

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, August 6, 2013

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 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, brought forward by the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister).

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to move directly to Bill 205? [*Agreed*]

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

Mr. Speaker: All right. We'll call Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, standing in name of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), who has five minutes remaining.

Bill 205—The Election Financing Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the minister's name?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied. Further debate on this matter?

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Well, good morning, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that you had a great weekend, as many of us did. I was almost suffering from withdrawal by the time I got back, and I'm sure that many were.

It gives me great pleasure to step up to the plate today to put a few words on the record regarding this

finance amendment act. And it troubles me as well when I look through this act and we're looking at a PST increase of 14 per cent. That's certainly an issue that a lot of Manitobans have taken to heart, and it has hurt a lot of Manitobans, more particularly those that are less fortunate than many of us. It seems that it hurts the poor more than it does anyone. We've seen this now in the past—or we've seen this since this has been enacted or suggested and started to have been collected on the 1st of July.

But when we had our hearings, Mr. Speaker, the committee, we saw a number of people that were registered and that came out to speak. And they spoke with great passion, they spoke from the heart, they spoke on how this is affecting them and how it affects their families and how it affects those that are around them and their communities. And we haven't seen turnouts like that at committees since—only once, I believe, since I've been elected.

The troubling part of that is that Manitobans have opportunities to move from Manitoba to other provinces, and we heard that very strongly in the committee hearings. We heard that people said, you know, if this is to continue, we look at the tax in other provinces. We're looking at the 5 per cent in Saskatchewan. Perhaps that's where they would want to move. And we see a lot of our young people taking advantage of the higher wages, the lower taxes, and I guess the take-home pay is a big issue. And we know now by comparing what takes place in Saskatchewan, on a weekly income, job for job, Manitoba versus Saskatchewan, it's a hundred dollars more take-home pay in Saskatchewan, quite an incentive for our young people to move to Saskatchewan.

And when they do move there and they end up with a job, they kind of get roots, they get friends, many end up settling down there. They have a family there. And what we find then is that the grandparents in Manitoba like to be close to their grandchildren.

And we also found that this tax is very hard on retired people, on retired individuals. And most grandparents become retired shortly after becoming grandparents, or before they become grandparents, they're retired. What we're seeing is the difference. The difference on a \$75,000 income in Manitoba and Saskatchewan or Alberta, for example, is almost

\$6,000 in tax alone. That \$6,000 allows the grandparents to spend time on a holiday somewhere or a couple of months in the States. Why would they not, then, retire in Alberta or in Saskatchewan? It makes quite a difference.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, that we see and we've heard very clearly—and I, because I represent a riding that spans a good deal of the border of United States, both Minnesota and North Dakota, and we see the businesses on our side of the border in the Emerson constituency, we see those 'bor'—see those businesses competing and they're competing vigorously with the United States with no tax—no tax. The prices in the United States are much cheaper.

I see the difference of over a dollar a gallon in gasoline, and that is all tax. That's all tax on the gas. Whether it's in North Dakota, it's either in Minnesota or in Manitoba, that's a tax. And it was raised in Manitoba to go into infrastructure, and we haven't seen that south of Winnipeg. We have potholes that can swallow buses or base—well, I might be exaggerating a bit, but it can certainly do a lot of damage to the buses.

But our businesses there are operating on a very, very tight margin, and it's directly related to the PST increase and the wasteful spending—the wasteful spending—that we have seen from this government in the past. There's plenty of opportunity to cut some of the fat from the government's spending and put it into the essentials, the essentials that are necessary for our businesses and for the life of Manitobans and to build a province that we deserve here.

We know that we are a have province with a have-not government. We have to turn that around. We have to turn the ship around. And I understand that turning this ship around in Manitoba would be like turning the Titanic, but if you don't start, you're not going to get it done.

We've heard from the businesses throughout Manitoba, but particularly those that are along the border of Saskatchewan or the United States, that are really, really suffering. Any of them that are still in business are staying in business primarily because of their business acumen, of the work ethic that the people in those communities have and the fact that they have their roots in Manitoba and they don't want to move somewhere else. That's the key factor that they're here. It's not that their businesses aren't portable. Their businesses are very, very portable. And we're going to start to see more and more of these businesses leaving the province of Manitoba.

We've seen—we've also seen one of the other troubling issues, and it's a highlight that was brought up more and more when you go out throughout Manitoba to some of the events. And, as you know, this is the type of the year that there are many parades and festivals, and I had the opportunity to be at a festival, the Metis festival, in St. Laurent on the weekend. Although it was not the nicest day to be there, they certainly had a great turnout.

* (10:10)

But one of the big issues that was raised was that the NDP have given themselves a \$7,000 raise with the vote tax, and the people there couldn't see the justification of that. They said, it's simple to raise money. If you want to raise money for your election, you should be able to go and ask the people for that. Walk up to them, shake hands, look them in the eye and say, would you like to donate some money to my campaign? And that right has been taken away from them. Many of the people said, look, we have some issues—we have some issues around this Lake Manitoba that haven't been addressed, and it doesn't seem that we're able to address it because now we don't see the MLAs and we don't see the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of the province out here—there's no ribbons to cut. And the lake is high; the lake is as high as it was before the flood in 2011. All it is, is one big wind away from another disaster. And it looked like, on Sunday, that this possibly could have happened up there. The people were unhappy about that. Very unhappy about that vote tax, that they felt that the government should be able to walk out to them, come and see me, tell me what your story is. I may contribute to your campaign and I might support you or I may not, but they don't have that opportunity.

And I can understand why the government doesn't want to go out and face these people now. I can tell you that it was only a mere couple years ago that they went door to door and said, we will not raise taxes, we will not raise the PST, that's nonsense. That's what we heard a couple years ago, and every MLA on that side of the House was guilty of doing that. They went door to door and misled the people, each and every one of them. And today, they're afraid to go out and meet those same people. They're afraid to go and say, look, I'd like to have a donation to the campaign, this is what we're going to do. Because the people—they know the people are going to question their vote tax, going to question their honour and their integrity for what they did in the last election.

And they still, outside of the Perimeter, don't see any of the money that was supposed to have been going to the infrastructure. We see bridges everywhere that are not in—not there anymore. We've seen the Minister of MIT blow up a bridge, a perfectly good bridge in St. Jean that needed some repairs, that was the lifeblood of that community. And since that has happened, we've seen that the store has been closed.

Mr. Speaker, that's not maintaining what we had. They promise we're going to do this and we're going to do that, but they have not been able to maintain what we have on the ground today. That's what people out in rural Manitoba need; they need to be able to get from point A to point B.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I'd just like to point out the vote tax and PST is what's hurting Manitoba the most and I would like to see these members opposite change the direction that they're going. Thank you very much.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): It's always a pleasure to get up in the House and put a few words on the record. It's also a pleasure to follow the member from Emerson, who seemed to me to be straying quite far afield from the actual subject of today's resolution.

So I want to talk about the resolution because I think it's an important one. We hear from the other side of the House all the time about how indispensable and incredibly important this particular amendment to the election finances act is, and yet there's no sort of consideration—in my opinion, anyway—of the very good things that the election finances act currently does. So I want to talk about both those things if I can in the next minute, and to make sure that there's a proper context on the—on this resolution, rather than a political context and a political spin that the opposition puts on this matter all the time.

I really think it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition doesn't really fundamentally believe in investing in democracy, which is critically at the heart of what we've tried to do as a government since we were first elected in 1999. The fact of the matter is that it was this side of the House and this government that eliminated corporate and union donations. And it's a fact of the matter that the other side of the House voted against that very thing. And the reason for that, at least from my point of view, is that they opposed the elimination of corporate and union donations because they fundamentally believe

that big money should influence the outcome of elections. And on this side of the House, we don't believe that big money should influence the outcome of elections. We don't believe that big money should have its way with influencing how people vote. They don't—we don't believe that, on this side of the House, that big money should play that kind of influential role in determining who leads government in the province of Manitoba. So we've gone to great lengths in the last 10 years to make the electoral process more transparent and more accountable, most of which—in fact, all of which—members opposite voted against.

