

Second 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
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
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, December 4, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I seek leave of the House to move directly to Bill 201, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 201? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 201, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act.

Bill 201—The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I move, plus seconded by the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that the Bill 201, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to stand in this House and present this bill.

The background for the bill is clear, Mr. Speaker. The bill requires the government to develop a formal procedure to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent. It is also—requires government departments to develop regulatory

reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint in making new regulations. Both the government procedures and department plans must be made public.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's—there—is—been many, many requests for this type of a bill. And it's a bill that I think is long overdue in the province of Manitoba. There are currently tens of thousands of provincial regulations in place in Manitoba. Many of them are redundant as we speak today, and many of them are costly with no financial benefits. As a result, the normal small business owner in Manitoba spends 10 hours of his time each month complying with government regulations. That's nearly a full workday for most small business owners. It's not quite a full business day for them small owners, as you know quite well that 10 hours is a very small day for entrepreneurs.

But let me tell you that these entrepreneurs are frustrated with this time spent. Every time they turn around, their government-related costs go up and more regulations are introduced. And since this bill was last introduced, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have hiked the costs on business exponentially. First, they broke their election promises that they had made and raised the taxes by \$184 million on key business goods and services like gasoline, property taxes, also on insurance, property insurance and private insurance, which has raised the \$184 million for their coffers which we aren't seeing a benefit for. They also raised their user fees on basic government services by \$114 million.

Then, Manitoba Hydro tried to raise hydro rates and did and were successful in raising the hydro rates 3.5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and with the projection of doing that for the next 20 years to pay for their ill-conceived west-side line and developing some power that they don't have a market for. It—there's no business plan that would—that's been presented to the Province of Manitoba at any time to back up their rate hikes and no other business plan that they speak of and the customers that they speak of—the ghost customers that they talk about.

Education property taxes have skyrocketed as well. If these tax hikes were not enough, Mr. Speaker, the NDP fiddled with the PST remittance program—or system, and the changes were supposed

to help small business. What it did, it was—what it did do, it created a hidden tax that has put millions of dollars into the government coffers. Did nothing for the small businesses; no benefit again. It's no wonder that small business confidence in Manitoba has been falling. Since the NDP were re-elected, the CFIB Manitoba Business Barometer has fallen almost 10 per cent. Manitoba has the second-lowest business optimism in Canada. It has the lowest business optimism in western Canada. This cash grab by the NDP is money that could be better used by business—money that could otherwise go towards hiring other employees, providing better wages or reinvesting in their business so that they become more competitive in Canada as well as in the world.

This is—according to a recent Canadian Federation of Independent Business report, Prosperity Restricted by Red Tape, the total cost of regulation to Manitoba businesses is \$945 million annually. Almost a billion dollars is being wasted in the province of Manitoba that could be invested in retooling our businesses to be more competitive that they would be hiring more people that we wouldn't have an outward migration year after year since—like we have experienced. Since 1999, we've had an outward migration every year out of the province of Manitoba—the only province in Canada that holds that deplorable record. Twenty-two per cent said that they had known about—if they'd known about the burden of regulation, they may not have gone into business in the first place. Eighty per cent of the respondents to the prosperity restricted red tape report said that simplifying existing regulations would help their businesses better comply with the regulations.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we're in the difficult times that we are today throughout the world—we have some economic challenges in many, many parts of the world—some of the simplest ways to bring our province into line in its budget would be to get rid of some of the regulations that are redundant. They would be a better position if we could have a one-stop shop for people that wanted to get into business that they could say, yes, we can go here and we can get the regulations that we need to follow going forward with one stop in one spot. It's about getting rid of the red tape by increasing accountability. That's what's important. Given Manitoba's dire fiscal situation, reducing red tape is a low-cost way that the government could support Manitoba entrepreneurs.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also need to be able to measure the overall burden—the overall burden—of

the red tape that we're faced with today. There is no yardstick for that and nor does our current government at this point want to address that. It's unfortunate, because it is a low-cost way of reducing our deficit. There is no question about that.

* (10:10)

The regulatory burden is the highest to the small businesses, which pay almost five times more per employee than their large counterparts that comply with government regulation, and I'm sure that you can understand that. According to the CFIB, 23 per cent of small business owners are spending more than six hours a week dealing with government regulations. Reducing the regulatory burden would make Manitoba businesses more competitive and would encourage businesses to set up offices in Manitoba, rather than not be in Manitoba at all.

The bill also requires the government to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent. It also—requires government departments to develop regulatory reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint making new regulations. Both the government procedures and departmental plans must be made public.

Mr. Speaker, there is a number of things that the minister—that could change—that would make things better in Manitoba: an assessment of—for—of the need of the proposed regulations with a 'biew' to avoiding duplication—that would be a starting point: an analysis of alternatives; a study of the economic impact of the proposed regulation, including an analysis of its effect on provincial competitiveness and how compliance costs can be minimized; confirmation that public consultation has occurred—it's important that the people that we are going to make the laws for have an opportunity to invest in their time and their energy in those; an estimate of the time and cost required for implementation—*[interjection]*—thank you; ongoing review of relevancy of the proposed regulation through the inclusion of a sunset clause.

One year after the act comes into force, each minister must develop and publicize a three-year regulatory reform plan for his or her department. It wouldn't be that big of a chore for them to do something like that, and—for any government for that matter, when we see that other provinces have addressed this issue. British Columbia has been very aggressive in cutting red tape and stimulated growth. They have cut their regulations by 42.6 per cent. The

other Provinces have stepped forward as well in the prov—in Canada: Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, Quebec, British Columbia and Ontario already taken up a challenge. Saskatchewan has established a regulatory modernization council.

According to other CFIB reports, 89 per cent of small businesses in Saskatchewan said they would likely recommend starting a business in their province, that's compared to the 53 per cent in Manitoba. That's a horrible, horrible statistic that Manitoba has to carry. Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise that Manitoba businesses would feel that, given, at the reg—feel this way, given that—the regulatory burden that they face. It's too bad Manitoba hasn't taken up the challenge to play a leadership role in the red—to reduce the red tape in small businesses, and that—and the red tape that the owners face every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would urge all members in this House to support this bill that's being put forward today, take it to committee and let's carry on and make Manitoba a better place for all people.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the Chamber today to speak about The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act that's proposed by the members opposite. And it gives me an opportunity to talk about all the things that we have been doing with respect to creating an environment here in Manitoba that helps the 106,000 businesses in Manitoba thrive and continue to thrive here in the province of Manitoba.

Now, with respect to small business, Mr. Speaker, I know members opposite, my avuncular colleague from Emerson, has often said that I have no experience in business and—et cetera, et cetera. Perhaps he didn't read my bio, that I did actually run a small business. I started when I was 14 years of age.

An Honourable Member: DeeJay.

Mr. Bjornson: And, yes—I hear the member saying, yes, you were a deeJay. I was a deeJay who had seven employees by the time I was 17 years of age. It was a small business, but it put me through university. And I also had dabbled in a few other small business enterprises along the way before I decided to follow the path that I chose to become a schoolteacher and then, ultimately, find my way here to the Legislature.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the members don't know, perhaps, is that when I was deeJaying, the federal government came in with new regulations without any consultation to the industry that automatically added \$500 per unit that you were operating, without any consultation to the industry. So you had to pay a fee before you plugged in your stereo to start making money as a deeJay, and there was no consultation. And what that did was that took a lot of the small operators out of the equation and it was just the big operators that were running the shows and providing that service.

So I'm very much aware—very much aware—as Minister responsible for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, the impact of regulation and the impact of fees, because that really changed the dynamic for me when I was running my small business and going to university. So I appreciate that the members often say, oh, what do you know about business? Well, I know a lot about business, Mr. Speaker, because I was a business operator in this province.

Now, I take that with me to the table every time I come into my office, Mr. Speaker, when I think about the rules and the regulations, when I think about the taxes and the fees, et cetera, et cetera. And that's why we've been doing the things that we're doing here in the province of Manitoba to make it a successful place not only for the 106,000 businesses that are here in Manitoba, but for the 100,000 people who now call Manitoba home in the last 10 years, for the 16,000 newcomers that came last year, many of whom came through the very successful Provincial Nominee Program for business, many of whom are setting up small businesses all over the province of Manitoba. And they're coming to an environment where 10 years ago the taxes was 9 per cent on small business, today it's zero.

