

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, August 6, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to—

PETITIONS

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The school learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September of 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which requires therapy. These children have been denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to—allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility from ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by M. Link, K. Link, N. Sawatzky and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition's signed by V. Wojtowicz, D. Kirton, D. Derksen and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Road 433 Improvements

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 433, Lee River Road and Cape Coppermine Road, in the rural municipality of Lac du Bonnet has seen an increase in traffic volume in recent years.

(2) New subdivisions have generated considerable population growth, and the area has seen a significant increase in tourism due to the popularity of the Granite Hills Golf Course.

(3) This population growth has generated an increased tax base in the rural municipality.

(4) Lee River Road and Cape Coppermine Road were not originally built to handle the high volume of traffic they now accommodate.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation recognize that Lee River Road and Cape Coppermine Road can no longer adequately serve both area residents and tourists, and as such consider making improvements to the road to reflect its current use.

This petition is signed by S. Morgan, J. Trudeau, J. Jeanson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack

of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this is signed by R. Panlilion, J. Del Rosario, J. Kulbacki and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

And this petition is signed by C.B. Mohr, J. Senderewich, W. Beattie and many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

* (13:40)

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by F. Torres, R. Mulato, J. Agasid and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf G. Fox, M. Aisicovich, E. Campbell and many other fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by L. Rogznberg, K. Makinson, J. Gallards and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

And (3) school learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to—access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access or—to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this petition is signed by L. Bouchard, A. Cacotare, L. Devigns and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background for this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is protected—projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied access—the ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denial of treatments are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Education consider making further—making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by J. Medina, P. Jularbal, M. Molinar and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

* (13:50)

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by B. Labossiere, M. Parsons, M. Stefaniuk and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

Signed by K. Karpyshein, J. Carpenter, K. Jopka and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This is signed by L. Flores, D. Lloyd, B. Wadelius and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in

excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to—the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by M. Baisinger, J. Fairbairn, B. Belisle and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has

caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by D. Michell-Arek, K. George, C. Marshall and many, many others.

* (14:00)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us today Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, the former member for Inkster. On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also, in the public gallery, we have with us today from the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia Bonita Hunter-Eastwood and Barry Hillman, who are the guests of the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Tax Increases Government Spending

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Welcome back, Mr. Speaker.

It's been said that government functions like a ratchet, and that means it only goes one direction, and generally that's up. And certainly with this government that's true. The NDP's high-spending problems have translated into a very big high-tax problem for Manitobans.

Yet across Canada, other governments seem to be able to address the problem, Mr. Speaker. In Ontario, for example, Kathleen Wynne has recently committed to a limit of 1 per cent growth in spending and holding the line on tax hikes. Yet here in spendP

territory, not the case. In fact, here we have seen growth of over 3 per cent again this year.

Now, to feed their out-of-control spending addiction what the NDP has to do, of course, is jack up taxes. And so this is why we see a proposal for a 14 per cent hike in the PST. Other provinces seem to be able to address the issue and are, Mr. Speaker.

So I have to ask the Premier: What is stopping this government here in Manitoba from doing the same thing?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, he didn't mention that Ontario already has an 8 per cent sales tax, but I appreciate that.

The reality is this, Mr. Speaker. Our spending increases over the entire time that we've been in office have been among the lowest of any provincial government in Canada, but very focused and targeted investments to ensure that we build a better health-care system, a better education system, to ensure that with this increase that we're looking at here that we build flood protection for all Manitobans. And that is fundamentally important.

We saw the investments in the floodway around the city of Winnipeg and in the Red River Valley in southern Manitoba. For ever dollar—every dollar we spent on flood protection, we have avoided \$30 of additional flooding. That's a \$1-billion investment that saved Manitobans \$30 billion in insurance payouts and lost economic opportunity and destroyed communities and dislocated people.

We are investing for safe Manitoba. We are investing for a prosperous Manitoba, a Manitoba where the economy is stable and we continue to have among the highest growth rates of any provincial government in Canada.