Now, the fact of the matter is, in making the electoral process more transparent and more accountable, it's induced costs to the political system, to the party system. And so the way that we've tried to deal with those additional costs for the purposes of accountability and transparency is to add in additional public investment to strengthen the democratic process. And so when we do that, all we're trying to ensure is that when we report back to the people of Manitoba about the election and our election expenses, we're having—we're hiring auditors to do that, we need additional legal assistance to do that, and so all that we've done is to try to make some public investment and ensure that that kind of auditing and that kind of important legal work gets done and gets done properly, so then we can report back to the people of Manitoba that their election process was credible, it was legitimate, and we are transparent and accountable in doing so.

And so who does it really help, Mr. Speaker? Well, it helps our side of the House, admittedly. It helps that side of the House, the Conservative side of the House. It helps the Liberal Party of Manitoba. Arguably, that's not in our best interests, but that's not the point. The point is to strengthen the democratic process to make sure that smaller parties, in particular, have the opportunity to compete on a level playing field in an election process and not be weighed down by the very legitimate and very real requirement for transparency and accountability in the electoral system.

And it's not just the Liberal Party of Manitoba. They've collected every year, and we've had no problem with that. That's what it's for. But it's also the Green Party of Manitoba. And they have many weaknesses, the Green Party of Manitoba. They're often asleep at the switch, as my friend from Wolseley reminds me. But the point of the fact is we're not trying to block their entry into the political

process. We're trying to make sure that they, too, have the opportunity to participate in the process on a level playing field.

And it comes back to that notion of level playing field that's so important about this particular resolution. The opposition—and that it's the member from Fort Whyte leading this particular charge, the Leader of the Opposition, putting his reputation out in front on trying to eliminate something that strengthens and enhances the electoral process, is really quite staggering to me, Mr. Speaker, and really quite disappointing. I, frankly, expected more from the Leader of the Opposition than to hang his hat on weakening democracy in this province by making sure—he wants to make sure that big money influences the outcome of the election. He doesn't want to be—he wants to be sure that the Liberal Party can't participate, doesn't want the Green Party to participate, at least not on a level playing field. They want to be sure that big money influences the outcome of the election.

And I say to my friends on the other side, it's a small investment to invest in strengthening democracy, but it's a big cost to remove that kind of public investment in democracy, because the cost will be the compromising of our electoral process. And, surely, the members on the other side of the House want to be sure that when they're elected that they're elected on legitimate and credible grounds and not to have won by virtue of big money influencing the outcome of the election.

* (10:20)

And so I appeal to them today, we appeal to them today, don't let that happen. Don't let the member from Emerson's very narrow construction of this particular issue influence how they vote on these matters. In fact, if they're led by the member from Emerson, frankly, they need a new guide dog, because he's walking in the wrong direction as far as we're concerned.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't really want to get into the opposition's record on influencing electoral outcomes. I think, suffice it to say, that all of us in this House know of that very dark chapter in our history when 'fo—when, really, efforts were made to influence the outcome of elections in the 1990s. And it really makes us, on this side of the House, very skeptical about the claims made about public financing to strengthen democracy. It can only mean that, again, with the Leader of the Opposition himself a product of the 1990s—that is when he

wasn't cutting and running at every opportunity—but at that point in the 1990s, that they're tipping back into that notion where they can't win on legitimate grounds so better to have big money and deregulate, in fact, the democratic process in order to try and influence the outcome of the next election. And frankly I don't believe for a moment that Manitobans are out there today demanding members of the opposition weaken the democratic process in Manitoba, because that's clearly what they're asking to have happen here.

I want to just say as well that it's sad that this resolution doesn't come forward with a bevy, a myriad of suggestions about how to enhance and strengthen the democratic process. How do we get more people to participate in this process? Where's that in the resolution, Mr. Speaker? How do we get more people to take interest in the democratic process, contribute, because we know that when our community members contributed—contribute to the democratic process, it strengthens what we do here in this House and the outcomes here in our community.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm really quite mystified—as I'm typically mystified by the resolutions that come from the other side of the House—how narrow a construction of issues that come forward and how baldly political they are and how counter to the public interest that they often are. Really, I would have expected a series of recommendations, suggestions coming from the other side of the House to strengthen the democratic process to make sure participation is higher. And at the end of the day, all we have in the resolution before the House today is a recommendation to allow big money to take over democracy in Manitoba. We on this side of the House won't stand for that. We believe in public financing and we believe in the democratic process in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I'd like to start by thanking the member from Fort Whyte for bringing Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, forward. And I'm happy to be here today to speak in support of this bill and put some comments on the record as to what I think about is happening here today.

I'm pleased to continue the fight against the NDP's vote tax, because it is wrong and is lazy. This NDP government believes that they are entitled to taxpayer funding of their political operations. They believe Manitobans should pay for their political

operations, Mr. Speaker; this is why the NDP government enacted a vote tax. This tax will give each MLA at least \$5,000 per year to fund their party's political operations. After the total number of years, they'll get close to a million dollars of taxpayer money to fund their operations. This is a lot of money to take from the public coffers.

Mr. Speaker, we, on this side of the House, do not believe in taking that vote tax, and we won't. We do not agree with the vote tax. We have rejected the vote tax since it was first introduced in 2008 and refused to accept this money. We believe that the financial contributions to a political party should be voluntary.

Mr. Speaker, political parties have to earn contributions from the voters. And that's one way that the voter has a way to make sure that the party's doing what they're supposed to be doing. Taxpayers shouldn't be forced to provide funding to political parties that are lazy. To go and ask Manitobans for a donation is what should be done.

When a person goes out and asks for a donation from a voter, they have to prove that what they're doing is what the voter wants to see done. The minute that the political funding comes from the government, it makes that political party lazy, and there's no need for them to interact with the public.

I mean, this is some of the things that you really need to look at when money is just given out, because now there's no reason for them to come up to knock on somebody's door and say, well, this is what I've done in the last year and what do you think? I've—how am I doing here?—because I want your support.

And everybody knows that it takes money to run a political campaign, and that's what makes a connection between the politician and the voter. I mean, when you go knocking on somebody's door and you say, I'm looking for money; if you haven't been doing a good job, they will soon tell you where to go and what to do with your asked-for money. Because they'll say, go out and do your job, do your job properly; then we will consider giving you some financing.

I mean, the vote tax will only further diminish the role of the grassroots members. Like, people go out there and they solicit funds, they talk to people, they're interactive and that's—those are some of the key things that need to be looked at when it comes to vote tax.

I mean, direct public subsidies make political parties dependent on state money and when this happens, there's less incentive to communicate with the voter. This vote tax is not needed. A good government—if they're doing a good job—can go out there and they can ask for money and they will get it.

The members opposite try to claim that this vote tax is needed to level the playing field. The member from Fort Garry-Riverview mentioned level the playing field, big corporate donations. Well, corporations can't make donations. We only have a \$3,000 limit to what people can donate, and, as a matter of fact, most of the donations come from small donations, \$25, \$50, \$100, \$200. That's where the majority of the donations that come from as far as in my constituency are anyways.

The member, one of the members opposite mentioned seniors, but seniors cannot afford donations. They cannot afford big donations. They should—the seniors should be out there, you know, that they want this to happen; they want the vote tax. Well, Mr. Speaker, all the seniors that I've talked to don't want this vote tax. They feel that what this government has done in this last bit, you know, it's increased the PST; it's increased the—what PST is applicable to home insurance, to a number of items, haircuts, beauty salons. Sometimes an elderly lady wants to go and get her hair done. Now she's got to pay PST on top of that if it's over \$50.

And the 7 to 8 per cent, it may not seem like a lot but a senior who is dependent on a certain amount of money to come in at the end of the month—they're very upset when they don't have enough money to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Maples had mentioned that this isn't a vote tax, it's a democracy advancement fund. Well, he couldn't be further from the truth. When somebody is told what to do, that isn't democracy; that's a dictatorship. And they should change the name from NDP—from New Democratic Party to new dictatorship party, because that is what they're doing with this.

