into the political process, and have him call all the various organizations and agencies and say, you know, it's probably in your best interest, if you want us to fund you, if you get out and you protest for us. And they filled the galleries with individuals sitting there; most of them had no idea why they were there—didn't know what the issue was about. They were as confused, Mr. Speaker, as could be, and this government brought them out on all kinds of false pretenses.

In fact, it was the minister involved—responsible for Immigration—went to Brandon and said, I fear leaving the country; I may not be allowed back in. Now, that may not be a bad idea, but, no, she would be allowed back in. This kind of terrible fear mongering, this over-the-top—the minister film—for Kildonan talks about over-the-top, Mr. Speaker; it's his government, his ministers who run around to ethnic groups and tell them, oh, fear you may never be allowed back in the country.

That's the kind of garbage that is put on the record out in the communities by this NDP government. And what do we have to do as a Conservative caucus? We've got to come along and suggest legislation that protects the NDP from themselves. That's what this bill is all about: so that hard-working, decent servants of the people—not servants of the NDP, these are servants of the people, high-level civil servants—that they be protected from being politicized by the NDP, who just can't help themselves.

They just can't help themselves from getting into the glue each and every time, Mr. Speaker. And you take, for instance, now, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). I love the spin from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak): She accidentally walked into a health facility, accidentally bumped into whole bunch of cameras, inadvertently had press releases, unknown to her, gave political spin, which we would all call holding a press conference, which was against the law, but somehow this happened. And she—you know, if you listen to the member for Kildonan long enough, she was actually the victim—she would be the victim. She accidentally bumped into all these media that she called there, that she organized to have there, and why did they ask her questions? Why did they read her press release? She's a victim. And this is why we need legislation to help the NDP. This is actually an olive—this is not an olive branch, this is the whole tree. This is to help them out to help them from themselves. They can't help but get into the glue.

And should we talk about Crocus? Crocus was falling on itself. It was a financial collapse the likes we're seeing in Greece and Portugal and Spain. In fact, it was a foreshadowing of what was going to come, and you had the NDP go on shop floors, go to their own union members, and say, ah, you got to buy into Crocus; it's a good deal—knowing that at Cabinet—knowing that at the Cabinet table they were talking about its imminent demise. Sixty thousand Manitobans were sold down the river by this NDP government, Mr. Speaker, and they—the member for Kildonan gets up and wants to talk about ethics and integrity. It's—I—you know, we were—we kept looking to the ceiling; you know, would lightning strike? I mean, I—it was just unbelievable. And he referenced something in '95; yes, the chief judge was talking about Tim Sale—he was talking about Tim Sale. It was actually Tim Sale who was the most dishonest when it came to the things that were going on at that time. The only elected official that was named as being one of those individuals the judge referenced was Tim Sale.

So, you know, I would caution the member for Kildonan. You know, we did miss him. It was nice to see him up on his feet, but now we know why they don't let him up any more, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious they can't let him on his feet because he either lives in a rose-coloured-glass world. We're not too sure where he—where his reality is, but for someone like him to be the pinch-hitter on the bill on integrity, is a real stretch. And you know what, I would

recommend—these are the kinds of laws that we should pass to protect the NDP from the NDP. That's what this bill is about.

And you know, I'm sure it's going to be the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) who's going to get up next, the man who sat night after night at his desk, all the lights out in the house, kids in bed, and went through all the special warrants and went delete, delete, delete, delete, delete. He's the individual who let all kinds of criminals go free; he's the one who believes that the best way to deal with youth crime is tickets to a game and a Slurpee; he's got the Slurpee approach to solving crime in this province, and he'll probably be the next one to get up and impart his wisdom on this bill.

You know what, they would have been better off just letting the bill go and doing the right thing. This bill protects not just the NDP from themselves, but protect all of us from the NDP. I recommend that we pass this legislation.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It is strange times indeed when, comparatively speaking, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is the voice of reason in the Conservative caucus.

It is a pleasure to follow the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), who has put so much valuable information on the record for our next election campaign. And I am absolutely astounded that the member for St. Paul would want to get up on this bill and talk about Manitoba's immigration program, our Provincial Nominee Program. And why the member for St. Paul would want to remind Manitobans that when he had the chance to stand up and protected the immigration program that has brought 100,000 people to this province in the last decade, from all around the world, and why the member for St. Paul, under the whip from Stephen Harper's office, as his conserve MP sat in the loge and tried to intimidate members of Legislature and tried to mislead Manitobans about the benefits of immigration.

I'm just so glad the member for St. Paul wants to get up and put those things on the record, because, indeed, Manitobans are angry with the decision that's being made by the federal government to pull back settlement services that are developed in this province, with our government in partnership with agencies in every corner of Manitoba, working with every ethnic community in Manitoba to continue to

make Manitoba a beacon for people around the world. I am very, very pleased that the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) has stood up once again and has put on the record his failure to stand up for Manitobans. The member for St. Paul should be ashamed.

Now, I don't want to be entirely negative about the member for St. Paul, because, I think, as I've said before, every day we spend this Legislature should be an education. And I know summer is almost upon us; there'll be some time for summer reading. I've got a book that I'm going to loan to the member for St. Paul. It's called *As Many Liars*, written by an author named Doug Smith, and it's a very, very good book. And it highlights the work that was done by the Progressive Conservative Party, by high-ranking officials within that party, to try and fix the 1995 election. And it was bad enough they were trying to fix elections—how were they going to do it? They were going to do it by disempowering Aboriginal people. It'll be instructive reading for the member for St. Paul, and I'm sure he'll enjoy reading that and maybe he'll come back to the House in the fall, just a little bit better informed the next time he gets up and wants to speak about ethics and responsibility.

But, you know, it's a Conservative routine. When you're questioned, what do you do? You spin, you attack and where need be, you just make it up. Well, people in Ottawa are getting pretty tired of that happening and they've been sick of that Conservative routine in Manitoba. And it's been shown in the election in 1999, the election in 2003, the election in 2007 and the election in 2011—each time when more New Democrats returned to this House, Mr. Speaker.

* (10:40)

And, of course, I know that the member wanted to talk about Jets tickets and so are we. Because, Mr. Speaker, for the party, the Conservative Party that claims to be so lily-white, it's very interesting that I and every other member of our caucus know Manitobans are still waiting for the list of every Conservative MLA who has seen a Jets ticket from any corporation, and they haven't provided it; they won't provide it. I know they were swilling drinks in the corporate boxes. And I know it's not as easy—some of us when we go to support our sports teams, we wear jerseys, we put our names on the back. The Tories have to go in disguise if they want to go to downtown Winnipeg.

So let's talk about independent officers and, of course, independent officers who do their very

important work in Manitoba are beyond reproach. They are individuals who come from various backgrounds. Some of them take the positions from senior positions in our public service in Manitoba or elsewhere. Some of these independent officers come over for private industry. And one of the benefit, obviously, of having independent officers is being able to have the widest possible pool of candidates so that when we meet—actually, when all parties are involved in the hiring of independent officers we know we have the best possible collection of individuals who can serve the province in a independent and in a fair way.