We've increased the threshold from 400,000 to half a million dollars for those small businesses, so we have 15,000 fewer businesses paying taxes, Mr. Speaker—the small businesses. *[interjection]* We are—yes, thank you very much, it is the lowest in Canada. Zero per cent is the lowest small business tax in Canada. I know the member from Emerson—I'm sure that's what he's talking about when he's heckling from his seat—that we have the lowest small business tax in Canada.

We've also increased the—reduced, pardon me, the corporate tax from 17 per cent to 12 per cent. We've reduced the corporate capitalization tax, Mr. Speaker, and we've done a lot of things that have

been very important in terms of facilitating the small business needs here in the province of Manitoba.

The member opposite said, well, what about a one-stop shop? Well, I guess he wasn't paying attention to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, because we're moving the Companies Office and the Small Business Development branch together to a special operating agency that will be a one-stop shop. And we had a one-stop shop with the Canada and Manitoba Business Service Centre. Unfortunately, there are not as many federal employees there to provide the support to the small businesses as there had been in the past because of their shift in priorities. But we continue to provide supports through the Small Business Development branch here in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade. And we are refocusing through the special operating agency that will be developed as a result of the combination of the Companies Office and the Small Business Development branch, previously with the Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre.

And I've been to the Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre when I actually bumped into a former student of mine who was looking at setting up a new business. And she was really amazed at the resources that were available to her not just in terms of the video resources, the text resources, the support of the counsellors that were there to—and advisers that were there to answer any questions that she might had. She was absolutely amazed that these opportunities were available to her as she looked at the possibility of starting a new business. And this young woman had nothing but faith in the economy of this province and the investment that she would be making to start a small business here in the province of Manitoba.

So there are a number of things that we have been doing, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do. We have, of course, set up computer portals that have increased the access for a number of small businesses where—the BizPaL is a great example, a great collaborative effort. So if you're going to be sitting in your kitchen in Nova Scotia or in your living room in BC and you're looking at setting up a business in Manitoba, you can go online, find out all the permits that are available—that are necessary, I should say, for establishing a business. And you could have all that information available at your fingertips, 24 hours a day.

So once you come to Manitoba and set up your business, as 106,000 business owners have done here

in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, once you come here and set up your business you can access TAXcess 24 hours for tax filing. You can access the Canada-Manitoba business centre. You can access the business portal, and the business portal is a very user-friendly website. It's a very business-friendly website where they have comprehensive online access to services and information.

Now, in 2009 we announced the creation of the Manitoba Business Gateway, Mr. Speaker, and these are meaningful opportunities for businesses to apply to the gateways where we have information and referral services in Brandon. We've opened new gateway sites at our bilingual service centres in St. Boniface, St. Vital, Notre Dame de Lourdes and St. Pierre Jolys and St. Laurent as well.

*(10:20)

You know, when I was in Notre Dame de Lourdes, too, I was quite surprised by the number of businesses from Asia that were establishing themselves there, Mr. Speaker. There's—I believe it was in Notre Dame de Lourdes where there's a new restaurant and, if I'm not mistaken, a new specialty grocery store to cater to the needs of Korean immigrants who have recently come to work in the hog industry.

But that's the spinoff of that, when you have so many people coming from different parts of the world, they're—it changes the market. So we have new restaurants and new specialty stores that were being set up because of that.

The business number—now, how's this for an idea: having one business number to access multiple program areas. And the City of Winnipeg was the first jurisdiction in Canada to follow that model of the one business number and we, as a Province, have been leading that charge and recently held a meeting with delegates from across the country to work towards one business number, Mr. Speaker.

So there are a lot of things that we're doing to make it easier for businesses to operate here in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I'll talk about BizPaL again, because I think that's a tremendous success story for the province of Manitoba. We have 70 communities in Manitoba covering over 75 per cent of the communities in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, that accounts for more than 10 per cent of municipalities currently engaged in BizPaL. So for a province that has 3 per cent of the population to have 10 per cent

of their pop—of the communities participating across the country in BizPaL, it speaks volumes to how we're punching above our weight to make sure that we get people engaged in this province in a very excellent resource, a meaningful resource, that makes it easier for businesses to conduct business in Manitoba.

If you want to talk about reducing the paper burden, Mr. Speaker: reducing filing frequency for sales tax, it started July 1st of 2002; removing the sales tax registration and collection requirements for small home-based businesses, that started in April 1st of 2007; elimination of the sales tax registration and collection requirements for small business, April 1st, 2010. We're cutting red tape for the non-profit sector. We are creating an environment here in Manitoba that makes it one of the most affordable places in which to live.

And, you know, members opposite—they've been chirping the whole time I've been speaking, but that's fine; I'm accustomed to that. One of the things they've been chirping about, Mr. Speaker, is Manitoba Hydro. They don't see the value in Manitoba Hydro that we do. They don't see a future for Manitoba Hydro the way we do, but they don't understand that hydro is our oil, and hydro and low hydro rates is one of the reasons why we can attract businesses here to the province of Manitoba. They want to mothball that; that's their priority. But we're not going to let that happen, because hydro is our priority; it's Manitobans' priority, and we know that we will be in office for a long time to ensure that hydro has a future here in the province of Manitoba.

Now, we are one of the most affordable places to live in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and that speaks well to any industry that wants to come and set up a business here. Yes! Winnipeg has been doing a great job promoting Winnipeg and Manitoba. Chambers of commerce are doing a great job promoting all the assets and affordability that we have in Manitoba. Maybe the members opposite should start talking about all the good things—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill 201, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act, and it indeed is an act that should be enacted in Manitoba. It's something that business people here do indeed require.

It's very strange when we listen to this government, they're very good at regulating things that they do not control. Auto dealers: they brought in regulations for transparency in pricing yesterday, supported in there for some of the communities.

But what about the entities that they do control? There's no regulations for that, for universities, for MPI, for Hydro. Surely they could have the same standards apply to their own Crown corporations and entities that they do—people that do not—are not directly related to the government. Universities, for instance—we see in Brandon University that there is now a new fee for the Healthy Living Centre.

Students have no choice: If you're enrolled as a student—bang—brand new fee here to support the Healthy Living Centre whether you use it or not, whether you're a resident on the campus of Brandon University or not. You have to apply, perhaps, if your practicum is even off campus, to be exempt from this particular fee. One way for the government and the university to finance that: on the backs of the students. Yet another tax, Mr. Speaker.

And, you know, things like this did exist in the past. Both the member from Brandon East and I were members of the Brandon University Students' Union that did finance their own building through something like this, but this was a building that belonged to the students, Mr. Speaker, not to the university.

Lots of other areas that I've run into in business, and audits are perhaps the most concerning. As the companies that I was involved in were of substantial size we were audited by some entity pretty much every year, sometimes federal, often provincial. And the auditors were usually there for about a week at a time and then would come back in another month for another week to discuss their findings with us.

These auditors usually came from Winnipeg; this is, of course, the centre of the audit universe in Manitoba. Mondays, though, usually didn't start in their world 'til about 11 o'clock because it is a long ways to Brandon from Winnipeg uphill, further than it is from Brandon to Winnipeg, of course, you know. It's just the way it works. And Fridays tended to end early because, you know, they've got to get back into the city.

But we did, you know, spend quite a bit of time with these auditors and helped them. I was not one that thought that we need to abuse them or anything of that nature. If they came into our offices we had

desks ready for them to use, phones, ready for them to use. The files were all clean. They weren't that dusty pile in the corner and say, go to it. I found that if we treated them well they would, you know, have some consideration for us as well.