* (10:30)

I mean, the—in previous years the NDP have never had a problem raising funds. All of a sudden now, they're having problems raising funds. Why are they having problems? Well, sure, if you're getting \$5,000 a year, each one of you—every one of you gets an extra \$5,000 a year to put into their political campaign. That is not right to the people of

Manitoba. I mean, even Gary Doer rejected the vote tax, but why is it that all the members opposite now are asking for the vote tax? They're probably—no, they're—they go around door to door and people are telling them, get out there and do your job, then we'll look at giving you a vote tax. They're more interested in what the jobs the people are doing, not in just handing out money for no reason. I mean—and they look at what this government has done in the last—since '99 when they got elected. They've more than doubled the provincial debt. They can't balance the budget. They keep spending money. They know nothing about spending money. They know how to spend money, but they couldn't run a lemonade stand if life depended on it, because they're not able to, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, things like—to the ordinary person, they say they're a friend of the working class. Well, when you increase PST on home insurance, on all kinds of other things—haircuts, whatever else—those taxes hurt the low-income earner, and that is where a lot of the people in this province are getting tired. They don't want to be forced into paying a tax to support a political party that's going against them.

Every member opposite—on the opposite side of the House went door to door during the election and promised no tax increases. First budget, what did they do? They increased the tax on all kinds of—the PST they—now they charge PST on home insurance. People who couldn't afford home insurance before are now having to pay PST on home insurance. They're having to pay hair—on haircuts. There's a number of items that they're looking at that they have to pay for, and they're not happy with it. And that's probably the reason why this government can't get funding. They just—the people out there probably are tired of listening to their promises. They have nothing but broken promises to the people out there, and everybody is sick and tired of it.

There's lots of places that vote tax could go to. This province is rated last in child—the worst in child poverty, the biggest use of food banks by children. There's all kinds of areas that that money could go to to help the people of this province, not the NDP's political budget. That is just wrong.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that there's got to be a lot of NDPs out there who just are waiting to speak to this. I will let it go to them. Thank you.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, good morning,

Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be one of those NDPs that's just waiting to speak to this piece of legislation.

I—let me start by saying how much I enjoyed the 124th annual Islendingadagurinn in Gimli. And I had the privilege of hosting Prime Minister Sigmundur Gunnlaugsson and his lovely wife, Anna Palsdottir, in Islendingadagurinn.

And at that event I had the privilege of toasting Iceland, and I was talking about the laws that came out of the Viking age. And it was really fascinating to go back a thousand years and read about the laws that were written by the law council, that were spoken annually by the Lawspeaker on the Löberg, which is the Law Rock, where he would deliver that on the site of the oldest Parliament in the world, Mr. Speaker, at Thingvellir in Iceland. And it was really fascinating to read about these laws and how progressive these laws were with respect to property rights for women, with respect to recognition for a separate judicial system and the need for one for children who had yet to see 12 harvests. They recognized young offenders and they recognized the need to have separate laws to address any transgressions that a young offender may have committed. And a lot of laws that dealt with the kinsmen of victims being responsible for—or, pardon me, being eligible for compensation from the kinsmen of perpetrators. It was really quite a fascinating read for me, going through the sagas and going through the laws of ancient Iceland to see how progressive, indeed, they were a thousand years ago at Thingvellir in Iceland. It was really a great exercise.

And you want to talk about progressive legislation, public funding of political parties is very progressive legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I have a lot of concerns that I see from members opposite, and concerns that I have—what I see happening with voter suppression legislation that's being brought in in many of the Republican states in the United States. And, of course, one of the members opposite, the member from Steinbach, introduced a rather interesting piece of legislation which would do more to suppress voters from participating in the electoral process as opposed to encouraging people to participate in the electoral process.

But I do think that maybe a lot of people aren't participating in the electoral process because of things like the vote-rigging scandal that happened in the 1995 election. I think a lot of people were really cynical about the fact that the members opposite,

when they were in government, formed a fake party, funded that party to try and siphon votes off from the NDP in a number of constituencies.

An Honourable Member: Oh, you woke them up.

Mr. Bjornson: Yes. You know, another thing I found in my research is some wise sayings from the sagas, and one was, low the mocker's fame lies. I was very inspired by the sagas this weekend.

But, again, I think the cynicism around participating in the electoral process has a lot to do with the fact that we saw one of the biggest scandals in the election history in Manitoba in that 1995 election, and members opposite were the architects of that particular scandal.

So why do we have public funding of electoral parties in Manitoba? There's something called compliance that came out of recommendations from the Monnin inquiry, and if members opposite have not read that book, *As Many Liars*, I would strongly suggest they take that home and read that. Read it on a beach in Gimli. I'd come and highlight some of the chapters for you.

To completely disregard the electoral process the way the members opposite did in 1995, we had to change that. And recommendations came forward, and those recommendations included a lot of compliance, and the cost of compliance is substantial. But I think the public is a lot more concerned about us being compliant with the rules and regulations that will govern political parties than the political pandering of members opposite talking about the so-called vote tax.

I was a little disappointed when I heard one of the members refer to the fact that one of our colleagues, the member from The Maples, had characterized it in a very, what I thought, progressive way, talking about this particular political funding of—or pardon me, public funding of political parties, because what he missed was what the member from The Maples was saying about his country of origin where very, very rich people bought themselves the elections and were able to get elected because they had the money and the wealth to do that. That's not participatory democracy.

Members opposite would rather have the very, very rich run the show, and to hear the member from La Verendrye—yes, the member from La Verendrye—to stand up and say, well, there's no corporate influence because you can't have corporate donations. That's because we brought in the law that

said you can't have corporate donations. We don't want corporate donations. And we also said we don't want union donations because we hear the members opposite always talk about our union buddies over here. They always talk about that, but we don't want undue influencing of political parties by buying political parties like the members opposite seem to be leaning towards. The Republican Tea Party members over there are trying their best to suppress voter participation. They're trying their best to move it to the corporate world where the corporate agenda can fund political parties.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, there's another great saying in the sagas—and I'm not going to respond to the heckling because the sagas say, it is a bad thing to goad the obstinate, so I'm not going to respond. I'm not going to respond to the heckling over there.

But do you know, Mr. Speaker, another thing that is kind of fascinating was when we had this debate before and it seems we have this debate every couple of years when one of the Tea Party Republican members of opposite stand up and start talking about the need to eliminate this public funding of political parties. I'd like to remind them that a former Progressive Conservative, and yes, he was a Progressive Conservative, the member from Brandon West, Mr. Borotsik, when he was on a committee in Parliament, I believe they were debating this very issue about public funding of political parties, and I believe Mr. Borotsik, and I'm paraphrasing here, but I believe he said something along the lines of, yes, Manitoba does have political funding of—pardon me, public funding of political parties, but I don't think it's enough. I don't think that they're getting enough per voter allowance. I believe that was one of the last Progressive Conservatives to have said something like that.

So it's rather curious how members opposite bring this up every couple of years, no, we shouldn't be having public funding of political parties. Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason we do—as I said and I'll say it time and time again—is because of what they did in 1995 where they tried to steal an election. They tried to undermine the electoral process. They were held accountable for it.

* (10:40)

And again, I strongly recommend—did I mention the name of the book? *As Many Liars*. Did I mention the name of the book? A book that talked about the Monnin inquiry that looked into the fact that a

political party in Manitoba tried to undermine the political process, and that political party was the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

So I know I've hit a nerve because the volume is going higher, Mr. Speaker; the volume is going higher. They're loud all the time when they feel they're right, but the right always seems to be loud on issues like this.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that they talk about is transparency, and one of the members opposite was talking about the diminished role of the grassroots movement. Well, this is fascinating because I know when we've had conventions, we open up our doors; we have public debate. We have public debate about things that might not necessarily be entirely comfortable but we have public debate. What do members opposite do? They have white-paper discussions and they close the doors. That's what they do.

You want to talk about grassroots roles, Mr. Speaker, members opposite—it's rather fascinating the way they engage their grassroots. It's really fascinating.

So we'll continue to do what we do and that is we talk with our grassroots people in our party, Mr. Speaker. We work with the grassroots in our party to fundraise. We organize. We do that very well and it has served us very well for, I believe, four elections, four elections in a row. And I know it's going to serve us very well in the next election because members opposite see what—pardon me, the public sees what members opposite are all about. They see what they're all about.

And to have the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, introduce this bill, we know his agenda. He would rather have—make money make the world go 'round, to quote my good friends in the band Rush. Big money make the world go 'round. That's what the members opposite would rather have.

And we would rather—oh, I hear my good friend from Springfield again, Mr. Speaker, or St. Paul. Yes, I hear my good friend from St. Paul. You know, I'm going to go home and my daughter's going to say, what did you do today, Dad? And I said, well, I was working with a group of people that want to make the world a better place.