And as one of my non-political colleagues said when he was looking at this bill, he called this the never-work-in-this-town-again bill. The bill that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has brought forward is actually intended to prevent senior public servants from others who have a lot to share from actually being prepared to step up and take on these roles. Because when they end their position as an independent officer, the member for Steinbach would ban them from being able to do work for the provincial government.

So, why is that? Well, we hear the member for Steinbach's words, but we'll look into it just a little bit more. This isn't about the member for Steinbach respecting independent officers because, as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has pretty clearly articulated this morning, the Conservative caucus has showed a complete lack of respect for those independent officers.

And, as well, it may be also that members opposite would really, really like to stop public servants, senior public servants who've served this Province for many years, for decades in some cases, from feeling they can come forward and apply for one of these positions. Because, effectively, what the member for Steinbach wants to do is to terminate the public service career of anybody who chooses to apply for a position and become one of our independent officers. And that shows a lack of respect for public servants, but, I suppose, what more would we expect from the members opposite?

And I know that in this particular situation, I believe it might have been Irene Hamilton's appointment that may have got the member for Steinbach to prepare this legislation. Well, as the Ombudsman, I want to put on the record that Irene Hamilton was a fair and diligent independent officer of this House. And, you know, it isn't always easy to

say that because she never shied away from being very, very open when she thought criticism of our government was appropriate. And even her last report as Ombudsman was critical of a government department. Because that's what—[interjection]

Oh, here's—now we're hearing the alternate theory; now there's the alternate theory. The poor member for Steinbach's trying to say one thing and his own members are saying the other thing. I would—oh, I'd like—love to be a fly in the wall in that caucus. It would be so much fun to be listening into their discussions because I know they would have such fascinating discussions. Even their conspiracy theories conflict with each other.

Now, Irene Hamilton, to return to that point, actually was a former member, a former civil servant in the Department of Justice with a great deal of knowledge about the court system in Manitoba. She's extremely well qualified for this position and we're glad to see her continue to use her expertise in Manitoba, to enhance our justice system.

And, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), again, it's very convenient, he's the one who puts this bill forward. He'll stand up in the House and he'll complain about the justice system, but every chance he gets he and all his colleagues, they will vote against more police; they'll vote against more Crown attorneys; they'll vote against more court staff; and, of course, they'll vote against things like the warrant squad which has now made about 500 arrests of individuals that are out in the community. The members opposite, I mean, they want to keep warrants on the books from property offences for 1982. New Democrats want to give the police the power to be out there actually going after the people that pose the greatest risk to our communities, and that's exactly what they do.

So, we think that there are a lot of things that can still be done in our justice system to make them more efficient, and I believe that Irene Hamilton is going to be an important part of that as the director of Justice Innovation.

Now, of course, what do members opposite say about independent officers? Well, you know, it was just last year during the election campaign when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) got up and alleged that the Province's financial books, as audited by the Auditor General, were cooked. He effectively said that the Auditor General had somehow participated in a conspiracy to somehow mislead Manitobans. And, indeed, we know that that audit

was clear. We know the Auditor General serves without fear or favour. Again, her decisions are not always easy; government departments have to make changes when the Auditor General steps up and says that there are things that could be done better. Perhaps by looking at what other provinces or other jurisdictions do, there's always things that can be done better. And we respect the work of the Auditor General. But, indeed, the members opposite choose to criticize the Auditor General if they don't happen to agree with her statements on a given day.

And, of course, what can we say about the boundaries commission? We had a senior Progressive Conservative official moaning, back in 2008, when the new boundaries commission came out and he accused the commission of deliberately strengthening the NDP's position for the next election. Well, what really strengthened our position for the next election were the stupid comments put on the record by the members opposite day after day after day.

And that boundaries commission, of course, is comprised by the chief judge of the Court of Appeal of Manitoba and the presidents of the various universities in Manitoba. And, of course, as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has said, that their attack on the independent boundaries commission was described as whining about a genuinely objective process to redistribute electrical—electoral boundaries. It was politically unseemly and as a sad commentary on the state of the PC party. Well, you can't say it much better than that.

So, indeed—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. It's certainly a pleasure to enter into the debate this morning on Bill 209. Certainly, we've have had some lively debate in the Chamber this morning, and always interesting to look back on history, isn't it, and see where various parties were in over time. And we—of course, we don't always agree on the history and sometimes here in the Chamber we do like to realign or rewrite some history from the past, but it's always entertaining.

I do want to commend the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I think it's an important piece of legislation. I'm not exactly sure where the NDP government are on it. I know the member for

Kildonan hinted that there was some value in this particular legislation. I'm not sure the Attorney General agrees with the position of the member for Kildonan. Maybe when the third speaker comes up, we'll get a consensus and we'll be able to move forward, hopefully, in favour of this particular legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the bill clearly lays out some transparency issues in terms of government operations and speaks clearly about the role of the independent officers. And, in fact, the legislation talks exactly about the Auditor General's office, the Children's Advocate office and the chief 'electorial' office and the office of the Ombudsman.

Now we, certainly, on this side of the House recognize the valuable work that those offices, those independent offices, do for and on behalf of all Manitobans. They provide a very valuable service. I think it's important to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes when Manitobans go to these independent offices, they're having issues with the government of the day. So sometimes they're complaining about dealings they've had with the Province and the government of Manitoba.

So it's important that these watchdogs, if you will, Mr. Speaker, are actually operating independent of what government does. If they're acting independent, completely independent of what government does, then they can provide an independent analysis and feedback to the people of Manitoba and that's—in essence that's their role in this as independent officers.

So when the member for Steinbach brought this legislation forward, he's recognized some of the trends that the current government we've seen in the last, well, several months in particular. And we can go back several years, if we like, Mr. Speaker. But, certainly, in the last few months we've seen some interesting developments over on the other side of the House.

And, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't very long ago we had assistant deputy ministers in the Immigration Department, pretty clearly acting in a political capacity in organizing events here at the Manitoba Legislature. And, you know, we don't see that that's a role for deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers, to take active political participation in government. So, you know, clearly those things raise issues with us.

*(10:50)

I know, just not too long ago in Estimates we saw another senior civil servant who has been a member of the party, the NDP party, donated several thousands of dollars there and then was appointed into a brand new position just recently. You know, we see these instances and we realize that there's a—appears to be, Mr. Speaker, a pretty cozy relationship developing with the NDP and senior management. And this legislation is intended to make sure that the public, at least, doesn't view that relationship as being too close, and that's why the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has brought the legislation forward dealing with the cooling-off period.

You know, we also have a situation where the NDP are dropping people into higher positions as assistant deputy ministers. And you know, we've also got ex-NDP members who are now are retired who are still on government payroll and, probably, you know, a job that could be done by an existing MLA and, you know, and save some taxpayers some money. So I know the public perception isn't very good when these kind of things happen and occur, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we want to bring forward this legislation here, to try to—it almost protect the NDP government from themselves.

This—we think this legislation will really strengthen the rules around appointments in terms of appointing independent officers. And if we have a three-year cooling-off period, I think then the public would recognize there is an independence to those respective offices, Mr. Speaker, and it's very important.