Mr. Pallister: [*inaudible*] explain, then, the absence of any investment of any significance in flood prevention for over a decade, Mr. Speaker, by that government, Canada's highest spending government, Canada's highest inflation rate, the highest increase in PST hike across the country, 14 per cent more. And this—all of this is hitting families very hard.

Now we're coming up to back-to-school time, and the school supplies are going to cost families more. Baseball gloves, bowling shoes, ballet slippers, you name it, it's all going to cost families more. Less money for families on top of less money in families' hands because of the broken-promise tax hikes of last year, Mr. Speaker, fee and tax increases,

higher gas prices, wine and beer, hydro, vehicle registration, education levies and property taxes going up because of that government's downloading, all of that adding up to \$1,600 less for a family of four, and every family of four facing the challenge of higher taxes, higher fees and this government not facing the challenge of getting its spending addiction under control.

Can this Premier explain, or does he ever—will he ever understand that higher taxes might be good for him but they're bad for Manitoba families?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, all economies go through periods of slow growth and recessions.

In the '90s when the members opposite—when the Leader of the Opposition was a senior member of the Filmon government, they had a choice to make on how they dealt with slower economic times or recession. What did they do? They slammed down and fired nurses. They hired—they got rid of 700 teachers. They entirely stopped funding any health-care improvements to personal care homes or hospitals, and they didn't have an assisted-living housing program in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the contrast is this. We are building personal care homes for Manitobans. We're building QuickCare clinics so people can get relief from emergency rooms. We are building access centres. We are training and hiring more nurses in Manitoba, 2,000. We are training and hiring more doctors in Manitoba.

And by the way, when they were in office, they put a tax on infants' and children's clothing. We've taken it off in this budget.

Mr. Pallister: Well, fundamentally, there's a bit of a difference in double-digit cuts in transfer support from Ottawa and double-digit increases, Mr. Speaker.

This government's seen the highest increases in the history of Manitoba in revenue, and yet they still jack up the PST by 14 per cent. Actually, it's not a 14 per cent increase on a lot of things, Mr. Speaker; it's an infinite increase, because just a year and a half ago, a number of things weren't included in the PST. So now benefits like life insurance, which was zero per cent, is now 8. Home and property insurance, which was zero per cent, is now 8. And even travel insurance, which was zero per cent, is now 8.

The NDP cannot spend more unless they take more from someone else, and that's called an

extraction cost. And higher taxes discourage productive behaviour by individual people. After promising not to, this government has implemented record tax increases which extract funds from responsible Manitobans trying to protect themselves and their families, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Premier understand that by punishing Manitobans for doing the right thing, he is actually doing the wrong thing?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, no government in the history of Manitoba has reduced taxes for families or business more than the people on this side of the House. When the Leader of the Opposition was in the Filmon government, the government he called the best in the history of Manitoba, their taxes on the average family were \$2,400 to \$3,000 or more per year per family; we have reduced those taxes for those families. Their taxes on small business were 9 per cent; they are now zero. Their taxes on corporate behaviour was 17 per cent; they are now 12. They had a capital tax, which discouraged investment in new productive technology and training for workers; we have eliminated that capital tax.

On every count, Manitobans are better off with the policies we put in place. We have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country. We are building schools. We're building hospitals. We're building personal care homes. And we're training and employing Manitobans—second lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Tataskweyak Cree Nation Sewer and Water Project Update

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): And this is an NDP party that went door to door in the last election, said, no PST increase, and they lied about it. We need no lessons from this Premier, Mr. Speaker.

On Thursday, May 9th, 2013, Manitoba Hydro wrote an email, and it says, I quote directly: From 2005 through 2008, payments totalling \$3,926,394.90 were made by Manitoba Hydro on account of sewer and water. That's for the TCN First Nation.

My question is to the NDP member for Kildonan: Where is the sewer and water project—the sewer and water system for the TCN First Nation?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Infrastructure—pardon me—Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): I understand that in 1992, the federal government, the then-provincial government, which was the Filmon government—that was the government that tried to privatize home care and also went on to try to fix an election—the Filmon government in 1992 signed an agreement with TCN, the federal government and Manitoba Hydro to put funds into a trust fund to build sewer and water. That agreement was put in place in 1992.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a photograph taken just in the last two weeks—if I could get somebody to pick this up. I would like the minister to see what the sewer and water system looks like for the TCN First Nation. If the minister would look at the photograph, what he would find out, that after almost \$4 million—and the photograph, there is nothing. So far, the TCN First Nation has gotten nothing when it comes to a sewer and water system.