And he'll go home and his daughter will say, what did you do at work today? I yelled insults at an

adult in a public building, Mr. Speaker, and I feel good about that. That's the difference. So he can chirp all he wants over there. He can try and shout down the truth in this Chamber about the fact that their political party were the architects of the worst scandal in electoral history in Manitoba.

But that's not what this party's about. We're about public, democratic process, and we're about engaging everyone in that democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to rise today and put a few words on the record in support of Bill 205, contrary to what the greedy New Democrats have put on the record.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know when there's a need for greed, we've got the NDP stepping right up to the trough and asking the public to pay for their political party operations through the vote tax. Now, the arrogance that they show is becoming quite clear and quite evident here in the Legislature.

We heard the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) talk at great length about investing in democracy. Well, Mr. Speaker, how can they speak out of both sides of their mouth?

On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, they're removing Manitobans' democratic rights to have a vote on the increase to the PST that is required today under legislation. So they have destroyed democracy for Manitobans that should have had a say through this year's budget that imposes an increase of 1 per cent in the PST. Yes, we should have an election.

And obviously, Mr. Speaker, they're afraid to go to Manitobans and ask the question on whether Manitobans support their budget that has been introduced that raises the PST and again takes more money out of the pockets of hard-working Manitobans. So they can't talk about democracy on one hand and how this bill that imposes, again, a vote tax on Manitobans is somehow strengthening democracy when they have weakened democracy to a considerable degree as a result of the introduction of Bill 20 and taking away the democratic right for people to vote on whether they agree with the NDP and how they again have dipped into the pockets of Manitobans on a—in a very significant way. So we can't have the hypocritical discussion that we're having here this morning from this NDP government talking about how they're enhancing democracy, and they talk about all the flowery ways and how they're

making democracy better through a vote tax which once again takes more money out of people's pockets.

You just look at the impact of the vote tax, you look at the impact of the way the PST was expanded last year in the election—or in the budget, and you look at, again, the way the PST was increased by 1 per cent this year, and we have looked at the biggest tax grab in the history of the province of Manitoba, \$500 million more out of the pockets of hard-working Manitobans, and where does that money come from? That money comes from people that pay taxes. *[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the point. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) is making my point: \$500 million more, where does that come from? From Manitobans, out of their pockets. And to add insult to injury, this government is now asking Manitobans to dig into their pockets and pay for the operations of their political party through a vote tax.

Mr. Speaker, this is—it's unbelievable to even begin to understand how this government can stand in its place and members of the government and ministers of the government stand in their places and talk about how democratic the vote tax is. It's not believable out there, and when I go out to talk to Manitobans, when I talk to organizations that have seen—non-profit organizations that are dealing with abuse—women that have been abused, and their increases have been flat. They have received no increases from this government over the last number of years, and they're saying how—how can this government look at taking a vote tax and supporting and funding their political party when we're not receiving any more money to support the women in our community that need that support?

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many out there who understand the greedy actions of this government who dictate from on high and say, we know best how to spend your hard-earned tax dollars. We know best. You don't have a clue how to spend your tax dollars, but we know better and we will continue to dig deeper into your pockets and take money from you, you hard-working, taxpaying Manitobans, and we will spend it. We will spend it the way we believe is fit. That is not democracy; that becomes dictatorship.

And people are understanding now the arrogance of this government who, again, raised taxes to benefit and to line the coffers of their own political party rather than providing that money and that

support to community organizations that need it. That is lazy—at the height of laziness, Mr. Speaker, and we see it on a regular basis from this government who doesn't respect democracy and doesn't respect the taxpayers or the democratic right of Manitobans to have a say in the way their tax dollars are spent.

* (10:50)

So, Mr. Speaker, we support Bill 205 on this side of the House. And I look forward to the debate and I look forward to this bill passing to committee and having Manitobans have a democratic right to make a decision on how their tax dollars are spent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm pleased to rise today to speak after the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) on Bill 205. And the member for River East talks about how the vote subsidy and the tax credits are paying for the operations of a political party. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what has been happening with the tax credit system from the very beginning. Is she telling me that the Conservative Party somehow took in, in rebates in—after the last 2011 election, a million dollars—or a million and three, and they somehow didn't use it?

Hold on, Mr. Speaker, I can't hear myself speak here from the noise from the members around me, surrounding me here.

But is she suggesting that \$1.3 million that the Conservative Party accepted just two years ago, after the 2011 election, was not paying for the operations of a political party? Because if that's the case, I'd like to know what she did with it, then. Because the whole reason the Conservative Party filed its financial statements and waited patiently for that rebate to arrive, that \$1.3 million, I thought was to pay for the operations of the Conservative political party. And if they're paying for something else, I'd like to know what it is, because that's not what it was for.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's instructive for the members—on this side of the House, anyway—to understand a bit about the history of public financing in this country. In 1972, the federal government, in a minority situation, passed the current laws dealing with the tax credit system. And everyone here is familiar with those, where the taxpayer gets 75 per cent back on its first, I believe it was—in the beginning, it was the first \$100. Now I think it's gone to \$200 and now up to \$400, and then it's a—there's a sliding scale of 50 per cent of the next amount over

\$400, then 33 per cent beyond \$750 and all ending at around \$1,150.

Now, that was quite revolutionary in its day, and the provincial party in Manitoba simply adopted that system and we had that in our province here for—since 1972. Well, the Conservatives, at all levels, in the '74 election, accepted their rebates. The Liberals—all the parties accepted their rebates. Nobody was complaining about this. As a matter of fact, this was seen as something progressive and the parties were accepting of it. And now, all of a sudden, a number of years later, we have the Leader of the Opposition in Manitoba basically trying to turn around and start opposing public financing of the election process.

Now, let's take a moment and look at what happened in the United States. Over the years there they developed a matching funds system for the presidential campaigns, and that seemed to be working well for probably 10, 20 years. And most people would have thought that that system would continue or maybe be—even be expanded upon in an effort to get the private lobbyists and lobbying sector out of the process.

Well, in fact, what's happened in the last—since George Bush II ran, since George Bush entered the race, he raised, I believe—member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) would probably know—43, I believe it was, million dollars. It was a record in its day.

But now the presidential candidates are raising—you know, even the Democratic presidential candidate in the last election raised, I believe, a billion dollars. Now, what the effect of this is, Mr. Speaker, is they actually opt out of matching funds. So you have a system in the United States developed over time for matching funds, so that for every dollar the campaign raises, the public matches it. What's—and you're allowed to forgo the matching funds if you just want to go on your own and raise as much money as you want. And it was George Bush—George Bush's campaign decided to pass on public financing and go straight out and raise money from these 50 billionaires that essentially have a stranglehold on the political—*[interjection]* And the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) seems to like that. I guess his problem is he can't find enough billionaires.

But that's what's happened in the United States in the last little while. Even the Democrats are dropping out of the matching funds system and they're going cap in hand to the Koch brothers, Mr. Adelson and the 48 other billionaires in the

United States that are collectively financing the system. And these Conservatives, including the member for Emerson, seem to think that that's progress. That's what they—that's what they would like to get us back to: to give up public financing, go and rely on these billionaires.

Now, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what also happens in the United States. It's—if the member for Emerson was an American candidate for Congress or the Senate, he'd actually have to do some work down there. They fundraise year round. That's all they do. Their whole history of a politician in the United States is to fundraise seven days a week, appearing at groups, appearing before these 48 billionaires, cap in hand, asking for donations, and that's why legislation can rarely make it through the House that's very good consumer legislation.

I'll give you an example. The air passenger rights legislation in the United States, even though bills have been introduced in the houses there in the last couple of sessions, have never made it through the houses, and you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because all the—the airline industry collectively pounces on anybody who opposes them. They concentrate their donations on their supporters and they basically force these Congress people to toe the line for fear that, if they don't vote their way, they're going to be cut off. And so the result is they change their votes. They miss votes. They're just nowhere around.

So, at the end of the day, any airline legislation, flyers' rights legislation, that you see in the United States didn't come from either of the houses of Congress, but came through the transportation agency, which is sort of the opposite that you find in Canada. In Canada you find a very weak transportation agency, and we rely on the political process. There they can't. They had to have the transportation agency bring in the laws that you see right now, because if they were to rely on a legislated solution, they would be waiting forever because all the big money, the 50 billionaires who run that system in the United States.