But they always did find some things and, you know, one audit we did have was on provincial sales tax. And the auditor at that time, they were going through it and they were auditing virtually all dealers of crop protection products in Manitoba looking at PST related to sale of crop protection products, which, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, as an up-and-coming farmer, you would know, many of these are exempt from PST. So they were—the auditor had the, I think, a bit of a gall and audacity to tell me, the first meeting we had with them, well, you know, we're not after you. We're after the farmers that buy their crop protection products from Walmart and Canadian Tire. It doesn't happen. It's little bit of a lost leader here. It was very odd for us to listen to that, to say, well, you know, if you have a farm of any size you don't buy your product there because it doesn't have the volume that you require. But, nonetheless, they spent a week with us on this audit and went through all of our processes and found out how we did things. And one of their concerns was, you know, when someone asks you for—to go and spray their field, you should have a signature on their invoice.

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, especially in today's technology, but all along we have—farmers have cellphones and they're out looking at their field with our people that work in the crop development environment, and they say, okay, it's time to spray it. They call in to the office; go do it; you're going to do it this afternoon at 2; we're fine. We go out and spray the field. We never see the farmer. How are we going to get his signature on the invoice, was our question for this gentleman, because he didn't understand how the business operates and their interpretation was if there wasn't a farmer's signature on that particular invoice then it couldn't be exempt from PST because it was no proof that it was actually applied to the field. So we had to work through that one with them and it took a little while for them to understand how that works. But, you know, we made some accommodations, they made some accommodations, but, again, weeks of our time and our staff's time trying to get them to understand how the business runs.

We've had lots of other ones come in and we don't really run a cash business. People pay us by

cheques or a credit card. We probably have about a hundred dollar float in any particular branch, but he wanted to see our cash register receipts to make sure that we were charging all the correct taxes and everything because he was used to auditing 7-Elevens and the like where it's all a cash business. And we said, well, you know, we deposit twice a day and here's our bank records and here's how we do it, and he was quite shocked by that and also the volume of the sales, of course, was something that they were not used to. So we're a bit of a training ground maybe for auditors and that's fine, but, again, lots of red tape out there.

I could go on and on about the audits, but, you know, one of the most, for us, controversial areas of regulation has to do with environmental licences. And you've heard me speak in the House here asking the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Mackintosh) about Speedway and the environmental licence that they had and why the department didn't know when it's a public document. I applied for all of these licences for our various outlets, and it takes a lot of work. It takes a great deal of research, and the document itself, at that time when I submitted them—there's been a small change now—but I needed to submit 25 hard copies of the application to the department, and then they had a period of time where they could consult with the various departments because they get distributed out to all the applicable departments and they all get time to comment.

* (10:30)

Invariably—invariably—every time on the last day of that consultation period my phone would ring off the hook, from this department, from that department, from a federal department, asking questions that were either contained in the document, the answers were there, or the questions were pretty simple and could've been answered at any time. But it was in their docket at the end of that particular month to make that phone call and that's when they did and they got the answers that they required or, if they were concerned about it, they would delay issuance of that particular licence. And if that licence is delayed, that backs us up into another season. We can't do the construction in that particular facility, we have to wait another winter; we have to wait from the investment; you have to wait for your tax dollars. But that's the way it runs in Manitoba; we like doing those types of things.

We also spoke recently about Brandon area planning and the new development plan—the new

zoning plan that they—it's been sitting in the minister's office since the summer waiting for a signature.

An Honourable Member: Why?

Mr. Helwer: That's a very good question. Why? Why is it waiting? Brandon and area planning, the City of Brandon, the municipalities of Elton and Cornwallis, took a lot of time to make these changes and they talked to a lot of people in the area. They talked to business people; they talked to developers; they talked to residents. Anybody that was interested had a shot at this plan and they 'cayak'—all came together to get three municipalities to agree universally that this was the plan that they wanted to roll out. Great, we've got—put the document together, send it in to the minister—nothing; it sits there.

We have millions of dollars of development that are waiting for that document to be signed. Why, Mr. Speaker? What is the holdup? They've got to do their due diligence? That was included in the due diligence that the municipalities did. They had plenty of opportunity to comment on it there; they did not do so. That is the government's fault and they're tying it up in red tape and delays again, where we've missed the summer construction season and we're waiting in the winter.

Much higher costs to develop anything in the winter, but that's what we're doing on Manitobans: we're just putting on more tax burden, more regulatory burden and delays. That's one of the biggest things that red tape can do.

In fact, the delays for development in western Manitoba—if you went into Saskatchewan and you went to Carlyle and you went to Weyburn—and I have done this, Mr. Speaker—they thank us, because we are the greatest driver of their development. Companies come in to Brandon; they come in to Waskada; they come in to the oil patch. They want to develop; they want to set up; they want to create a company and they hit the red-tape wall, and they go, you know what? We're going to go in to the border—over the border to Saskatchewan because they want us there and they'll let us do this and we can still operate in Manitoba.

Isn't that a great idea? Greatest exporter of economic development is this Manitoba government. Fabulous thing to be proud of I'm sure, because contrary to what the previous speaker said, we do

actually have oil in Manitoba. And maybe we need to pay a little more attention to that sector.

Far too late, Mr. Speaker, for this to happen, but we need to pass this and I recommend that they're—give due consideration to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I'm pleased to put a few words on this bill.

I'm pleased to see that the Conservative Party has actually moved into the year 2000. I know when I was running a number of businesses in my previous iteration—I ran some reasonably large businesses, and it's interesting, because back in those days you actually had to file all your paperwork manually on paper and mail it in. And, you know, it's interesting, because you used to have to mail in zero per cent tax returns—you'd have to mail all these in. You'd have to pay by cheque—you actually had to pay by cheque and, in many cases, when you had to incorporate a business, when you had to make changes, when you had to do property transactions, you had to drive into Winnipeg to do that or you had to have certified documentation. So when I was in northern Manitoba and I wanted to set up a business, you actually had to fast freight it after it was certified by a lawyer all the way down to Winnipeg. Terribly, terribly inefficient, slow, cumbersome, and if they lost the document you'd start all over again.

I'm of the opinion, that—when I was Minister of Industry back in 2003, we were the second jurisdiction that integrated BizPaL. Right now, 75 to 80 per cent of our population are caused by—are—fall within BizPaL communities and, you know, the funny part is, that took money from the Department of Industry to implement. Why? Because we brought municipal, provincial and federal regulations under one umbrella to make it simple to do.

And I know the members opposite—especially, the member from Emerson doesn't understand how to use the Internet, but if he learns how to use the computer, he learns how to turn it on, he'll be able to understand that he can actually file PST and all these documents online; you can pay for things online and there's even Google search and save. Back in 2005-2006, it's interesting to note that we actually did a complete review of all the government forms and documents, and consolidated forms, got rid of forms, got rid of regulations that were not appropriate. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, that process, through the budget process, was voted against by the Conservatives—every single Conservative voted

against measures to improve the reduction of red tape and make it easier for small businesses.

And I'm interested to know why the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) is against environmental regulation. I know the Conservatives in Brandon did not do an environmental assessment when major plants were started in Brandon. I know he's in favour of going on without any environmental rules or regulations; he must be, because he spoke against it. I know that the members opposite—when I was oil and gas minister, when I started out there was \$120 million of oil business in Manitoba a year. I know now it's a little bit excess of a billion dollars a year. I know that we moved to consolidate regulations. We moved to make sure that there was understandable environmental regulations in the oil patch, and we actually worked on workplace health and safety regulations to ensure there was less injuries in the mining and oil, gas industry.

And I know the members across, the Conservatives, do not believe in workplace health and safety; they believe that there should be a cost in human lives for producing product. I don't believe in that, so I believe that you need regulations for health and safety. I believe that you have to protect water. So when we were talking about the oil and gas industry made sure that there was appropriate protections of groundwater—we made sure of that. And I trust the member opposite from Brandon knows that it's important to have appropriate water regulations. And I know he's a nice man so I trust that he understands the importance of environmental regulations and licensing, workplace health and safety regulations, because that's what makes us safe. And I do know he's a nice man so I believe that.