We know we certainly have the history here of this cozy relationship, and I know the members talk about the 1990s and all this and some of the history. You know, at least the governments back in that time, they had the ability and they had the want to call inquiries, and actually get to the bottom of issues and dig around and see just what actually did happen so that the public had a right to know. Well, that's the furthest thing from the current NDP government. We had the Crocus scandal and we asked for inquiry time and time again; no inquiry was ever done. So it's pretty clear to us and I think pretty clear to a lot of Manitobans that the NDP had something to hide and, quite frankly, we're sure they did, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation is very important to Manitobans and, you know, it also goes the other way. You know, we talk about an independent officer coming out of the civil service,

there's a three-year cooling period and the same thing works the other way. You know, if an independent body came in, a person came in and wanted to go work for civil service there's also a three-year waiting period for that.

So we're certainly looking forward to the third speaker on the NDP so we can get an idea of exactly where the NDP want to go on this one. We've heard both sides of the story from the NDP. So let's hear a third party and see if we can move on, and hopefully they will vote in line with this particular legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I do want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that it's nice to see private members' hour is living up to its intent today, you know, where we gather as private members and have a civil discussion.

But I do want to say to the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) that I believe all members are honourable members, including the member for St. Paul, and I do wish he would perhaps reflect that in his comments. Because it's one thing to have strong partisan views, but I think it's quite something else, Mr. Speaker, to go after the integrity of individual members, and I want to say that because it's very much indicative of what is really behind, I believe, this legislation.

And if you look at it, it's interesting because, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was very calm, collected—actually, he wasn't himself this morning, Mr. Speaker, but he did try and put forward a principled argument. I—you know, I accept that. I don't necessarily agree with the bill or the arguments, but what was interesting is how the two members that followed really indicated the true agenda here.

And I want to note, by the way, there was reference to a cozy relationship between senior staff and this government. There were various code words that we saw from both of the members that spoke after, that really reflect the sort of the Conservative view of not only civil servants, but senior civil servants. And I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, if there's one thing I'm really proud of in our government is that we've changed the revolving door situation we used to have in this province where governments changed and there was almost an immediate significant change both in terms of the senior level of civil service, but also in terms of many individual civil servants.

Many of us will still remember, when Sterling Lyon was elected, there was a purge of anybody that was suspected of being anything close to NDP. And I remember one person, in particular, who has passed away since—he was Aboriginal—he always told me, the ironic part was he felt targeted because people assumed he was—since he was Aboriginal, he was supporting the NDP in the Department of Northern Affairs, and, in fact, he was a card-carrying Conservative. You know, he was not partisan at all.

And one of the things we've seen is a significant shift. But what I noticed, is it's particularly obvious here is that members opposite seem to have the idea that you can only be partisan, and you have to be partisan all the time, and anyone—in this case, senior civil servants—cannot be above partisanship. And I look at you, Mr. Speaker, because you are probably the best example of an independent officer—in this case, elected by a member of the—members of the Legislature. You have been partisan. I've sat with you in caucus. I've sat—you—within this House. You have been partisan, but when you became Speaker, I think, everyone in this House would say that you have followed through, in terms of ensuring that you are not only non-partisan, but fair to every member of this Legislature. We didn't need a cooling-off period for you to be Speaker.

And I want to say, by the way, that when we're talking about the people, we're talking about here senior civil servants. We're talking about independent officers of the Legislature. I've had the opportunity as minister to work with many deputy ministers in many departments, and each and every one of them had significant integrity and has significant integrity. And I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that I never have asked their partisan affiliations or assumed anything about their partisan affiliations. But I do want to remind members opposite that civil servants are entitled to participate in elections in this province. There are guidelines in terms of senior civil servants, but civil servants are citizens as well.

And I think the real fault here—and it's part of the general characterization of not just senior civil servants, but civil servants generally, by members opposite—is they really don't get it. Our civil servants—our senior civil servants and our rank-and-file civil servants are public servants first and foremost. They are citizens as well. They may have partisan affiliations, but, you know, they operate in terms of integrity. And whether it's the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) yesterday questioning

the engineering advice of our engineers, whether it's the kind of comments I saw—and this was not from the Conservatives; it was from the Leader of the Liberal Party—attacking a well-known and respected engineer, David Farlinger, I want to indicate that in this province, one of the things we've evolved to and we've moved away from—to is an environment in which we respect the integrity of our civil servants, including our senior civil servants. And I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that you are the best example of that.

So I want to say to members opposite: Do not confuse things like a cooling-off period for partisan individuals such as ministers. We do have a cooling-off period, mostly, by the way, to ensure that ministers aren't setting themselves up down the line in terms of opportunities using their decision-making ability as Cabinet ministers. We have that, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's appropriate, because Cabinet does have a very different role, but that's not the same for civil servants. It's not the same for independent officers. And I think it's a confusion on the part of the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) of the roles of those individuals and perhaps some assumptions.

So I will, Mr. Speaker, say that when it comes to this bill, it's very unfortunate that we've had the kind of tone in this debate that we've seen, since the member for Steinbach's—spoke, from members opposite. You know, in the end, I do believe that we can have a civil debate on this, but I do believe that this bill is wrong because it assumes that we don't have integrity in terms of our civil servants and our service. I do not believe a cooling-off period is necessary, and I would urge the members opposite—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation will have four minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution under consideration today is the one brought forward by the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers), titled Bullying Prevention.

* (11:00)

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable acting government House leader, on House business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Acting Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). The title of the resolution is Active Transportation.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, and the title of the resolution is Active Transportation.

And we'll now proceed with the resolution.

Res. 10—Bullying Prevention

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight):

WHEREAS the provincial government is committed to safe and caring schools where all students receive the quality education they need to have a strong start in life; and

WHEREAS bullying occurs in many environments, including schools, the community, at home, and online; and

WHEREAS bullying is unacceptable conduct that causes harm to individuals, families, and the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS all Manitobans share a responsibility to prevent bullying and to promote healthy and safe environments for children, youth, and adults; and

WHEREAS the provincial government passed the Safe Schools Charter in 2004, which requires school divisions to have safe school policies, student codes of conduct, and protocols dealing with bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination, and disrespectful behaviour; and

WHEREAS the provincial government provides operating funding to Safe Schools Manitoba, a partnership initiative that advocates a positive, proactive approach to the promotion of safe and caring schools and communities; and

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba passed Bill 28, reporting bullying and other harms, in 2011, which requires school staff to report bullying or other unacceptable conduct to the principal and, if the principal believes that the

student has been harmed, to notify the 'parent'—parent or guardian; and

WHEREAS the most effective way to address bullying is to take a holistic approach and involve all the community members who interact with students in a leadership role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is the first province in Canada to make Sheldon Kennedy's Respect in School online curriculum training program available to all school divisions free of charge; and

WHEREAS the Respect in School program will help all adults working with students in a school to better understand and respond to incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment, and neglect.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to continue working to ensure that schools are places where all students feel safe, valued, and respected.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for St. James, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows, that:

WHEREAS the provincial—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Ms. Crothers: Shortly after being elected in St. James, I was contacted by a parent who had been struggling with a particularly challenging situation involving a group of girls that were bullying her daughter. And as she outlined the great lengths she went to in order to get some restitution for her daughter, it became very clear to me that bullying is, indeed, a community ailment. It involves and affects not just the child who is bullied and the perpetrator, but, also, the bystanders and those who must pick up the pieces for the child afterwards whether that be their parent, their teacher, or principal, or another friend, and, unfortunately, in some cases, in this case, the police.