So, surely, the public of Manitoba—you know, I invite the Conservatives to debate this in the next election, because when the public is faced with the alternative to what the Conservatives—the alternative that the Conservatives want, and they realize that it's going to take us back to the bad old days of the big companies in Manitoba—you know, that's what they're going to do. They're going to eliminate the ban on union and corporate donations. That's what

the plan is here, because they want to be able to line up with their corporate friends as they did for the last hundred years, line up, picking up big 5 and 10 thousand dollar cheques, \$25,000 cheques. That is what they really intend to do and that is the end game with where they're headed right now.

The fact that they feel they can make hay complaining about a—what they call—it's a vote subsidy. It's a compliance cost. The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), if he would actually, you know, pick up a dictionary once in a while to check out what a compliance cost is, the whole—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will have one minute remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution that we are considering this morning is the one sponsored by the honourable member for Radisson, entitled "Supporting Malala's Mission."

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 30—Supporting Malala's Mission

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I move, seconded by the member from Flin Flon,

WHEREAS Manitoba and Canadians believe that education is a fundamental right for all children; and

WHEREAS the right to education is recognized as a fundamental human right in key international legal instruments to which Canada is a signatory, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; and

WHEREAS Malala Yousafzai is the Pakistani teen who was shot by the Taliban for advocating for universal education and girls' rights; and

WHEREAS Malala Yousafzai survived the assassination attempt and is inspiring people across the globe to work towards universal education; and

WHEREAS over half of the children throughout the world do not have access to education are girls; and

WHEREAS two thirds of over 120 million youth aged 15 to 24 who lack basic reading and writing

skills are female, perpetuating the global gap in gender equality; and

WHEREAS educating girls and women in—is the most effective investment for achieving long-term health benefits for a nation, thereby saving the lives of mothers and babies and creating healthier and stronger families.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the declaration—dedication of those like Malala Yousafzai who advocate the rights of women and girls across the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government and all the Canadian provinces and territories to continue to work with the international community to promote and ensure by international law that all children, specifically that all females, have access to a high standard of education.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Radisson, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen),

WHEREAS Manitoba's—Manitobans and Canadians believe—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's Order Paper?
[Agreed]

WHEREAS Manitobans and Canadians believe that education is a fundamental right for all children; and

WHEREAS the right to education is recognized as a fundamental human right in key international legal instruments to which Canada is a signatory, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); and

WHEREAS Malala Yousafzai is the Pakistani teen who was shot by the Taliban for advocating for universal education and girls' rights; and

WHEREAS Malala Yousafzai survived the assassination attempt and is inspiring people across the globe to work towards universal education; and

WHEREAS over half of the children throughout the world who do not have access to education are girls; and

WHEREAS two thirds of over 120 million youth aged 15 to 24 who lack basic reading and writing skills are female, perpetuating the global gap in gender equality; and

WHEREAS educating girls and women is the most effective investment for achieving long term health benefits for a nation, thereby saving the lives of mothers and babies and creating healthier, stronger families.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the dedication of those like Malala Yousafzai who advocate for the rights of women and girls across the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Federal Government and all Canadian provinces and territories to continue to work with the international community to promote and ensure by international law that all children, specifically all females, have access to a high standard of education.

Mr. Jha: I rise today with great pride and hope to speak on my PMR and to share my thoughts with all members of this Chamber.

I hope this resolution passed unanimously, as I believe this could lead to further action, making compulsory education to all children in international law. As most world leaders have been advocating for making education a compulsory act, I see this move a step closer to make that happen. As Nelson Mandela has stated, and I quote, education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, end of quote. I hope we get this small step to giant leaps in building an equitable society in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat overwhelmed with emotions when I think of millions of children who are suffering due to lack of food and due to lack of education to improve their standard of living. The salient feature of this PMR is also to ensure that no female child in the world would ever be deprived of receiving basic standard education.

I'd like to share the quote from Brigham Young, who says, you educate a man, you educate a man; you educate a woman, you educate a generation. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we must educate all children, but certain groups and communities in the world do not

see that, and particularly towards girls they are extremely biased and oppressive.

Mr. Speaker, all-at times, I look at the vast sky full of stars and realize how tiny our world is compared to these huge galaxies of planets. And then, I also realize our planet has not yet secured our own future by progressive knowledge of act-and acts. It's true in the world of ours there are millions and millions of children who are hungry and do not have access to education.

It is sad to hear horrifying stories of operations of women by their own fellow human beings in several societies of the world. Millions of women will suffer--still suffer due to such acts. These women need to stand up for themselves and their children. I see no other tools for development more effective than education. I see this to be the most powerful path in building a better world.

As the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said on education of girls, I quote: Without achieving gender equality for girls in education, the world has no chance of achieving many of the ambitious health, social and development targets it has set for itself. End of quote. Is this a pipe dream, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so. I think that by hard work, by working together, we can make it happen. It is challenging but it is real.

Mr. Speaker, we have done so much remarkable work right here in Manitoba. Let me remind our members--and particularly to the new members--about a wonderful woman activist, Nellie McClung, who made history in this country by changing the act in 1916 to allow women to vote. In 1927, she worked with others to recognize women as persons, making them equal to men to hold public office.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it works with dedication that dreams can come true. Like Neil Armstrong proclaimed after he landed on the moon in '69, I quote: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." End of the quote.

These are small acts, but really these are the giant leaps for the future, Mr. Speaker. This PMR today is a small step, but it could lead us to improve our laws towards building a better world by providing education to all children. This PMR is focused on girls' education in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I know that several oppressive societies and dictatorial regimes in the world today do not give women equal status and use oppression to silence them. These undemocratically run societies

are controlled by terrorist organizations like al Qaeda and Taliban who use violence and power of guns to control.

Our small yet powerful move, by giving women the power of pen over that of swords, could eventually provide them the power and the needed instinct to fight for their own rights and liberate them. These non-violent acts like Gandhi used to liberate India's millions of people could be used for substantial value to them.

Mr. Speaker, this PMR is to support a mission by the world's bravest child activist from Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai. On October 9th, 2012, then-15-year-old Malala was shot in the head at point-blank by Taliban combatants. Her only crime was that she was speaking about the rights of girls to get educated. Malala's life was saved by the hard work of Pakistani doctors and nurses and later flown to UK to continue her recovery.

Just a few weeks back on July 12th on her birthday, this brave girl, Malala, was honoured for her incredible bravery in the face of adversity and violence at the United Nations. Speaking at the UN she rose, Mr. Speaker, and she said, they thought the bullet would silence us, but they failed, and out of that silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions, but nothing changed in my life, except this weakness, fear, hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born.

Mr. Speaker, this is the month of Ramadan, and I wish all the Muslims of the world the best. In two days, Ramadan will end. This is the holy month, and I must say that this is a very serious issue here that the majority of people in Pakistan—I know them, some of them are very close friends of mine—that they do not see women as a subject for oppression. This is a small group of people that they take that and to try to do that.

* (11:10)

Islam does not discriminate women. Islam, in fact, is—gives the equal right to both men and women. They have given—it is—Mr. Speaker, the prophet also says, heaven lies beneath the feet of your mother. How can these brutal terrorists oppress their own mothers or to-be mothers by giving them nothing but a grade 2 status in their society?

This PMR is just a tiny effort, I believe, like the tiny little candles with the—you know, favourable winds can spread the fire and destroy the dense

forests. I hope that this little candle here will light to set fire to destroy the evil forces of the world and hope this will throw the lights on the path of making a better world.

Like Malala's point spoken at last month and in New York, she says, let us pick up our books and our pens. They're our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.

I like to thank all members for listening to this PMR. Especially I thank the member from Steinbach, whom I had discussed and got the support. I hope that member—Liberal leader here would—will also support this particular resolution.

In conclusion, I like to read two lines of a poem by Nobel laureate Tagore inscribed on my birthday card I got from the member from Fort Rouge. This is a beautiful two lines that, Mr. Speaker, I get very charged when I read this. It says, let me light up my lamp, says the star, and never debate if it will help to remove the darkness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I am very pleased to be able to stand today and speak in support of this resolution. And I'm pleased to address this resolution not only as a woman politician but also as the chair for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians for Canada and vice-chair for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians internationally.