I look at other things. Small business often has to hand out lots of paperwork and all the rest. And at one point when I became Minister of Industry, I realized that one of my corporations had, actually, seven different numbers: a federal number, City number, provincial workplace number—seven numbers. And I'm pleased to see that the Province of Manitoba was the first jurisdiction that tried to incorporate one single business number. And I think that was really, really important, because I can still remember when we got in trouble with Revenue Canada because the holding company was different than the operating company, which was different from—than—and there was different numbers for everything, and we did get in trouble where one account had a surplus of about \$28,000 for the

monthly contribution and one had a deficit of \$28,000 and we had to link the two.

I also look at other things that make sense. My first regulation was the non-smoking health protection act, and I have to thank the former member from Carman, a Conservative, because we worked together to build that regulation, and, not only that, we brought in a hotel industry, the restaurant industry, we made it in plain language. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Now everyone celebrates the fact that we were the first jurisdiction to do non-smoking, but also that the act is readable. And a lot of jurisdictions followed that piece of literature.

The other thing that's interesting is the members opposite, the members in—from Emerson, was busy complaining about taxes—taxes. Now, when I was a small businessman, I was paying, you know, a reasonable tax both the—corporately and privately. The tax rate was 9 per cent under the Conservatives. Now it's zero for the first \$450,000 [*inaudible*].

* (10:40)

I think—I think—I know I'm not the mass—math whiz that the members in—from Emerson is, but zero is less than nine and it's less taxes. My corporate tax rate used to be 17 per cent, and it was 17 per cent under the Conservatives. Now, I believe that 12 per cent under us is less than 17 per cent. And I think that was good. [*interjection*] I think so. I think so.

And I think that the fact that we also can submit those tax forms online and pay them, that's very, very positive.

I think that it's interesting to note that the members opposite voted against all those measures, every one of them.

And you know, I look at corporate capital tax, and when I was Minister of Industry, I did meet with lots of businesses and industry. And you know what? They said, listen, we need to make sure we have a good business environment. Let's work on the red tape, which we did. We got rid of lots of repetition. We got rid of lots of forms. We moved down this road. But then we also listened to them about the corporate capital tax. We eliminated it, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, but while we eliminated it—and the Conservatives had promised to eliminate it prior to this—we actually did it and the members opposite voted against that.

So, now, I've only had four or five corporations and a number of companies and I've only operated and had numbers of employees, but I happen to know that I had the pleasure of working under the NDP government, which was cutting red tape, and the Conservatives that were doing things from the 1940s and '50s.

I'm pleased to say that we've moved down this road. And what's better, Mr. Speaker, is we've moved down that road in consultation with businesses, with industry and the population.

So I invite the member from Emerson to go to his computer, turn it on. If he needs help, we can send someone over there and they will show you—they will show you how the BizPaL works, how the automatic filing works, how he does not have to lick stamps and put the—on and—them on the envelopes and mail them away—that he can actually move from the 1940s into the 2012. Because, you know, I think society has, our government has, and we will continue.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba business office that has done a great job of working with us—I have to congratulate Hugh Eliasson, who has done an absolutely amazing job of leading the charge on the reduction of red tape in the single business number.

And I also have to say thank you to the entire Department of Industry. They were great to work with, because, you know, they don't have a lot of noise and rah, but they do the job and they do it well. And what's nice about it is they're quietly efficient and they've made huge changes. Because, just simply, the art of filing—the old system where you did everything by paper—you submitted all the paper and it was a pain, and now it is very, very efficient.

And I'm pleased to do that and I often wonder why they rally against auditors who help protect the system and protect the companies. They rally against the system which protects workers, with workers' health and safety and environmental laws. Because I think regulation is necessary, as we learned in the US crash. We need to have regulation to have good government.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm pleased to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 201, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act, introduced by my colleague from Emerson. I'm pleased to have actually introduced this bill previous

to this in a couple of sessions myself, so I wanted to, of course, speak in support of it.

What the bill does is requires governments to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulation more transparent. It also requires government departments to develop regulatory reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint in making new relations. And then both government procedures and department plans should be made public, Mr. Speaker.

This is something, Mr. Speaker, that has been recommended by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I know the members opposite know who this group is because they do lobby with them. And they represent, oh, I think it's around 7,500 small businesses in the province of Manitoba. So they have a voice. There's a number of people involved in this organization, and what they do is they raise concerns to the government about issues that are important to small business. And the issue that has become most apparent, according to the CFIB, is the issue of regulatory burden or what is traditionally called red tape.

And it just might be of interest to note why it's called red tape, Mr. Speaker. It's because of these—in days gone by, all these regulations were written up by clerks and rolled up in little pieces of white paper in scrolls and tied up with red ribbons. So, hence they became known as red tape. And these were all the rules and regulations that were scribed.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, a very important thing for small business because, as we know, as what small business and business people tell us, is they spend a lot of time during their regular day complying with government regulations. This is something that takes time away from their work—busy work schedule, meaning that they have to work often into the evening.

If anybody here has run a small business, I can say that I have and I know that you can't always get everything done during the day and things have to get done in the evening. This takes away time from your family, it takes away productive time from the time that you have during your normal hours of work, to do things that are required to be in compliance with many rules and regulations.

So the total amount of cost to small business is really astronomical, and I think it's been reported to be about—total cost of regulation to Manitoba

businesses, \$945 million annually, Mr. Speaker. That is money that small businesses could use to grow their businesses. If they can grow their businesses, they can employ more people. When more people are employed, there's more money going around in the economy, more money to spend in the economy, more money is taken in by taxation. It grows the economy. That's what small business in the private sector is really good at, growing the economy, if they're allowed to do that. If the government would work with that segment of the province, of the economic drivers in this province, to actually help increase the productivity and grow the economic pie, that would be a really good way of moving forward. But, unfortunately, what we get is all these roadblocks being put in the way.

And I hear the opposite—members opposite with their arguments. They will say that we don't want health and safety or environmental regulations and, you know, there's nothing that could be further from the truth. This—and I know the members opposite know that, but they like to pump up the rhetoric. But they know that this is not about health and safety regulations, it's not about environmental regulations, which all are necessary for everybody to survive in harmony, Mr. Speaker. We know that. And, you know, that's just empty rhetoric coming from their side.

As a matter of fact, when I hear the member from Assiniboia put on the record about not caring for human safety, I mean, that's absurd, Mr. Speaker. I think that's quite disrespectful to even imply that anybody in this Chamber would want anybody to be harmed in the workplace or anywhere. So that's just a disrespectful thing to say.

So I'm just wanting to clarify that position with this bill, that this is not a bill about reducing regulations with regard to health and safety or environment, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to clarify the other point that the 'mener'—the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) said. He says, oh, every time they want to do something. Well, you know, they haven't really done all that much. Yes, I—yes, they've done BizPaL, but you talk to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and they will say—they will say—well, that's a small, minor step, but it doesn't address the underlying problems. It does not address the underlying problems.

And I know the minister responsible—the minister from—I think he lives in Southdale, I'm not

sure now, but anyway, the minister from Gimli—he keeps trying to tell people that, you know, that they've addressed the problem, but, Mr. Speaker, they haven't. They haven't addressed the problem and, you know, and that's not just me or anybody on this side of the House saying that. Canadian federation of 'indepesent' business always say, they don't go far enough. They don't really look at the underlying problems. They try and tinker with little things here and there, but they don't go to the heart of the problem, which is all the regulations that they keep imposing every year.

* (10:50)

We just saw it the other day—saw the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) table two big binders like this full of new regulations. Now, I'd like to see somewhere along the line where there'd be a baseline and every year you'd see that many shrink, that many regulations shrink, Mr. Speaker, rather than grow. Now, they have not really addressed that and this is the underlying problem here.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very good bill. It's been done in other provinces. I know BC has enacted some legislation. The Canadian government has moved quite ahead on reducing regulatory burden. I think as—I think they've actually achieved about a 23 per cent reduction in regulatory burdens to small business. Saskatchewan's moving in that direction.

Other provinces are looking at what they can do, because they recognize in other provinces—I know, even in Nova Scotia they're moving in that direction because they realize that 'manit'—that small businesses are the economic driver, the economic engine of growth and prosperity in the province. So anything that can be done to help small business is a very good thing. Other provinces are doing it.