I have a child that is going to enter kindergarten in September, and I've thought about what I will do if I learn that another child is bullying my child. It requires a leap of faith to trust that there are systems in place and that people around my child would choose to do the right thing and intervene and pursue the issue with all of those who need to know.

I'm happy to know that our government has addressed this issue already in many different ways.

Our Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) has done an exceptional job creating programs and safety measures to deal with bullying. However, while we continue to increase the ways that we can handle bullying, there is no way to legislate kindness and empathy. All we can do is encourage it and create more opportunities for those who work with children to be able to address bullying when they see it. The Minister of Education proclaimed the week of November 13th through 19th in 2011 to be designated as Bullying Awareness Week.

Every child deserves to have a safe, secure school where they can get the quality education they need without the threat of intimidation. Teachers, principals, and parents have always worked to keep our schools safe, but we know that there is more to do. While we can't wrap our children up in a protective layer and keep them from every harm or hurt that life brings them, we can help them by ensuring that others aren't going out of their way to hinder the progress and success of our children.

Some of the great things that we have already implemented are programs such as Lighthouse. We now have 71 Lighthouses in the province. A Lighthouse provides youth with a safe, fun, consistent place to go at night. Safe Schools Manitoba works with schools and school divisions to help them address bullying and safety needs at the grassroots level. We have also delivered our cyberstalking awareness campaign to all 470 high schools in the province to address the threat of bullying online. After-school Manitoba programs are being introduced to give kids productive outlets, mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for after-school hours. We also introduced legislation to set clear expectations about reporting responsibilities and follow-up actions in schools.

This legislation ensures that serious incidents are reported to school principals who, in turn, report to parents. I'm referring to Bill 28, reporting bullying and other harms, which formalizes the well-accepted practice of reporting inappropriate conduct. This ensures that parents are made aware when their child may have been harmed by an incident at school or a school-approved activity.

Bill 28 builds on Manitoba's Safe Schools strategy by requiring all employees of a school board, as well as persons who have care and charge of students such as volunteers or coaches to report unacceptable student conduct to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. Clarifying and formalizing

reporting expectations for staff and persons who have care and charge of student will improve student safety. We support the culture of awareness that has been developed in our schools.

Bill 28 will enable schools to identify students who are engaged in unacceptable conduct of a serious nature early on and implement appropriate intervention strategies in order to foster and maintain positive and safe learning environments for students. Most recently, we introduced the Respect in School program. This is a bilingual, online program that helps all adults working with students in a school environment to better understand and respond to incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect. It is a unique approach that provides staff and volunteers with a common curriculum and a whole-school focus. This program focuses it on administrators, teachers, school bus drivers, educational assistants, parent volunteers and other individuals who interact with students in a leadership role.

No matter where they happen, in the gym, in the hallway, on the school bus, on the playground, we must be vigilant in creating safer, more respectful schools, because we all understand the importance of learning environments that make students and their families feel safe, valued and respected. Respect in School will complement the other prevention and intervention programs and resources that school divisions have established to support the development of positive relationships and mutual respect. It will also help to extend the scope of a number of safety and respect-focused initiatives such as safe schools, healthy schools, as well as suicide prevention efforts.

We successfully piloted Respect in Schools in three schools in three different school divisions during the 2010-2011 school year: Elkhorn school in the Fort La Bosse School Division, Mountain View School in the Frontier School Division, and the Many Faces Education Centre in the Flin Flon School Division, and the response from participants have been quite positive.

Respect in School will be available to administrators, teachers and support staff, including school bus drivers and educational assistants and parent volunteers, as I mentioned already. And, as I've also said, we can't legislate kindness and empathy, but we can encourage our children through some of the early childhood programs such as Roots of Empathy and through the many other Healthy

Child initiatives that have been put in place by our government—and which I'm extremely proud of—that encourages emotional and physical well-being from the beginning of a child's life.

For a balanced approach, we also provide opportunities to the adults that work with and around children to be able to recognize and act when they see that harm is being done. As adults, we carry the responsibility of demonstrating what fair, kind behaviour looks like, what it sounds like and what it feels like. It is expecting too much of our children to behave kindly to others when they see the adult world around them tolerating the very behaviour that we ask them not to emulate.

In closing, I'd like to share a story of my own experience as a child. I grew up in a rural community, and although I only lived about 40, well, maybe 30 minutes away from the school that I attended, it took us about an hour and a half to get to the school on the bus. And my brother and sisters and I, we were the first ones on the bus in the morning at about 7:15 and the last ones off at the end of the day, which was around 4:45. So I spent a lot of time on this bus.

And there was another girl who lived a few miles down the road from us and she decided at some point when I was about 12 years old that I was an interesting target. She bullied me on the ride home fairly intensely for a few weeks and the pressure of dealing with this relentless badgering started to take a toll. I can clearly recall walking up the long lane to my house, opening the door, seeing my mother and saying, Mom, can a 12-year-old have a nervous breakdown? And then I fell apart in her arms, which I think is pretty awful that a 12-year-old is thinking about nervous breakdowns, but that's the point that I was at.

* (11:10)

And I kind of wonder, had some of these programs that I—I've been talking about this morning, had they been available at that point, perhaps the bus driver on my bus would've recognized that something was going on and could've intervened before it got to the point that it did.

I survived, and in my case, the bullying stopped when she lost interest in tormenting me, and I did defend myself a little bit, but she was a tough nut, let me tell you. And I have to add that whenever I return home to visit my family, I bump into her quite a bit, and she is as delightful as can be. I don't know what

happened to her, but she—she's very friendly and, you know, we can't tell our children who are suffering from having to deal with bullies that, in time, the bully may change. That just doesn't cut it.

I have very clear memories of how dreadful it was to endure that kind of behaviour from one of my own peers. You don't forget those things. And when I see her, when I go home, I'm always friendly and I'll make small chat with her, and while I'm standing there talking to her, at the back of my mind I can still hear some of the things that she said. So you never really forget.

It is our job to ensure that we are providing ways to handle bullying effectively for all involved. And I ask all members to vote in favour of this resolution, which will help us to protect children from the devastating effects of bullying to any degree.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise this morning and to put some words on the record with respect to the bullying prevention resolution, and I thank the member for St. James for introducing this resolution this morning.

And certainly, this private member's resolution points out an important issue that is the subject of great public debate and public attention and the issue is this: that bullying behaviour is simply unacceptable and should not be tolerated. And we know that in Canada, one in seven Canadian children aged 11 through 16 will experience bullying or are experiencing bullying, and it's clear that we have constantly more and more to do in order to address the issue and, as elected officials, we must also recognize that we have a role to play in bullying prevention. And so I am pleased this morning to stand and to speak on this issue.

We know that bullying is complex. It's a vicious kind of aggressive behaviour. It is distinguished by its frequency. It is perpetrated on weaker victims and the consequences are severe, especially for those who are being bullied.

And we also know that the issue is complex, that there are a myriad of factors that go into bullying, and we know that the research is always producing more evidence about what the causes of bullying are and how we, as a society, can stand against it and work more effectively to eradicate bullying from our schools, from our communities, from homes.