I have met a number of women parliamentarians from many countries in the world, and one of the topics we have addressed a number of times is the significance and the importance of girls receiving an education. And it is something that is very near and dear to a lot of our hearts, because as certainly as somebody says, as—an educated and enlightened woman is an asset not only to her immediate family, but also to her whole country. And once we see girls having the opportunity to go to school then we also see girls growing into women and women having a great influence on teaching a whole generation through their children too. And we can empower change and we can make change in the world if we focus on the very basic privilege that we have here in Canada all the time, and that is the privilege of going to school and learning.

It was interesting a few months ago, Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to represent Canada at an international conference on gender and

politics in London, England. And it was at the time that Malala was in the hospital in England. And it was profoundly moving to be sitting in a room with women parliamentarians from all over the world, and having a discussion about Malala and what she did and why she did it, and knowing that she was in a hospital in that same city. There was a great desire for all of us—and there might have been 60 of us—to go and visit her, which, you know, many people were quite excited and wanted to do that, but also realize that that was not probably something that was going to be allowed. So what we did is signed a card. And somebody made this great big card and all of us had the opportunity to write a message to Malala and it was delivered to her in the hospital.

Hard to know what to say, Mr. Speaker, when you're writing a letter to a 15-year-old child who has been shot in the head, deliberately, because she felt that she wanted to fight for something really important, and that was the right to get an education. And, knowing what she came through, knowing how resilient she was, hearing her family talk about it and hearing other people talk about it, it was really a difficult moment to be sitting there thinking, what can you write to this girl that could even possibly express what you want to say, and, knowing that I was representing Canadian women and girls, an even greater challenge to know what I should write. I have to say I don't quite remember what I wrote, but all of us did write something very heartfelt to this young woman that felt very, very strongly about what needed to be done.

And it's hard in Canada, Mr. Speaker, for us to even imagine something like that happening where you have, you know, a young girl who wants to promote schooling for girls and then she is shot point-blank as she is going to school. What that has created, though, which I think has really backfired, you know, for the people that wanted to stop her voice and her strength, it really has backfired because she has now emerged an even more powerful voice for education, and it is a voice that needs to be heard.

There are so many children in the world that aren't going to school, and, when we look at what the United Nations numbers are, they are indicating that there are 57 million children of primary-education age who don't have the opportunity to go to school. There are 250 million children who cannot read, write or count well, and UNESCO has recently released a report indicating there are 48.5 million children of primary-school age in conflict-affected

countries alone who do not have access to primary education.

And very troubling in all of those statistics, too, are that over half of the children that aren't receiving schooling are girls, and there's a number of different reasons for that. It's something I think the world needs to pay more attention to and understand better and find out what the problems are that prevent some of this from happening. And since I have become involved with Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and looking at various gender issues that we as women in politics need to be addressing on a worldwide scale in order to make a difference, certainly looking at the research and the literature that is out there, education for girls is right up there as one of the more significant issues that have to be dealt with. But it's interesting, too, as we look at some of the reasons that girls aren't going to school and trying to see what some of those solutions are that could be put in place, and some of it is just basic health and sanitary reasons, in an article I read from India the other day.

So I think having this discussion and having a resolution is the right thing to do. Supporting the resolution is the right thing to do because it's going to take a little bit from all of us around the world to have Malala's dream move forward. It was so interesting a few weeks ago when she spoke at the United Nations and she called on children worldwide to demand universal primary education, and it's interesting that this is coming from a child that has the fortitude and the strength and the courage to do what she's doing and to feel very strongly about what it means. She said, I raise up my voice so that those without a voice can be heard. And it was a passionate call to action.

But also we know that while over half of the children that aren't going to school are girls, there are still many, many boys in those millions that don't have that opportunity to go to school. So we have to focus on finding ways to ensure that all of the world's children have an opportunity to go to school.

* (11:20)

And it is interesting to note that the United Nations' goal is to ensure that all children have access to primary school by 2015. I'm not sure that we're going to ever be able to meet that, when we see the challenges in many of the countries, when we see the conflict in many countries, but it is a noble goal. If we don't have goals, we're not going to be heading in the direction that we need to be heading in.

And so I think the goal is important, and I think there needs to be a stronger emphasis in all of this. And, certainly, as girls become more educated, they become more empowered. They can make a difference in the world in a huge way to address a lot of the inequality we see in the world.

And we certainly support trying to move this issue forward and being part of an effort, even a small part, in what we can do, in helping to move this forward. So I do thank the member for the resolution, and I think it is something that we need to keep working on, to continue to move forward with the same kind of passion as Malala and certainly ensure that she's not fighting this alone. When we see our young girls around us getting an education here and what it does for them and how it can lift them up, and—up and creative and powerful in a dynamic world, we would want the same for all girls in the world and all boys because it does make a difference.

So thank you for the opportunity to speak on this, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): It's a pleasure to be up today to speak on this. I'd like to thank the member from Radisson for bringing this PMR forward and the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). I know she spoke at—she was the keynote speaker for the women engineers, I believe that was, and as I hear her now, I know that that speech must have been fabulous with all the experience that you've had.

This is such an important issue to come before us, and I'm so pleased that both sides of the House are together on this.

I know that when I was 16, the thought of doing what Malala is doing, just—I can't even imagine, Mr. Speaker. Growing up in rural Manitoba, I didn't actually even know that women weren't equal. My mother was very much into equality, and she took obey out of the ceremony in the '40s and said, yes, that's not happening. And there was just no question we all thought we were equal. It wasn't until I got into Winnipeg that I discovered that women in the world are not equal. And so it was quite a shock for me, and it took me some years to start to learn just how lacking in equality the world is for the female gender. So I'm particularly interested in seeing this come forward.

Malala's speech at the United Nations is on YouTube, so I did take some time to listen to that. And like I said, it was just hard to believe that she

could be only 16 years old, and that this was occurring at when she was, like, 14. And one of the things that she said, when July 12th became known as Malala Day, she said, Malala Day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. There are hundreds of human rights activists and social workers who are not only speaking for human rights but who are struggling to achieve their goals of education, peace and equality. Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them.

So as we hear that, we really see how much work needs to be done in this area. And it's kind of mystifying to me because we know what a huge difference it makes to a country when women are educated. We know the benefits that come to the entire society when women are educated. And so it's kind of hard to understand how we still haven't got there. But we certainly—as the member from Charleswood mentioned, there are great goals being put forward by the United Nations. But we know that economic growth increases, Mr. Speaker, in a country—that education contributes directly to the growth of the national income in countries. So even if people don't want to do it because it's the right thing to do, you'd think they might want to do it because it's economically the most viable thing to do. One would hope that just the moral side of it would be enough, but you would think with both, we would be going a little bit faster on this.

Educating women makes countries more viable in the global market today. Investors coming into countries look for women who are educated being in those countries, and for a labour force that is educated. So we know that fertility, that population growth, that infant and child mortality rates all fall when women are educated. Child nutrition improves when women are educated. So there's certainly every possible reason, and none against, to see this happen.

We know that yet, in spite of this, that throughout the world women and girls are routinely deprived of education, and, of course, as the member from Charleswood mentioned and the member from Radisson as well, boys as well, in many countries, are not receiving an education. I know that two thirds of over 120 million youth aged 15 to 24 lack basic reading and writing skills, and those are just the females.

And, so—education, of course, also—well, we're speaking about the economy, but it beats poverty.

One extra year of schooling increases a person's earnings by about 10 per cent. So 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low income countries just left school with basic reading skills, not even with the kind of secondary education that I know many in this House would want to see everyone receive. So just that alone would be a huge accomplishment, if we could even get, you know, people to have basic reading skills.

Education, of course, reduces, as I mentioned, child mortality. A child born to a mother who can read is 50 per cent more likely to survive past the age of 5. That's incredible. In Indonesia, child vaccination rates are 19 per cent when mothers have no education and 68 per cent when mothers have an average secondary school education. That's incredible. Education contributes to improved maternal health, as I mentioned. Women with higher levels of education are most likely to delay and space out the pregnancy and to seek health care and support. Education helps combat HIV—which we know in many countries is just rapidly spreading—malaria, other preventable diseases. It facilitates access to treatment. It fights against stigma and discrimination.

So the benefits are truly endless, and yet in many of these countries, of course, we know that females receive way less education, if any. They're often forced into unpaid work, so they're doing all the caregiving and that sort of thing where they're not being paid, and that reduces their social and economical—economic independence, making them dependent.