I don't really know what the reluctance is on the part of this government that—I don't know what it is that they don't see the importance in small business and the importance of what they mean to the economy and how small business actually can grow the economy. It would be good for everybody—not just small business, but good for everybody. I don't understand their reluctance to have a really good, serious look at this. I don't really even see it as a real partisan issue, Mr. Speaker. It's just a good common sense thing to do. And as we're often reminded in this Chamber, no one has the corner on good ideas.

So, I think this is—very good idea, again, put forward by the member from Emerson. And I think that it'll be very good to pass this on to committee and have people come and talk about this and then have a very good discussion on it. If members opposite won't even allow it to go to committee, how can they know what the other people in the province are saying? Because this is really important, to take it to the public. So I would recommend that that's what we do—we support this bill, pass it on to committee, have the public come and have their say and have further discussion on it. Because I don't really see that we get much in the way of debate from the other side; all we get is rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, and that's very unfortunate.

But, again, just in conclusion, I'd just like to say it's a good bill, it's a non-partisan bill—should be supported for the sake of small business in this province, and I think we should move forward with it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand in this House and speak to this particular bill, and it is an interesting debate that we're having.

And I appreciate the opportunity to follow the member for Morris and agree with her in that—in her sentiments, that red tape is not a good thing. And I think what we've heard from both sides of the House today is, is that we agree, and the only difference here is, is that we are actually doing something about it and taking steps to address this issue. And what we see here from the members of the other side is basically more of the same.

And—but, you know, I wanted to start by saying that, you know, sometimes we fall prey to—or fall into the trap of stereotyping. And sometimes there's a stereotype that one—members of a certain political stripe are better business people or more attuned to the world of business than others. I would argue, and I'd like to put on the record, that I would put any one of our members up against the other side in the business acumen on this side of the House and experience on this side of the House any day of the week, with members on this—on the opposite side of the House.

You know, I come from a family, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, of small businessmen and persons. My father's a small business owner. My brother is—owns a small business in multiple locations across Canada. And my brother-in-law—well, now this is

interesting, because I talk to him as if he is a small business owner, but I really don't know if his business can be considered small anymore. We might actually call it medium-size or large. He's doing very well, and he's doing well because he's working on the projects that are—that we're building here in Manitoba. So he's doing very well in his industry. And so I would put, you know, our—my family's experience up against anybody else's experience in the business world any day of the week.

And, myself, I mean—the member from Gimli had mentioned his business experience, and while I have—I did start a small business, myself, as well. I'm not going to get into the details because, you know, if he's talking about being a deejay, I wouldn't want to talk about—I'd maybe explain to others what a KJ is, but anyway—*[interjection]*—that is what it is, but I won't put it on the record. But we did have a little company and we would go across Manitoba and put on little shows, and it was a lot of fun and I did learn something from that experience and, again, from my family, having that experience. So I do get the chance to talk about these issues with members of my family.

And, I mean, first and foremost, you know—and it's been said here before and sometimes we talk about things and we say them over and over again, and maybe they lose their—they lose—you know, they lose some wow here in the House when we say zero per cent over and over again. But I don't think when you talk to small business owners and I don't think when you go out and speak to the public, when you remind them that we brought the small business tax down to zero, I don't think it's lost the wow factor for them, because it makes a difference.

We know that in Manitoba, small business is the economic driver of our economy. And it's folks that are starting out their small businesses, that are putting their ideas on the line, that are putting their money on the line and are putting their talents on the line to take a chance, that really drives our economy forward. So we've recognized that and we've—I mean, first and foremost, supported them by dropping their tax rate to zero.

But we didn't stop there and we're not stopping there. What we're doing is we are helping them navigate some of the regulations and, you know—and we're helping them understand what regulations and steps that they need to take and to ensure that their business is going to thrive and be successful.

I heard over and over again from the other side, talk about regulations. Well, you know, there's a big difference between regulations and red tape, and I think we need to put that on the record and, first and foremost, talk about the difference between regulations and red tape. And if anyone on the opposite side of the House wants to stand up and say that we should have no regulations and all of a sudden that they're the party—they're a libertarian party, that there should be no regulations on small business, I would in—I would—they're the tea party light, the Tea Party of Manitoba. That's fine; they can stand up and they can say that.

But on this side of the House, I think—and I'd say—I would argue most Manitobans would say that—that most Manitobans would agree that there is a need for regulations and there is a place for regulations.

Now, once those regulations are in place, helping small business owners understand and medium-size and large business owners understand what those regulations are, are—is exactly the point of our one-stop-shop idea.

Now, there was some talk earlier, you know, about—you know, about how we've put some of this on the Internet. So this is—we've amalgamated and we've made it a one-stop shop, whether it be what those regulations are or a—just a gathering of information. Folks can go on the website and they can get that in one place with a simple click.

And I'm not going to get into the debate of, you know, whether the members opposite are able to access this information or whether they found it confusing. But I know that from the—from small business owners, that they appreciate that this information is out there.

We talked about this in the Throne Speech: the combination about the Companies Office and the small business support programs. This is going to streamline operations, it's going to improve service delivery and it's going to reduce the duplication that we've seen previous to this.

And it's going to provide that one-stop-shop support, which is really what small business owners are looking for. They're looking for support. They've got the ideas. They've got the drive, really, what they want is government to support them and to give them the ability to thrive and to thrive going forward in—

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Concordia will have three minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolution, and the resolution to be considered by the House this morning is the resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Burrows.

The honourable acting Government House Leader, on House business?

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a matter of House business.

Mr. Speaker: On a matter of House business, the honourable acting Government House Leader.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered in next sitting Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). The title of the resolution is rural cancer core—pardon me, CancerCare hubs.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered the next sitting, next Tuesday, will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Selkirk, and the title of the resolution is Rural CancerCare Hubs. It's for the information of the House.

And now we'll deal with the resolution sponsored by the honourable member for Burrows, titled We Day.

Res. 1—We Day

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member from Concordia, the following motion:

WHEREAS We Day is a day-long event organized annually by Free The Children that encourages young people to make the world a better place by getting involved in a variety of humanitarian causes; and

WHEREAS on October 30th, 2012, 18,000 Manitoba elementary and secondary students attended this year's We Day at the MTS Centre, while even more watched the live broadcast; and

WHEREAS all of the students who were invited are already involved in volunteering or fundraising work for both global and local causes; and

WHEREAS students heard from keynote speakers such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Mikhail Gorbachev and Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Justice Murray Sinclair; and

WHEREAS the We Day event is followed up with a year-long educational program encouraging students to get involved in one local and one global cause; and

WHEREAS these students are now inspired to help change the world through a wide variety of community involvement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the students, educators and speakers who participated in We Day for their efforts in making our province and the world a better place.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Burrows, seconded by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that:

WHEREAS We Day is a—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Ms. Wight: We Day began in, I believe, in 2007 and didn't come to Winnipeg until 2011. And it's purpose, just in case there's any people who aren't aware of it, is to encourage young people to work to create a better world, to get involved, to be part of their community, both the global community and the local community.

In 2007, Mr. Speaker, there was 2.2 million people between the ages of 15 and 19 living in Canada and many more under the age of 15 that are also involved. And so that, in itself, is just a tremendous force of energy, and We Day is one of the things that is engaged in getting that force of energy working for good.

We Day has, on its own, many benefits, but it's really not about that one day. It's really about the other 364 days of the year and engaging that force and energy of youth to be working those 364 days of the year to help others.

I spent many years, Mr. Speaker, working with kids involved in various serious crimes, and I was always interested in how quickly I could engage

them in wanting to do good and in believing that that was, in fact, why they were here, that they hadn't been born at all to hurt other people, that they had been born for much greater purposes. And they—it was very quick for them to turn around and be willing to want to do things to help others.

And so I really believe that our youth are very open and really desiring to do good for others, and they need to be empowered by the adults in their world to do that. They need to be given the opportunity, as young people to fulfill their 'abil'—their—the things that they're capable of doing.

So although Winnipeg began in 2011, there are some stats available because it began earlier in other areas, and I'd just like to get some of those on the record, Mr. Speaker, because, yes, may We Day is just a great day of inspiration and it's one day that doesn't last.