We know that when it comes to bullying, there's a lot of reasons for someone to be picked on. They can be too short or hair or skin colour being different. They can be too quiet. They could be wearing glasses. They could have braces. They could be from a different culture. And it's interesting that one writer on the—in the literature says this about it. It says: No matter what the perceived or fabricated excuse, the excuses have one thing in common—they're irrelevant. Each reason is just a deceptive justification for a bully to indulge in a pattern of violence, be it physical or psychological, against someone else, against another child who is smaller or maybe younger or less able or less strong or less aggressive than the bully. And so the target is simply useful for the bully to direct his aggression.

And we know that it happens in Manitoba. It happens in our own communities. And I'm just thinking this morning about one example from a few years back, and that is Gary Hansen, the 16-year-old from the town of Roblin, who committed suicide and left no note or explanation, and his parents understood that he had been bullied, and the community was shocked. They were shocked to think that it could come to this. And at the time, in the media, officials with the Goose Lake High School indicated that they had no idea that Gary Hansen was being bullied because there were no specific incidents that were reported to them.

And so we know, as a province, that we have—we've understood the tragedy of this situation and the tragedy of so many like it, some that end in the devastating consequence of suicide, many, many more that just end up having a permanent and disabling impact on the victim. But we have gotten better as a society and as groups at addressing these things. We've gotten better at understanding how to make a difference when it comes to bullying, and even now, I think that as we're looking at this resolution, we have to be careful that we are not patting ourselves on the back so much as to not recognize that we have a lot more ground to cover. We have a lot further to go.

And I was just chatting with a colleague of mine, we'd shared a story of speaking with a constituent and they are moving out of a community and they had referenced that the children were happy to go, and he had inquired, well, why would that be the case that they were happy to go? And they said the extent to which their three children were experiencing bullying in their school division had become intolerable, and so even though the children

did not know what lay ahead for them in a new community, they were so excited to be out of that school environment.

And I'm so discouraged to hear reports like that, and I know that we all are—as colleagues, we're discouraged to hear reports like that. And we think with all that we now have in the arsenal to deal with issues like—of bullying, why is it that we can still have examples like that, where children don't feel secure and safe in that learning environment? And it comes to this: That we understand that schools have a duty to offer safe and secure places to learn, that children need to feel comfortable attending fear and not—attending school and not fearing for their safety, and in the same way parents must feel comfortable sending their children to school without fearing for the safety of their children. And that's exactly what the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) had said earlier, that as a mother with a young child, there is that moment where you release your child into that system and you want to have that assurance that those caregivers and those teachers and all those adults in charge are going to be able to react in a situation like that, to do the right thing. And we want to know that our children are well taken care of when they're under the supervision of the school system, and that's why every school in Manitoba should have an antibullying program that works, and that's why we're so discouraged when we find examples of ones that aren't working.

The whole school approach is one that we understand works the best, that it's predicated on the assumption that bullying is a systemic problem and that programs must address the problem at all levels of the school community. And I know that our models in Manitoba follow that example, whereby they seek to actually change the culture of a system over time in order to send the message to individuals who are bullying, to send the message to ones who are being bullied and to send the message to all others that this isn't an acceptable behaviour and it won't be tolerated, and it gives all the stakeholders a framework in which to address the issue.

And it takes time to adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment and bullying and intimidation of pupils on school grounds, and it needs to be done in school grounds and on school property; it needs to be done in school buses and at school bus stops; it needs to be done at school-sponsored events and activities. We have to understand that there's a wider scope than just the school.

But I do want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that, beyond just passing laws, we need to know if the programs and procedures that we are adopting actually work to diminish the problem. And more research is needed to study what works in what circumstances and for whom, and it's very important, I believe, that schools be held accountable for the programs that they have adopted with respect to antibullying. And if the programs that are in place right now are being proven to be not effective, then other ones need to be put in their place, and I think an important place to start for this is simply enforcing existing legislation that we have that aims to mitigate bullying in schools.

I think about Manitoba's Safe Schools Charter, under which all schools must outline a code of conduct for students that includes a statement like things like—that things like bullying and abuse, in a variety of forms, will not be tolerated. And while I know that these are important steps in providing a framework of conduct for students, I wonder how many students are aware and how many times they are made aware of the code of conduct, and I would hope it would be not just on the first day of school, and I would hope that teachers have these hanging where they can be seen and that schools make mention of them during school assemblies and things like that. I think it's very important that we enforce the things that we have in place right now.

* (11:20)

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that there's an important place in this discussion for homes and families. And I was a little discouraged to see that there wasn't mention in the resolution of the important place of families with respect to antibullying. And I believe that we cannot frame this issue, we cannot have a fulsome discussion, by excluding the home and excluding of families, because we know that the prevention of bullying, the promotion of healthy attitudes towards others, begins in the home. And we know that children who bully come from homes that—where aggression is favoured, where there's a breakdown in communication.

We need to make sure in families that we're dealing with our children in ways that we set limits, we monitor our children. We communicate love and warmth. We set age-appropriate limits and we use non-physical punishment to deal with misbehaviour. There's so much that we need to do. But it's important to recognize the role of parents when it comes to all these things.

It's important to recognize also that we have new challenges, including things like cyberbullying. And we have to constantly adjust our strategies and our approaches to understand that the target is always moving, and cyberbullying is very important to address as well. Because of these things, I support the motion, and we look forward to continuing to work to reduce bullying.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I, too, would like to thank the member from St. James for bringing this forward and allowing us a chance to speak on such an important topic, and the member from Morden-Winkler.

I remember my own days in school, Mr. Speaker. And as the member from St. James said, you never forget them when you're being—those moments of being bullied never leave you. And I can remember being on the schoolyard, and I was very skinny. I can remember being called toothpick, which, today, I would be honoured if anyone should like to address me as toothpick now. At the time it was—it seemed horrifying to be called that. And I wore glasses at—from the age of seven on.

And I remember days where I thought, I can't go to school the next day—like, it's just too awful. And later I gained a voice and I couldn't stand it when other kids were being picked on, and I did speak up. And that, in itself, was terrifying because that turned the focus onto yourself. And, you know, you put yourself at risk every time you spoke up for somebody, because you felt like, well, now they're just going to turn their attention to me.

And I'm sure people in the House can remember those feelings, because the feelings, too, never leave. You always remember what that was like—I think, forever. And the member from St. James was speaking about her own child beginning time to go school and that fear. And I was so afraid when my daughter started school. She was very shy and very quiet, and I was really worried about her. And I would always ask, and she was never being bullied.

She went to Sister MacNamara, and the whole world, people from all over the world, went to Sister MacNamara, and she never experienced that the whole time she was there. And finally, when she gained a voice, Mr. Speaker, she said to me, you know, mom, I'm just not the kind of kid that gets bullied. The reality was that was true. She happened

to, by a fortunate mix of genetics, be born beautiful and smart and funny and talented, and those are usually not the kids that are bullied in school.

So my job with her, Mr. Speaker, became to ensure that she didn't become one of those bullies, that she didn't use that against others. And that, in fact, she had the courage to stand up herself for the kids that aren't in that position, because when you're a kid, you don't realize that that really is ever going to end.