So I really hope that every side today will be able to stand behind this PMR so we can all do the small part that we can do to help change this in our world today. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this resolution and, indeed, to support it, and I believe we will have unanimous support, which is good.

Let me start by talking a little bit about Malala. Around the world, Malala Yousafzai is known for her advocacy for education for women as part of the broader goal in ensuring education for all. She's also known for her extraordinary courage. She's survived tremendous opposition in her country, Pakistan, including, of course, being shot in the head at point-blank range. She survived, for which we are all thankful, and more than that, she has continued as a leading advocate for educating women.

* (11:30)

Most recently, on July 12th, she was at the United Nations for Malala Day and to continue her ongoing campaign for universal education. It is significant that one of the major millennium goals that has been adopted around the world thanks to a lot of work by former secretary-general of the United Nations Kofi Annan and, indeed, many others—and one of these millennium goals is to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. And another of the millennium goals is to eliminate the gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably as soon as possible, and at all levels of education the goal is no later than 2015.

These are important, ambitious goals. Ambitious in the sense that there are still countries where there—like parts of Pakistan where there is still too many with the view that an education is not so necessary or important for girls. Thankfully that is changing and there has been some significant progress over the last number of years toward the millennium goals, and I think for that we can all be thankful. One of the pleasures, of course, of being in Manitoba is that we have people from around the world, and that includes many who have come here from Pakistan, Malala's home country. A wonderful part of the world with amazing rivers and mountains and areas where there are very productive farmlands. And I have had the good fortune to meet many who have come from Pakistan here to Manitoba and to enjoy their company, to enjoy the customs and learning more and more about Pakistan. And I think we can be fortunate that we have so many who have come from Pakistan who are contributing here in our province in a whole variety of different ways and different forms. And that, I think, speaks well for Malala's home country and, I hope, for our continuing good relations. And I hope also that the efforts here, through the resolution and in many other ways, will help to advance the cause of education for women in Pakistan.

I also want to talk a little bit about our own situation here in Manitoba. We have, compared to other provinces, a higher rate of infant mortality. We have, compared with many other countries, a higher rate of infant mortality. And I think when we look at ourselves one of the things that we need to look at is ensuring that everybody in Manitoba has the opportunity not only for an education, but to be able to graduate from high school. And we still have areas in

Manitoba where the graduation rates are alarmingly low. There was a report in the newspaper over the weekend about Aboriginal education and pointing out that R.B. Russell School, with many Aboriginal students, has a graduation rate of 16 per cent.

Clearly we need to dedicate ourselves not to just what we do around the world, but to what we can do here to improve areas like this where there is a big need yet to improve the opportunities for education. And there are a variety of reasons that need to be addressed, and there are a variety of actions that we need to take, but one of the things that we cannot forget is that there is a need and an imperative here, as well as elsewhere in the world.

And as I have talked in the last several months, indeed years, but particularly in the last little while, about the children who come through our child and family services system, that they, too, have very low graduation rates. And they, too, need extra attention, assistance, care, approaches which will enable more and more to be graduating successfully and to get out of the cycle in which children in care have themselves had children who are then taken into care. And one of the important ways that we can do this is to—improving opportunities for education and for those who have been in Child and Family Services and for Aboriginal kids and, indeed, for all kids in Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me conclude in supporting this resolution. I would like to thank the MLA for Radisson in bringing this forward. I would like to express my support for this, as we work in a global village and we keep the connections here in Manitoba with around the world, do what we can to help in Pakistan but not forgetting what we also need to do here at home.

Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Yes, thank you for allowing me to speak on this private member's bill introduced by the member from Radisson. It's quite an honour. I know we're here to talk about Malala Yousafzai, and it's quite an honour.

I had the opportunity to travel in Afghanistan over 30-some years ago in 1979 just before the Russians came in. And I travelled all around Afghanistan from Herat to Kandahar to Kabul to Bamian. And at that time, it was like going 500 years back in time and it was a really, really neat country. And I just got to see how things worked together.

Now, there was some problems. They—women were not even allowed to go to school, and—but there was happiness and there was working together in the different communities. Since the Russians came in, in about 1980, things were still pretty good because women were allowed to go to university and become doctors in Kabul, and that was a big step. But, of course, you know, the nations of the world thought that this was not a good move, to have the big bear come down from the north, and what happened is that all the schools and that were closed to girls and women. And as you know, up 'til now, girls have been scared to go to school, and Malala is just a—one example of many things that have happened to girls or women that have walked out on the streets.

And I think it's our job as a country, our job as a society, to stand up for people that are not treated fairly within their own societies. And girls and women are, all over the world, not being treated fairly. The member from Burrows and the member from Charleswood spoke very eloquently about how women are mistreated in other parts of the world. And, again, we want change. But when I look back 30 years when I was in Afghanistan, there's not very much change.

That change can happen from us, from us as a government here in Manitoba, from us as a Canadian government. We can dictate who we trade with, who we, you know, buy and sell things with, and those decisions could be made on how the people of those countries are treated. And I think we have the power to look at that. Let's not look at what country has oil and what country has resources that we want. Let's look at how the people themselves in those countries are treated.

I heard a very eloquent speech from the member from River Heights that talked about, you know, it's not just about the Malala in Afghanistan, we have our own Malalas right here in Manitoba and in Canada. Education that we've taken for granted, that all of us in this House have taken for granted, is not taken for granted by many people within our own province.

* (11:40)

I mean, there's barriers to a lot of things. One is money. One is—is there schools there? One is— that—is there a high school there? One is, can they move? I mean, we tried years ago as governments to educate First Nations and we took them as young as 3 and 4 years old and took them to school. That was part of the genocide of the First Nations. Oh, we don't want

to mention that, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to mention that good, clean Canada there was a genocide right here in our own country. But before we can lecture, before we can point out inequalities in other countries like Malala in Afghanistan or the genocide like I mentioned before in Armenia that we can lecture to Turkey, we have to also open our own closet door. and we have to recognize the inequalities that are here in our own country.

And we have to work together. And it's an honour to be in this House with both sides working together on that. I mean, I don't know if we're going to call this happy Tuesday but it's nice when we all agree—we all agree that there's a concern here, and there's a concern not just about women but about children, and remember when you solve—or if you want to solve poverty, it's through education. If you want to solve inequalities, it's through, you know, it's through education. If you want to have intolerance, okay, you have to have education, and so all of us here are educated. We wouldn't be here if we weren't. We've all had those opportunities.

But remember there's still opportunities—or people that don't have opportunities in our own country, and we, again, have to stand up as Canadians and look at ourselves and say, you know, should we be spending money on these F-14 jets? Should we be doing this, should we that? Should we maybe make sure that everybody has clean water in Canada? Should we make sure that grandmas like my grandma—not now but—still have an outdoor toilet, because this is happening in Canada. This isn't in Bangladesh or wherever. This is here. So, yes, we have to get together and look at that.

But I think it starts off with the member from Radisson saying that, you know what? There's inequalities; there is importance like Malala who was shot in the head point-blank by a radical. This isn't by some Muslim; this is by a radical that does not want women to gain any power. This is by a radical who, you know, wants to control everybody's thoughts, and I think, as we sit here and we talk about this, we have to realize that our government of Manitoba and the Canadian government, it's very important who we pick and choose who our friends are, and I think we should be darn well looking at situations where societies are treated with respect.

I myself has travelled in Pakistan and India where young children as young as 4 years old were put in a dark room to make a carpet. Now, you might ask, well, why would you have young children as

young as 4 years old? Because their fingers are smaller and the knots on the carpet can be tighter. Why would you have the lights off where the carpets are? Why would you have that? That's so they can concentrate even more so on the knots that they're making. That's happening today, okay. That didn't happen just 30 years ago; that's going on today. Who's buying those \$30,000 silk carpets? We are, you know, and it's sad that this continues on. And I—by no means do I want to belittle this private member's bill, but it just hurts me that I've seen the situation and it does keep on going on. We can make a stop to it. We can stop child labour.

You know, I know different nations have stood up and say, end of children labour. Well, you know what? You've got to eat, and in this case the young boy and girl that I saw that were 4 and 5 years old, the family was working on the carpet and they only got dollars a day. They only made maybe 30, 40 dollars for the month, and they worked as a family on this carpet and that's how they survive. It wasn't like they had weekends off. It wasn't like they only worked eight hours; they worked 14 hours. And some of those kids when they get 10, 11 years old, they can't see. They're blind, but they have to work to eat.