But the studies have shown that that is not true. So, in fact, since 2009, \$20 million has been raised; 5,700 schools have participated; 3.4 million hours have been volunteered for local and global causes.

The kids were also, of course, asked about how it's affected them: 73 per cent of the participants said that it increased community engagement. But did it? Did it really, or did they just think maybe it would? No, it does last, and some of the results show that 80 per cent of the alumni of We Day volunteered just in the past year.

So it continued past when it—well past that day; 83 per cent made a donation to a charitable cause in the past year.

And this one's really interesting, Mr. Speaker: 79 per cent of those of voting age voted, as opposed to their peers who—where about 40 per cent voted. So that's a really interesting 'stastic' in itself.

In Waterloo, Mr. Speaker, they did just a simple study: how many kids believed that they could be a leader of social change before they went to We Day, and it was 27 per cent; after, it was 61 per cent. We Day inspires.

It inspires the kids who attend—thousands of them here in Winnipeg. At the last We Day, I believe, it was 18,000 kids. It inspires the family of the kids because 93 per cent of the kids went home and told their families about what they could do to change the world; and it inspires their teachers, and the teachers have stated how valuable they believe it to be.

And the kids learned so much, Mr. Speaker. They learned so many global issues, but, like—things that, you know, maybe as adults we know that we take for granted that everyone knows. Kids don't know all of these things, so they learned that not all people, for example, have water. Girls in sub-Saharan often don't get to go to school because it's their job to be spending their time walking miles to the water source and supplying the water to their villages. And these are some of the things that the organizers and the kids are working to change.

This year they learned about the impact of residential schools. And they learn practical ways, Mr. Speaker, to actually be able to, as kids, help their communities, and one of those ways that's just great is collecting pennies. So collecting \$25 worth of pennies can bring water to someone for a lifetime.

They learned that they could go out and instead of trick-or-treating just for candy, they could trick-or-treat for Harvest—for food for Harvest. They learned that creating local and global change is cool. Who the cool kids are in schools, Mr. Speaker, is beginning to change.

And I don't know if people here in the House remember who the cool kids were during their days, but it wasn't usually the kids that are—were volunteering and playing the tuba. Well, now it's becoming that way and it's a great force in working to end bullying in the school, because what has become cool is kids working in their community and giving back, locally and globally.

Another reason that a—that's been mentioned on why We Day is so important is that kids have a different brain development, and their abstract reasoning at younger ages just isn't there and it's much harder for them to visualize the effect of what they're doing. And so We Day makes it real. It makes them able to see the effect and power of the change that they are bringing.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? It helps our kids know that the adults are actually interested in their world and what they're doing. And I cannot tell you the powerful effect that has on the lives of kids, and we don't do nearly enough of it.

* (11:10)

It lets—one of the most important things is, of course, that it lets them know that they have the power to change the world. Our media, Mr. Speaker, often tells the community the negative things that our kids are doing, and We Day gives them a fabulous

opportunity to recognize the many things that our kids are doing well.

In my area, Mr. Speaker, I have a number of schools in my area and in every one of them, the students are working to volunteer. In The Maples, they have all kinds of committees, student councils, amnesty committee, sustainability committees; they volunteer in churches, in Seven Oaks hospital.

At Sisler, again, they're—have a number of committees that they're involved in, they're engaged in community activities, they volunteer at Fred Douglas Lodge, at the hospital, at animal shelters. At O.V. Jewitt, they're gathering food and gifts for Christmas hampers, then they're doing philanthropic work with the We program. Lord Nelson, the students have a green team; they're collecting pennies, again, for the drinking water that I mentioned earlier. I just love that one because it totally changes someone's life and it's so possible for kids to do. At Shaughnessy Park, they have a student leadership program at the school. They work with Aboriginal treaties, they've done ads; you can google that at CTV.

So it's just a tremendous amount of good that comes out of this one event—well, not just the one event, but the whole, as I said, the whole year.

They hear speakers like Spencer West, who lost both his legs at age 5 and has redefined possible, Mr. Speaker. Recently, he was able to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, without legs. And the kids can absolutely see that as they listen to him speak. And I think that it is without doubt that these role models help them recognize their own ability to change the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief)—yielding the floor to the honourable member for La Verendrye?

The honourable—[interjection] All right, then we'll allow the honourable member for La Verendrye first, and then we'll come back to the honourable minister after.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): As critic for Children and Youth Opportunities, it's an honour to be up to put some comments on records on this resolution brought forward by the member from Burrows.

We Day is a movement that was started in 2007. We Day is a day-long event, organized annually by

Free The Children. We Day encourages young people to make the world a better place, by getting involved in a variety of humanitarian causes. This year's second We Day held in Manitoba was held at MTS Centre on October 30th, with 18,000 Manitoba students in attendance.

Guest speakers and musical guests helped to foster a message of social responsibility to the youth that attended this year's We Day.

Mr. Speaker, Free The Children is an international charity and educational partner, working both domestically and internationally to empower and engage youth to be agents of change. We Day is aimed at students that are grade 7 or above, and the youth must be part of a school or community group. Due to the mature subject content of some speeches at We Day, tickets are only available to youth that are in grade 7 or above.

Part of We Day is Free The Children's We Act program. This program inspires a generation to care about social justice and provides the practical tools needed to turn inspiration into action. Launched by the energy of We Day, We School puts students at the forefront of global activity, citizenship, by educating them on social issues and action planning. Developing leadership skills and engaging them in world-changing action, We Act is the blueprint for young people to take action as agents of social change. We Schools commit to taking on one local action and one global action and to share their action plans and accomplishments with the community of We Schools.

Through their activities, and with the support of Free The Children, students are given the opportunity to participate in student-led campaigns, explore and develop their capacity for leadership and to engage with the world in new ways. In turn, their efforts provide tangible benefits for the social communities around the world.

Another part of We Day is Me to We. This is an innovative social enterprise that offers socially conscious and environmentally friendly products and life-changing experiences.

At We Day Winnipeg this year, Mikhail Gorbachev was the guest speaker, and a part of his speech he mentioned how important the environment was. Access to clean water is an environmental, social and health issue. As many as 800 million people have no access to safe drinking water, and about 2.5 billion also lack basic sanitary services. He

urged young people to question leaders about what they are doing to address the main challenges that face the world today. Can you imagine the power in the room with 18,000 youth that had been motivated by guest speakers and musical guests?

As the leaders of today, it is our job to provide the youth of today with the tools to become the leaders of tomorrow. We need to provide them with the education they need to be socially responsible. This generation of youth has the great potential to be more socially responsible than generations previous. We need them to have—we need to have them focus on not only global issues but on matters that are right here in our own backyards. We need to focus on children and youth poverty and how to improve this. We need to instill a sense of pride and ownership in this province and communities in which we live, and our youth are important in seeing that through.

We Day encourages young people to make the world a better place by getting involved. They have the power to make a difference in getting rid of bullying. Volunteering and fundraising work are the backbone of a healthy society, and a sense of community spirit should be fostered in children and youth. There are few opportunities for Aboriginal youth in this province as many live on northern reserves where poverty is high. We need the youth of this province helping other youth right here at home.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this resolution, and thank you.

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Mr. Speaker, it's a honour to be able to stand up and put some words on the record for We Day.

I, of course, want to start off by talking a little bit about Free The Children, the actual organization. Neil Taylor is the vice-president of that organization and, of course, he's somebody who has worked very hard for young people in Manitoba and was, you know, somebody who before We Day came here and before the work of Free The Children, he has been someone who has inspired support for that, and I just want to say for the record I'm very proud and I want to thank Neil Taylor for his commitment to young people and to the movement of We Day and Free The Children.

Of course, it's been said that it is an organization that puts a lot of emphasis on poverty reduction locally, provincially, nationally, internationally and it

embraces the idea of the spirit of volunteerism by capturing the minds and hearts and support of actual youth, which is an absolutely incredible accomplishment.