You don't realize that those of—people who are maybe a little bit different when they're kids, that later, as adults, that will seen as a good thing. But it's not ever seems to be seen in school as a good thing, and they don't realize that. They don't realize it's going to come to an end someday and that they will be—find a time when they're accepted and loved and belonging and all of those things. So it's important, I think, that we do share that with them, that this time does end, as well as work, of course, towards ending bullying in our schools or anywhere. It's not just happening, of course, in our schools.

And we have some fabulous programs, I'm sure people are aware of. And one that I really loved was the focus where they did all that work on helping the kids understand that if you did see bullying, you did stand up for that child that was being bullied, and you walked away from the bully because that bully's looking for attention, right? For you to laugh or cheer or applaud him in that bullying, and so that program, I thought, was just—was very effective.

And I really want to see that—those kinds of things growing and I know we are doing a wonderful job in our school. I was lucky enough to be able to go with the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) to pink day, one of the pink day events. I wish I could have gone to all of them. There was a bunch around the city and they were fabulous and I was able to go with the Minister of Healthy Living to the youth leadership conference held by the Red Cross in February as well. And the Red Cross just has some amazing programs called Beyond the Hurt and they do a tremendous job in helping kids have empathy, Mr. Speaker, and understand just how destructive bullying is. Because I think that's another thing about kids. We aren't usually thinking about what are the effects of what we're doing on others unless somebody's saying to us, hey, you should maybe think about what that effect is on somebody else. So we need adults in our world to be doing those kind of things.

And I think it's just tremendously important that we, as adults, whether we're coaches, whether, you know, in our role as parents, when we're on the street we need to take it upon ourselves to stand up for the people that we see around us being bullied. And they might not be children, Mr. Speaker. We all know that adults are getting bullied every day and whether, you know, they happen to be adults with various disabilities or adults that just appear different or have a different culture or whatever it is. So we need to be standing up for those people and teaching our children that respect for others needs to be given even if we differ in our opinions of what they believe in, that doesn't matter. We need to be teaching them to be respectful to all people.

And the effects—I guess the effects are so lasting. I remember the—I don't know—recently we've heard about Mitt Romney and his story of bullying when he was a teenager. And he had gathered a bunch of other people together with him, other kids with him, and they attacked a young man and they held him down and they chopped off his hair and made fun of him. And it was horrifying. It was just a horrifying example of bullying at its worst where you not only, you know, you actually gathered a group to attack someone. And that man spoke now of those effects and it had absolutely never left him, and the damage that was done to him was with him for the rest of his life.

So this work that we're doing to work on ending bullying will affect our society at every level. We want to see and need to see violence in our communities reduced. And this is one of the main things that we need to be doing. We need to be teaching our children that violence in any form—and bullying is certainly violence, a form of violence—needs to end and that it's absolutely not acceptable. So I think everyone in the room is probably in complete agreement about just how important this is that we're doing this work.

And someone mentioned we're also bringing it into sports. We all know of stories in the sports world where kids have faced tremendous harassment and hazing rituals and all of those things, and we're bringing that into sports so that our coaches and all of those people need to be trained in that as well. And I think that's just incredibly important.

* (11:30)

The member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) mentioned cyberbullying, and I know I had a friend, as well, Mr. Speaker, whose daughter ended up being

bullied over the Internet and it was just horrendous. They sent out, you know, just the most horrible things, lies about her, all over the Internet, and it was devastating for her. And she was another one where she wanted to move schools. You know, she couldn't imagine going back to that school.

So, I guess, I would just like to stress that if we're really going to have an effect, every single one of us every day needs to stand up against those who are abusing their power in any way. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from St. James for bringing forward this resolution and to our colleagues from Morden-Winkler and Burrows for their comments that they put forward onto the record.

Today, I feel privileged to stand up and speak and put a few words on the record in support of this resolution. The resolution points out an important issue that has been the subject of great public attention. Bullying behaviour is simply unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

As my colleague from Morden-Winkler mentioned, that one in seven Canadian children aged 11 to 16 is experiencing bullying. It is clear that more must be done to address this issue. As elected officials, we have a role to play in the bullying prevention.

Bullying causes a lot of grief to victimized students in the short and long term. Many victims feel a great loss of confidence, humiliation, depression, all of which may contribute to scarring for a long period of time, even after the bullying is over. For many students there is no greater difficulty in overcoming the effects of bullying.

There's still a lot of work to be done with respect to mitigating bullying in our schools. It is a complex problem to eradicate completely, but certainly part of the solution is having open dialogue and working together with children and their families to overcome bullying. We can't debate the excuses for bullying. It's how it affects the victims, but, it all—but, at the same time, to give those victims the tools to help deal with these different situations.

In the resolution, it says, whereas the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba passed Bill 28, reporting bullying and other harms, in 2011, which requires school staff to report bullying and other unacceptable conduct to the principal and, if the principal believes

that the student has harmed—has been harmed—to notify the parent or guardian; and whereas the most effective way to address bullying is to take a holistic approach and involve all the community members who interact with students in a leadership role.

We have to link this to our common, everyday morals, values and ethics. Is this not the responsibility of each and every one of us as being Canadians?

Another portion in the resolution talks about the Respect in School program, the online program which has been developed by Sheldon Kennedy and, basically, is promoted. It's available to all school divisions, free of charge, and the Respect in School program will help all adults working with students in a school to better understand and respond to incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect.

Is this going to be mandatory training? That'll be a question for future. Will parents be able to do the program online as well, free of charge?

If we're serious about antibullying, do we not have to open up these things, not only to professionals who are working with students on an everyday basis, but to all stakeholders—parents, guardians, absolutely all Manitobans and, for that matter, be a leader amongst Canada to show the efforts and the due diligence that we are doing as a province to curb bullying.

Perhaps another starting point would be to enforce existing legislation that aims to mitigate bullying in schools. Manitoba already has a Safe Schools Charter, under which all schools must outline a code of conduct for students that includes a statement that things like bullying and abuse in a variety of forms, among, others are not acceptable.

While this is important steps—while this is an important step—provide a framework of conduct for students, I wonder how many students are aware of this in Manitoba. I know that under The Public Schools Act there is a forum for having ceremonies or open school debates where some of these rules are outlined at the initial part of every school year. Is this, maybe, something that we not necessarily legislate, but strongly encourage administration and senior administration to make sure that within schools that these rules are not only touched on the first day of school, but, also, many times throughout the school year to just try to enforce the importance of the rules and, also, some of the consequences that may come with by breaking those rules?

For a code of conduct to be effective, I think that at a minimum all students should be made aware of these strict expectations. In addition to the awareness of expectations, what is also needed is a consistent nontolerance of this kind of activity, which will contribute to an amicable and inclusive culture. Bullying cannot be normalized in schools or anywhere else. To decrease this behaviour, it is imperative that teachers and students take a more active approach in stamping out bullying behaviour.

In the press release dated February 23rd, 2012, the Province to provide \$300,000 in new funding for Respect in School programs, issued by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), and just to take a quote from there: "'We all play a role in ensuring safe, respectful environments for children and youth,' said Sheldon Kennedy. 'I applaud the Province of Manitoba for adopting a proactive approach to protecting students by giving school leaders the tools they need to take action to prevent bullying or abuse of any kind,' says Kennedy.'" Also from the press release, "It is currently available to all school divisions that would like their administrators, teachers and support staff, including school bus drivers, educational assistants and parent volunteers, to take advantage of the online curriculum."