And youth—and Malala, she knows the importance of education, because many women, many girls give up, you know. They give up because they see what they have to go through. She is one in a million. She's the Nelson Mandela. She's the Gandhi. She has taken upon herself, her life, to continue on and fight for women and for children, and it's an honour for me to stand here and say, yes, we've got to continue that fight. But, yes, as Canadians we've got to stand up and change—make changes right here in Canada so that when we talk, we don't talk out of both sides of our mouth. We don't say, hey, you've got to do that—and we're still doing that.

We've got to make sure, like the member from River Heights said, the graduation rates in some northern reserves and that is ridiculously low. We've got to spend the money. We've got to bring in the teachers. We've got to get them help, because through education, it will help their own health. When I look at some of the northern communities with the high rates of sugar diabetes and that, that can be cured just through education, through proper diet—how to eat, what to eat, when to eat. But they're not getting that education, so we have to work together.

And again, I—what I have to say is on behalf of myself and the team here, both sides, it's an honour to speak on Malala, and I just hope that we don't forget, okay—we don't forget. And when we have an opportunity to talk that we keep on talking.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to thank the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) for bringing forward this resolution, also for the discussions that we've had regarding the resolution. I appreciate the heart with which he brings forward this resolution and the intentions with which he brings forward. And, indeed, we will be supporting this resolution before the noon o'clock hour to bring it to a vote.

I do know, Mr. Speaker, that there are many in this House who would've liked to, had they given—been given the time, to speak to support the resolution. But I know that through our actions today that all of us, as a collective body, will be showing support to ensure that all children—and in particular the issue around young girls not being able to have access to primary education around the world—that it's an important issue.

And, indeed, there are other issues that domestically and locally has been brought forward by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen). This, in particular, is about an international situation. There might be some who wonder what is it that we can do here in the Manitoba Legislature. What difference will our voice or this resolution make? And to them I would say the answer is, ultimately, I don't know. But I know that if we do nothing, then nothing can change. And so, the ability to bring forward this and bring forward, as a message, that we support ensuring that all children and, in particular, in this case, young girls have access to education that can change their lives. It's something that we, as a Legislature, support, and if it makes an impact somewhere down the road among different legislators, if it makes an impact in the minds of others who this resolution might be sent to, then we can say we've done a good job. And if it makes no impact, we can say we've tried. And, ultimately, it is about trying to make a difference. And I think that that is really what Malala has done, and she's done it by using her voice and ensuring that other kids in the world also have a voice.

And I was given a letter from my colleague from Charleswood that was on Malala's blog, and it was written by a girl from Zimbabwe. And I just want to

read a little bit of it into the record, Mr. Speaker. And I know all members can access this blog at a different time, but the 15-year-old girl from Zimbabwe writes, education is one thing that no one can ever take away from you. It is not something that can be stolen. A person who has an education is capable of achieving so much in such a short space of time. I find it appalling that schools were closed down just because the Taliban think girls are not supposed to learn. It also saddened me to think that friendships were destroyed and dreams were shattered. Your story also taught me to stand up for what I believe in. I think that it is amazing how such a young girl can speak about such a controversial topic. I would've probably been too afraid of prejudice and consequences I might face for doing something so brave.

So her voice, Malala's voice, has encouraged others around the world, other young people to stand up for what they know is right. And so, if they can stand up for what they know is right, then why wouldn't we stand up for what we know is right?

* (11:50)

And we know, as a Legislature, that all young people are deserving of an education. All young people deserve to have that chance, because an education really is about giving them a chance. It opens up their opportunities within the world to do different things that opens up their mindset to new ideas and to be able to reach their full potential.

And why wouldn't we want that? We want that for our own kids, obviously, Mr. Speaker, as a parent. And I know there are many others who are parents in this Legislature. We all want that for our own children. And if we want that for our own kids, why wouldn't we want that for kids around the world just because we haven't met them? It doesn't matter. We want that same sort of benefit for them. We want them to be able to succeed.

We know that that was something that concerned all of us when we see what's happening—not just in Afghanistan, I know there's been comments particularly about Afghanistan—but in other countries in the world where young kids don't have the opportunity to attend primary school, not just because of the economic conditions sometimes that exist in those countries or that exist in individual villages or in the individual lives of these kids, but because of misguided religious beliefs, or misguided ideology. And it's incumbent upon us to ensure that

we do what we can to give some opportunity for these young kids.

So I appreciate the fact that the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) has brought forward this resolution. We don't always get an opportunity to speak about issues that are beyond the borders of Manitoba, that are more international in nature. But I do think that there is value for us as a Legislature, as a legislative body, as individual MLAs, to be able to speak about that and to send the message that, in Manitoba at least, this is something that we believe in, that we do believe that all children—boys, girls—should have that opportunity for education, should have that opportunity that we would all want for our own kids or for our own grandkids. And it does give us a broader world perspective.

So I want to thank the member for Radisson. I'll leave a little bit of time in case there's other members in the Legislature who want to speak as well before this resolution comes to a vote, which I think will have a positive resolution.

And, ultimately, we are doing this not because we have to, not because anybody was demanding us to bring forward a resolution like this, but because it's the right thing. And as a famous person once said, it's never the wrong time to do the right thing. And it's right to support this resolution.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): It's definitely a privilege to rise with other members of this Chamber and speak to this private member's resolution that has been brought forward by the member for Radisson. I would like to thank him for that and I'd like to thank everyone else that has spoken on this resolution and the support that it is being given.

As someone that has come from a background in education and as someone that has come from a background in feminist studies, especially feminist pedagogy, it's always been one of my beliefs and it—that education is fundamental to the success of any and all people's lives. And as mentioned by the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), that, again, if you can't get people with the right moral direction for it, that at least you would think that folks would maybe take into consideration the economic benefits, because education does so much for so many.

But in the case of women, one of the things that research has shown over and over again in the

history of international development, economic and community development is that when women are educated and when women are given access to things like microloans and these kinds of things, when the empowerment is put in the hands of women, the community goes so much farther. It goes so much faster. Because when those things have been placed in their hands—and, again, whether it is education and literacy and numeracy or whether it's the ability to start a small company that will often come from those foundations, what they are able to do with it grows exponentially because they give to the next generations. Because they are our mothers, because they do these certain things, because there's a—the way they have been socialized, they will go and do things that reap benefits beyond anything that folks had often imagined.

And Malala is an amazing young woman, but as others have said here, she is not the only young woman. But as with so many things involved with social justice, and whether it is social equity in terms of economics, whether it's in terms of political empowerment, that sometimes what it takes is to have that one person. Whether it is Gandhiji that becomes our one person in terms of civil disobedience and how we do things peacefully, whether it's Martin Luther King, whether it is Nellie McClung—again, these people are not the only ones that fought the battles that they did. Nellie McClung was not the only suffragette, but she did particular things that set things in motion and she became a person here in Manitoba.

Unfortunately, sometimes we've also had people that have laid the groundwork that did not live to fulfill their dreams. I'm thinking, too, the comments of the member from Flin Flon. It reminded me of Shannen's Dream and a young woman in northern Ontario who is fighting for educational rights for First Peoples. And so she is someone that we look to now, but we look to in memory, and that is the one thing that I think we are very fortunate with Malala, is Malala becomes that symbol for us, not just of someone who was—that someone tried to take down for her beliefs and for who she was but, like a phoenix, rose from the flames and becomes a living embodiment of the very reasons why we all need to keep fighting for these kinds of things and to make sure that every child is educated.

And, as I've said before, in terms of when we think of things like social justice, as long as there is one person on this planet that is oppressed and is not able to be—to achieve social inclusion and social

equity, none of us are free. We are all attached to that very same chain.

So I would like to thank the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) for bringing forth this very important resolution, and thank the other members of the Chamber that spoke, and I'd like to be able to sit down now so that we can all pass this resolution unanimously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the resolution? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On House business, Mr. Speaker. Could you canvass the House to see if there's agreement that this resolution has been passed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to let the record show that this resolution has been passed unanimously? *[Agreed]* Then the resolution has been carried unanimously.

Mr. Swan: Also on House business, Mr. Speaker, can you canvass the House to see if there's agreement 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, August 6, 2013

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