I want to put on the record, of course, the leadership and vision of Hartley Richardson, who saw We Day in Vancouver and brought it to Manitoba, worked very hard; also the co-chairs—the chairs with him, Bob Silver, also his commitment to, you know, to young people. I have the honour and privilege of working with Bob and his commitment to the mentorship programs in the Children and Youth Opportunities Department is—his commitment and dedication is unbelievable; and, of course, to Mark Chipman, who provides the facility and also the—a major supporter of We Day and a major supporter of the—of young people in the province of Manitoba.

* (11:20)

So, you know, Hartley Richardson, Bob Silver and Mark Chipman, I want to say for the record, and put on the record how committed and dedicated you are to young people of Manitoba.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was able to actually speak there and it was a very unique experience. It's not often that you get to stand in front of 18,000 young people, you know, represented by 396 schools. And I got to have a short conversation yesterday with the members from La Verendrye and Lac du Bonnet about We Day, and I know they would be very interested to hear, word for word, what I said at We Day. So, for the members of La Verendrye and Lac du Bonnet—now, what I did is I always left room for the students to cheer.

So if members opposite want to cheer at any moment as I go through the speech, please feel free; it might add some liveliness to the House. And I know the member from Lac du Bonnet's actually a teacher in his former world, and I know he was—he would also be somebody who would understand how important it is to engage young people. This is what I said, Mr. Speaker.

It's absolutely amazing to be here with all of you today. As a minister of a brand new department, Children and Youth Opportunities, I can't tell you how excited I am to be part of this wonderful and special event. I need your help. I have received hundreds of emails, letters and phone calls from students all throughout the province all wanting to be able to share this experience with us here today.

They're streaming in live on the Internet, and, although they couldn't be here with us, how about we let them know we are thinking about them and appreciate this opportunity that we have here by sending them a big We Day cheer?

I want to start by sharing a story with you about a group of youth that live in Shamattawa, an isolated community in northern Manitoba. These young people living in the face of hardship have found ways to get a sense of contribution in their small community. One of the things they do is an annual community cleanup. Their community is small, but take a—but they take a lot of pride in where they live. There is only one space where children can have a safe place to play and participate and that's their school gymnasium. These youth volunteer four nights a week to make sure that gymnasium stays open. And although this community faces hardship, they make sure they raise enough money and resources to hold an annual elders gathering to show their appreciation and respect for their elders. Now—this speech I—was given on October 30th, Mr. Speaker.

Now, staying with a Halloween tradition, there is a group of students at Fort Richmond Collegiate that won't be trick-or-treating for candy this year, but instead they will be collecting donations that will be used to inspire hope and opportunity in places like Haiti, Sierra Leone and Africa. They're also working to build awareness about the challenges and some of the hardships that many of our First Nations communities face here in our own country and in our province.

Now, although these two groups of students from Shamattawa and Fort Richmond come from very different parts of Manitoba and have very different experiences, they are connected and share the universal value of generosity. Both groups of students have said through their actions that someone who is really rich shouldn't be allowed to be more generous than someone who is poor and someone who is older shouldn't be allowed to be more generous than someone who is younger. And true generosity is to be able to give away something that really means a lot to you. Something that we all have, whether we're rich or poor, young or old, is time. Young people throughout the province of Manitoba realize that no matter who you are, what background you come from or where you live, you can get a sense of contribution and generosity in your neighbourhoods and communities.

Now, here's what we need. We need a generation of young people who are going to talk to each other. My friends in Shamattawa will get to know the young people at Fort Richmond Collegiate who are working very hard to raise awareness for the challenges which the community of Shamattawa face every day. We need a generation of young people that will build relationships with each other. And we need a generation of young people who will work together to inspire hope and opportunity throughout the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that we do have that generation of young people. And being at We Day and seeing all of these young people that day, that is a generation, without question, that is going to be inspiring hope and opportunity and working extremely hard.

As the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) has said, this isn't a one-day event. Our government has been very supportive of the long-term commitment to this by supporting curriculum development, by supporting the projects that go on throughout the year. So although there is—the We Day event is absolutely incredible and amazing to be part of, even more incredibly is the work that happens outside of We Day, and our government is very committed to continue to support that.

I love their saying, Mr. Speaker. Their saying is, you can't buy a ticket to We Day, you have to earn it, and I think that's an absolutely incredible saying for something that represents the things at We Day.

Now, a few things I want to say is, of course, we've got to hear lots about the commitment of the students and youth and all the amazing projects that go on, some of them local, some of them provincial, some of them national and some international. Some make big, big impacts in their communities and others make big impacts internationally.

And so their work is absolutely incredible because it's based on the idea of volunteerism and generosity, a universal value that everyone can understand and everyone can build stronger, safer and healthier communities.

Also, Mr. Speaker, a lot of work goes into this. You always need the idea of having good supervision and sometimes barriers arise for some of these young people, and it's absolutely incredible the support teachers, principals, vice-principals, superintendents, have committed to We Day and supporting Free The Children.

So young people are able to do what they're naturally capable of doing, which is being role models; which is being mentors; which is inspiring—which is inspiring hope and change. And so I want to commend the teachers, the educators—all of those people who work so very hard with these students. Also to their parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, olders and brothers, members of the community that take the time to make sure that they are supporting young people on their initiatives, that if any barriers arise they're going to be there to help them remove that so that they can continue to do the things that they're doing by making a difference in their communities.

And I do want to say for the record, the role of the media. As the member for Burrows said, often what you can see in the media is—you know, I've always said, in the face of hardship and adversity and struggle, there's always 500, 1,000, 1,500 young people in the face of that hardship that do enormously well. And sometimes in the face of that hardship, there's always one or two that make a mistake. And often, Mr. Speaker, that's the story that is told. You often get to hear about the mistake, not the 1,500 young people in the face of hardship who have done incredible things and showed enormous resiliency.

So I want to put on the record and thank the media for highlighting many of the stories, many of the activities, many of the things that these young people are doing in very positive ways, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to say for the record, some of the people that were able to speak there: of course, Mikhail Gorbachev; our Premier (Mr. Selinger) of Manitoba gave a great speech on bullying; Hannah Taylor, you know, a 16-year old activist, founder of the Ladybug Foundation; Justice Murray Sinclair; a blind bullying victim, Molly Burke; activists and founders of Free The Children, Craig and Marc Kielburger; Liz Murray, author of the 'memrah' *Breaking Night: My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*; and, as the member of Burrows said, Spencer West, who climbed 'Klimajaro' despite having lost both legs at the age of 5, Mr. Speaker.

It was a pleasure to put some words—

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

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It's a pleasure to rise today and put a few words on the

record to the resolution brought forward by the member from Burrows.

On October 30th, 2012, 18,000 Manitoba students attended We Day at the MTS Centre. As was mentioned in the few previous speeches, guest speakers, musical guests, helped to foster a message of community involvement. Mr. Speaker, volunteering and fundraising work are the backbone of a healthy society and a sense of community spirit should be fostered in children and youth. But at the same time we need to have that balance. There are some major global issues and also major issues in our own back yards. All are very much important.

In Manitoba we know that there are several reserves that do not have running water, while there's little focus giving to issues such as that. We have a government of today that seems to spin it onto the federal government and put all the implications or needs onto the federal government, when I think we could be doing a little bit more here in the province of Manitoba.

* (11:30)

When I do look at the youth of today, Mr. Speaker, education is the key about our children and they live—is an important first step to empowering them to create a better world.

Mr. Speaker, the member from La Verendrye and Point Douglas mentioned it's not only the youth of today that we need to focus on. We need to all focus on all the different issues that we are encountering in Manitoba and throughout the world on a day-to-day basis. Whether that be staff, students, elders, our grandparents, absolutely everybody needs to grab a hold and take a—take some ownership.

The member from Point Douglas mentioned the media. Those children and youth that are in tune with the issues that face society are more likely to be better citizens. This goes back to the education piece and taking some responsibility for ourselves and to educate ourselves. How many youth and adults read the local or community newspapers today, Mr. Speaker? Now, depending which newspapers you read, there are different slants to the issues, but I think that by reading those local newspapers, community newspapers, that should encourage us to go out and search out more information, do some further research, take some ownership again to educate yourself on the issues.