I strongly feel that this program should be made mandatory, and should be—possibly, a professional development day should be targeted towards this program, as well, because I don't think that all professionals have the tools in their tool box to rightfully deal with these situations, and they don't necessarily know all the steps in order to, as it states in Bill 28, to be able to report incidents of bullying.

Access to the programs, again, as I mentioned earlier, this should be wide open to parents as well. As far as costs go, I'm not sure what the initial costs are for this. I know that the Province is stating \$300,000 over three years. To me, it's a small price to pay when we're looking at a \$1.12-billion deficit last year. A hundred thousand dollars, and even if we up that a little bit to include all parents, I think, would be a small price to ensure the safety of our students and our children.

Again, while the bill—Bill 28—aims to deal with bullying and was only recently proclaimed, only time will tell what the implication of this legislation will be. Without schools having to report to a larger body on the frequency of bullying incidents, and to work towards decreasing the number of incidents, we may not have any idea of the impact of this legislation.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, is that the tools are already in place—are already in place—for schools to track, and then further report bullying incidents.

Now, again, according to Bill 28, it is up to professionals within the school to report to the principal. And then, the principal has to then decide then to make the parents aware of the incident without, at the same time, disclosing the information, or the information of the bully, to the parents even though we know that that student who is being bullied would then carry on home, tell the story, and then, I'm sure, the parents would be in the school the very next day. There's no reason why this information can't be tracked. A lot of the names of the students within the school are all protected with PHIA and FIPPA. Anyways, we would just need to know the number of cases or incidents.

* (11:40)

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the private member's resolution rightly calls for more action to address bullying throughout Manitoba. I would also like to point out, however, that we need to take concrete steps like tracking bullying behaviour. We also need to make students aware of the dangerous effects of bullying and the ensuing punishments for getting involved with this cruel activity. This way we'll be in a better position to succeed and ensure the safety and security of all students in our schools and elsewhere. Schools will no longer be a site of humiliation.

Students should be able to feel safe and focus on learning and self-development. This is why I appreciate the opportunity to stand, and I encourage all members of the House to support this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I am—want to take this opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to, obviously, a very important subject to me as Minister of Education and, I believe, a very important matter to all ministers of Education and members of this House.

I'd like to thank the MLA for St. James for bringing forward this bullying prevention resolution. And I'd like to thank her for telling her personal story about her incident when she was a young person going to school and the effect that it had on her as she was attending school. And I would also want to thank her for the little vignette that she told at the end, in regards to meeting that person when they

were later on in life as adults, and finding it quite interesting that some of the memories of that individual weren't as pleasant as when she had that chance meeting with her later on in life.

It is unfortunate today that we are debating this resolution. I think that we feel, as a government, that we would like to think, I know, and all members in this House would like to think, that this is an—matter that at some point in our lives, we would like to think we didn't have to continue to pass resolutions and pass legislation about.

But for some reason, Mr. Speaker, this is still a situation in our society that is happening, where there are incidents where young people are in situations, not just in school, quite often outside of school as well, where—and online as well, where there are incidences of bullying. And, unfortunately, I think that we still have to be vigilant, and we still have to have programs in place, and we still have to have legislation in place because, at some point in our society, I think we would like to think that this is no longer something that is happening to young people because of the devastating effect that it can have on our young people for many years to come.

Our government has obviously been very active on this file. Our previous minister of Education was—implemented a Safe Schools Charter because we believe that schools have to be safe and secure so that young people in our society today can get the education that they need and the quality of education that they deserve.

And we put a Safe Schools Charter in place under our previous minister of Education, and it was one of the first initiatives in regards to legislation that we put in, so that there was a code of conduct in place in the charter so that every school could have a statement that pupils and staff must have—behave in a respectful manner and comply with that code of conduct. And it was also a code that outlined what was unacceptable: abusing physically, sexually or psychologically, orally, in writing or otherwise, bullying, including cyberbullying. And, you know, we have to continue that work.

And both members of the opposition have spoken today in this House about Bill 28. That was another piece of legislation that follow—that we followed up on because we felt it was important that there were clear expectations about reporting those responsibilities and reporting the follow-up actions in schools.

We believed that we made—had to make it very clear that there was a responsibility for people in our school system, regardless of whether they were teachers, perhaps they were volunteers, parents working in our public education system that would see an incident, not just in the school but maybe on the playground, perhaps on a field trip where they were helping to supervise, and if they saw that kind of an incident, there needed to be a very clear expectation that they would report that incident and that that incident would be reported to the principal so that there could be follow-up action, Mr. Speaker. Because we believe, as a society, that that is not acceptable, and we need to continue to do work on this issue so that we can provide that safe and respectful environment in our public education system.

Obviously, several members have spoken today about how proud our government was. We're the—we were the first province in Canada to make Sheldon Kennedy's Respect in School online curriculum training program available to all school divisions here in Manitoba. And that online curriculum is available to all school divisions free of charge. And I was honoured to make that announcement with Sheldon Kennedy and have him talk about his personal experience of sexual abuse, and he has been inspirational in the work that he has done in Canada and it is just another tool that we have here in the province of Manitoba to fight these kinds of bullying incidents. And we were very pleased that we worked with the Manitoba School Boards Association on that announcement, and we made it available to all school divisions and they are working with us to make sure that all of the school divisions know that that tool is available to them.

I am pleased that the MLA for Burrows talked about the exciting things that are going on in our school divisions here in the province of Manitoba, and it's young people that are getting involved. Young people, students in our school who are standing up against bullying in schools and saying to their peers and their colleagues that it is not acceptable to have bullying happening in our schools, that there needs to be respect for diversity. And I was pleased to be at Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau and, in fact, I was with the MLA for Transcona as well, and we had a wonderful time at the Day of Pink at that school because there's nothing more exciting than seeing a bunch of young people in a school, active and involved and engaged and being advocates against bullying.

And I just want to congratulate all of the schools that participated in the Day of Pink. We had 130 schools in 76 communities across the province. There was staff, students, community and they all talking about the importance of creating safe, respectful schools.

And I know that the Red Cross has been absolutely wonderful in regards to the work that they do. They have a wonderful program called Respected: Beyond the Hurt. It's a bullying prevention education program and we have had the honour of working with them in communities all across the province of Manitoba, and it's been very exciting, Mr. Speaker, to see this kind of work done here in the province of Manitoba.

I want to just mention I was in committee last night with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), and it was incredible to hear the beautiful speeches that we heard from the presenters to the Minister of Justice's Human Rights Code Amendment Act. This act is to protect transgendered persons and, you know, Mr. Speaker, these individuals are some people that have been targeted in our society in regards to the decisions that they make about their sexual orientation and their gender, and they told beautiful stories about what they have done in regards to advocacy and creating safer places for transgendered people. And I just wanted to say I was so pleased I was there last night to hear those speeches and to have the opportunity to recognize them for the work that they have done.