Some of other additional points I'd like to mention in regards to world issues, Mr. Speaker, is my wife, myself and our two boys, we sponsor a young girl through World Vision, and we have been doing so for quite some time and she's nine years old. Her first name is Jessica. We have to be doing more than just signing a cheque on a day-to-day basis. We have to get out there, and it's the little actions that are going to be making the difference.

The member from Point Douglas mentioned that in my former career—and I still like to consider myself an educator and a guidance counsellor—it's the everyday actions again that are going to make the difference, and that's what I tried to instill and encourage all the students that came across my path on a day-to-day basis to do. It could be as simple as just saying hello to a passerby. I've heard stories in the past of people who had contemplated suicide and had told stories of just a certain person walking by them in a hallway—whether that was at a school or a community event—and just saying hello to them gave them that extra incentive to carry on the rest of the day and to face some of those challenges. And we know that a lot of those challenges are at some times quite monstrous. And they're not quite speed bumps; at times, they're more like roadblocks. But if we can help encourage a few people to carry on that message on a day-to-day basis, to help those people who are in need to get through the roadblocks or to get over the speed bumps and just to carry on.

I live every day, Mr. Speaker, that you'd want to treat people like you'd like to be treated yourself, and those are definitely some of the attributes that I like to pass on to not only my boys, but to everybody else that I encounter.

Some of the other important projects that are happening at the community levels, Mr. Speaker: at school, students have the opportunity if they're in senior high—grade 9 to 12—they have the opportunity of getting a volunteer credit. That volunteer credit works towards their 30 credits for graduation. You put in 110 hours of community volunteering and you get a credit towards—again towards graduation. I have found that some of the students who had taken part in that volunteer credit, they started out—started off being, I guess, selfish for lack of a better term in that—wanting to do the community credit because it was an easy credit.

Some of them do volunteering and they found that—why should they not carry on and just get this credit towards graduation? Others just strictly did it

just for that graduation credit. Many of them we had set up working in personal care homes and in hospitals and also with our local organization called ACL, which is a community for–community–or Association for Community Living, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of those students had come back and reported that they just could not believe how fantastic of an experience that was. And a lot of those volunteer activities then carried on into future jobs for them.

And some of them—some of the students didn't quite know where or what they wanted to be after high school, but some of those volunteer activities, those fundraising activities that they did within their communities, helped guide them into different occupations that they possibly wanted to do after high school.

I'd just like to mention just quickly that just recently I've been asked to go and speak to some of the students—or to the students of the school that I used to teach at, École Edward Schreyer School in Beausejour. They're having a mini We Day on December 12th, and the chairperson for the mini We Day—his name is Devon Sanclemente and guided by the staff member, Mrs. Angie Chamberlin.

All the students in the school are going to be participating, grade 6 to 12. Of those students, after the We Day that was held here in Winnipeg, 46 students had signed up to be part of the co-ordinating of the mini We days. And they are—they're actually going to also have another We Day in the spring.

This year's guest speaker, after my short two or three minutes of chatting on that day, is going to be Sean Quigley, the little drummer boy from Winnipeg here. So I'm really looking forward to spending the day with the students again and some of my ex-co-workers. And I appreciate the time of the House today to put a few words on the record.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I, too, appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak to this very important resolution and this very important event that the member from Burrows is—has brought to the floor and has highlighted for us all.

You know, We Day is a very, very unique event and it's something that I think has grown. It started—I wouldn't say it started small because I don't think this idea was ever very small, but it certainly has grown

even beyond what I think the original organizers could ever have hoped for. And I think it speaks to a change in how students and young people see themselves, and see themselves in the world and in their communities.

You know, we, I think, all want the best for the next generation and we hope that the next generation will do more and do better and continue on the things that we find are important.

And my experience in working with those of the next generation through the high schools in my constituency and other places is that the next generation is just on the fast track to understanding things that we could never—we couldn't comprehend or we couldn't appreciate when we were their age. And I say this as somebody who's only 33 years old, so it's—you know, I'm not too far removed, from my perspective, from some of these students.

But the things that they are talking about in school and the things that they are taking the initiative on in their school lives, not just in the classroom but in their school lives, is far, far beyond anything that I ever experienced when I was their age, and I would guess that most members in this House would agree with that.

You know, this particular event and this focus on this one day is really just one part of a larger picture and a larger movement that's happening in young people throughout the world and especially here in Manitoba.

We Day was phenomenally successful this year, I know, and was since it came to Manitoba; 18,000 students packing the MTS Centre is just—it's just an incredible thing to see. This isn't a Justin Bieber concert; this isn't, you know, the latest pop act. This is talking about social justice and change for the better, and it's a hot ticket, Mr. Speaker. This is, you know—it's not easy for these students to get in. It's not like, you know, they're—you can use your money to buy it or that you can, you know, somehow get this ticket, you know, buy it on the internet or something. This is something that you have to earn by showing that you are a member of society, a contributing member of your community, and, you know, students are putting out that effort to make that happen. They dedicate themselves to taking one local and one global action in the following year, and so this can be anything selected by the students or school groups. Some youth do choose to take part in campaigns that are run through Free The Children,

but, really, it's whatever the students are coming up with.

* (11:40)

And that's what we're seeing, is that the students are coming up with their own initiatives and their own ideas, and it is part of a larger global movement of students who are talking to each other, you know, through social media, who are learning more because of the access to information that they get through the Internet, and the—so they're starting to see how other people in other parts of the world live.

And I think the minister for—what the minister for youth and—Children and Youth Opportunities said, you know, about it's children in Winnipeg even just understanding what's happening in the north is an important part of this story.

So it's happening all over and it's giving students the opportunity to understand different parts of the world and different perspectives.

Now, once they've had a chance to go to We Day and get fired up and pumped up, as the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) said, it doesn't end there; it's not a one-shot deal. We know that they take that attitude and that energy and they bring it not just to their—to themselves and to their school life, but also to their families, and that ripples through the community. And they're, you know—this builds throughout the community, and that kind of understanding of what the issues that people face not just in our community, but all over the world have—that's where change is going to begin.

I appreciate what the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) said and shared with us, the—that his students in his area are organizing their own mini We Days. Like I said, it's an exclusive event to get to We Day. But, you know, that doesn't stop students from doing it on their own, and so schools are organizing their own We days, which is bringing that message from those particular students who are most interested in the—in this kind of idea, but bringing it to the larger school community.

And I think We Day is particularly important to us here and students here in Manitoba, because volunteerism is such a big part of what makes Manitoba what it is, and it's something that we're all very proud of. We've taken that idea that Manitoba is the volunteer capital of Canada and we brought that into the school curriculum.

So whether it be through the initiatives like the community service student initiated projects, the Youth Leadership Scholarship Program or Education for Sustainable Development, we're bringing that idea of volunteerism to the curriculum. And we're teaching kids, really, starting in kindergarten right through their school lives, about citizenship and what that means, and they're taking that message to heart and they're really incorporating it into their lives.

We've also have the new After School Leaders program, which provide mentorship and internship opportunities to children from high-needs communities through practical work experience. And we also have the Neighbourhoods Alive! program, which is—it fits very well with the We Day idea, in that it takes very small community-based projects and gives them a little bit of funding and a little bit of cash to get them started and to get them off the ground. But really it's coming from the community.

So I—you know, I just wanted to put a few words on the record. I really do believe that with our support and with the attention that bills like—or resolutions like this are bringing to these kinds of activities, I think we're raising awareness and we're raising the appreciation for what the next generation is doing, and I think we're going to continue to celebrate those activities, to support those activities and to move forward on promoting those activities for students throughout Manitoba and into the future.

I think we're in very good hands with the next generation and I look forward to working with students from across the province to bring these social justice issues to the forefront and to work together as a community to have some positive change.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further speakers to the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Acting Government House Leader): I was wondering if you'd canvass the House if it was the will to call it 12 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 12 noon? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Taillieu	357
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Wiebe	359
Second Readings—Public Bills		Resolutions	
Bill 201—The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act		Res. 1—We Day	
Graydon	349	Wight	360
Bjornson	351	Smook	362
Helwer	353	Chief	363
Rondeau	355	Ewasko	365
		Wiebe	367

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>