I want to thank, once again, the MLA for St. James for bringing this resolution forward and, of course, I look forward to it being passed in this Legislature this morning by all members of the House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): A pleasure to rise this morning to speak to this private member's resolution, and I want to acknowledge the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) for bringing this important issue to the Legislature for debate this morning.

You know, clearly I believe that we, as legislators, should be sending a message to the public that bullying is not acceptable behaviour here in the province of Manitoba, and I think with our comments this morning in the Legislature, I think we certainly are sending that message.

* (11:50)

Some of the figures that we see are quite disturbing, when we talk about one in seven Canadian children aged 11 to 16 experiencing bullying at some level. It's quite clear that much more work has to be done on this particular issue. And I think we do have a role to play in that regard as well.

It certainly is a challenging issue. It's an issue that's been going on for many years, and I think maybe as a society we're finally getting our head around some of the issues relative to the bullying. But then, at the same time, as technology changes, we're entering into another area of bullying that we're not accustomed to, and we talk cyberbullying that's occurring now, and it's very widespread as well. So, just when you—we think some of the issues we're—we can deal with, there's new issues and new challenges in front of us.

I share the member from St. James—I spent a lot of time on a school bus, too, when I was younger. For many years my dad was the bus driver, so that was an indication you're going to be the first one on and the last one off the bus, so I spent a lot of miles on school buses over the years.

You know, at that time, we—I don't think we thought too much about the aspect of bullying. I'm sure, you know, those things were happening on school buses around the province but, you know, there really wasn't a recognition of the issue. And I don't think we, as legislators, and those people in the school system, really maybe weren't sure how to handle it. You know, we didn't have any protocol or frameworks how to deal with that. So the—you know, the teachers, maybe in a lot of cases, turned a blind eye to it. Principals at the time, or school boards, didn't have a lot of direction from government or direction from a school board in terms of how to deal with bullying issues.

So, you know, there were certainly challenges there. But I think it's incumbent upon all of us that are involved in the school system, for sure, to make sure that we have a framework in place to deal with it. And I guess that's what the latest legislation that we did, Bill 28, the reporting bullying and other forms act, was passed here about a year ago. I was hoping we might have a little more experience with that bill. I'm recognizing that it was just recently proclaimed, though I'm not sure why the government didn't get that bill proclaimed earlier, once it was passed. However, that does send a signal to people

that, you know, we are certainly recognizing that bullying is an important issue here in Manitoba.

And I think we have to send a signal, too, that everyone in the—within the school system has to be diligent, in terms of keeping an eye out for bullying in respect to not just playgrounds, but we talk about school buses, as well, and we hear incidents of kids walking home from school, situations arising, and out in the playground, as well. Certainly, my wife is a teacher and she provides me some insight into some of the issues that go on in the school and around the school and after school and before school, and there certainly is a lot of challenges out there that have to be addressed. And, quite frankly, there's a lot of work ahead of us to do yet.

You know, we find ourselves in some interesting family and—interesting family and social situations, not just in Winnipeg, but the same thing happens in rural Manitoba. And it can be quite a challenge for some of the children that are involved in those difficult family situations. And that's where we, I think, have to make sure that we have the resources available there to make sure that those children that maybe at a little more risk, a little more susceptibility to some of these things, have the resources and have the ability there to have people talk to them and make sure that their issues are being addressed.

So it's very important, and I think it's important that we signal to the youth early and consistently that bullying is not going to be acceptable. And certainly we're putting a lot of onus on the school system to provide that education. But I think we also have to deliver that message at home as well. And, clearly, if we can get that message delivered to parents I think it's very important.

You know, the other area where we see a lot of bullying is in the sports side of thing, and then the team—team sense, and clearly, you know, with my—our family has been quite involved in sports over the years. We've been fairly fortunate that not too many situations existed. But I do know just talking to one of my friends, just on Sunday at a golf tournament, actually, and he'd indicated to me that his child was having some issues with bullying. You know, and as a result of that bullying and those situations in—on the team, that particular student decided, you know, not to play that particular sport. He decided to move onto something else. So, clearly, we've got a lot of work to do in terms of bullying: support, educating people on bullying and taking steps to improve it.

So, you know, there's a lot of situations out there that have to be addressed, and I reflect back on the Neepawa Natives situation that became public here just over the last year or so. I believe many people didn't recognize that there was those types of bullying practices carried out in sports and, certainly, at that high a level of that age of kids. So it was quite an interesting situation when that whole issue became public.

And I think the other thing I just wanted to mention, too, we did have Sheldon Kennedy here in the Legislature a couple years ago, and his work he's doing and some of his programming is certainly effective. And there's a lot of good programs out there, but we certainly have to make sure that the resources are available to do what we can to ensure that bullying is dealt with in a proper fashion here in Manitoba.

With that, I thank you for my opportunity to speak, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I do want to put a few comments on the record to this very important resolution.

Bullying has always been there. I just don't think it's been as reported and, perhaps, as focused on as it is now. If you go through any society, you go through communities, you will find that a lot of people have been bullied, and they carry the scars of it. It is a—very dangerous. It is, obviously, often a very damaging and, at times, a life-threatening behaviour.

And—I got elected in 1995 as a school trustee in River East School Division and, Mr. Speaker, at that time I felt that the best way to approach bullying was that it would be a zero tolerance.

And it was something that I pushed at the board: zero tolerance when it came to bullying, first of all, to the front line of education that had to do with teachers and administrators, and zero tolerance when it came to students.

And I've always felt that teachers also suffer a degree of bullying. Some of the students can be physically fairly intimidating. When you see some of the grade 6, even some of the grade 5 students, they can be physically very, very large and they can be menacing towards teachers. And, Mr. Speaker, they also need to be protected because there can be a veiled violence towards them or even actual violence towards teachers and that's unhealthy for the school system. I've always felt that the front line of protection for our children starts with our teachers and our administrators, and they need protection.

Also, so do our students, and I wonder if there's anybody who hasn't gone through this—through school, through the playground, through life and hasn't been bullied in one way or another, because it's there. And I got an email just the other day and the individual indicated that, you know, they were—good student, didn't wear glasses, they weren't skinny, they weren't heavy, they—there was no reason for it other than that they were very good at school and they got bullied for it, and got bullied substantially for it because there were other students that didn't like the fact that this individual did very well at school.

I think we have to look at bullying. I think this is a debate that is important enough that it should be something we debate in a very fulsome, in a whole way in this legislative Chamber. We've seen legislation come forward over the years. Was it effective? The legislation, as the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) said, it was passed. And the legislation, you know, did it have the effect? Did it actually do what it was supposed to do? You know, we still have considerable amount of bullying, whether it's in sports, whether it's in education—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for St. Paul will have seven minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed 'til 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY	Schuler	2104
	Swan	2105
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	Cullen	2107
Second Readings–Private Bills	Ashton	2109
Bill 301–The Young Men’s Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act		
Caldwell	2099	
Helwer	2099	
Second Readings–Public Bills	Resolutions	
Bill 209–The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act (Cooling-Off Periods Related to Independent Officers)	Res. 10–Bullying Prevention	
Goertzen	2100	
Chomiak	2102	
	Crothers	2110
	Friesen	2113
	Wight	2115
	Ewasko	2116
	Allan	2118
	Cullen	2119
	Schuler	2121

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

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