How is it that \$4 million of Manitoba Hydro money, ratepayers' money, went for a sewer and water system, and to date, Mr. Speaker, the people of TCN have gotten nothing?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this is the same photo, I think, the member tabled a couple weeks ago. But having said that, the federal government, Hydro and the Filmon government entered into an agreement to project—provide funds to TCN. If the member has any questions about their sewer and water, he ought to talk to the federal government, who entered into an agreement with TCN, or TCN itself.

* (14:10)

On many occasions, as he's attacked that First Nation day in and day out, I've told him he should talk to the corporate entity, the free-standing government of TCN that's responsible for those funds and for that construction. I said he should come to my office. We could even fly up sometime and meet with the community. But, Mr. Speaker, he ought to talk to the community and not attack them in this Chamber indirectly.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, Mr. Speaker, the last photo that was tabled in this House was of the TCN First Nation Keeyask community centre that cost \$7 million and was never built by this minister, although all the announcements were made: \$7 million, no Keeyask Centre; \$4 million, no sewer and water system.

Mr. Speaker, this minister, the NDP member for Kildonan, has failed the families, the children, the women of the TCN First Nation who are the ones who send us these photographs. They're the ones who are giving us these documents. These—each and every one of these come from members of the TCN.

And they'd like to know: Where is their Keeyask Centre? Where is their sewer and water system? How is it that, for over \$10 million so far, they've gotten nothing out of this minister and his government?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I was just talking to one of my colleagues, and I believe there's a groundbreaking ceremony up in TCN shortly for the TCN centre, and I'll ask if the member for St. Paul can be invited. And perhaps he can address the community, for once, face to face, and maybe apologize for the attacks he's made on not only that First Nation but on First Nations over and over again.

The only time members opposite talk about First Nations is when they attack them. They attack progress. We're trying to work with First Nations, bring them back into harmony with all of us, Mr. Speaker, and all members want to do is attack and drive them back.

I think the member should apologize to that community if he gets an invitation to come up in the next two weeks. Thank you.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Targets Government Timeline

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Conservation, under the disguise of trying to convince Manitobans that he knows more about environmental controls than Manitobans, is now telling them to give him another chance, just one more chance.

He knows that his recent environmental reannouncement is at best an attempt to distract Manitobans from his NDP government lie not to increase the PST. For example, Mr. Speaker, how can a government that pretends to care about our environment announce a ban on petcoke when, by their own admission, there's no users of petcoke in the whole province?

Mr. Speaker, so can the minister tell Manitobans why he's happy that he's left Manitobans' greenhouse gas emissions 15 per cent above his 1990 promised

levels and when he'll announce real greenhouse gas emission targets?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I think I only heard one word. It was petcoke. Mr. Speaker, not surprising; I'm sure they're concerned about our strategy to ban petcoke and, indeed, coal heating.

Mr. Speaker, last week was really, I think, quite momentous in this building when, in fact, on the same day that we were announcing our strategy to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, the opposition leader got up in the House and said that we should consider in Manitoba electricity generated by natural gas. We went one way; they went entirely a different way. I think that's unfortunate. They can stand up for jobs in Alberta; we stand up for jobs in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Sounds like members of the House are in pretty good spirits after the long weekend, but I might encourage honourable members that, wishing to have a private conversation, they can choose either the loge to my left or to my right or perhaps another place in the building to have that conversation. And I would encourage that to occur, please, so that we might be able to proceed with question period.

Now, back to the honourable member for Arthur-Virden, with his supplementary question.

Mr. Maguire: What the minister missed was petcoke and there's none of it used in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's obvious even this minister knows his NDP has failed on environmental integrity. Under his watch, Lake Winnipeg is now the most threatened lake in the world. Greenhouse gas emissions are 15 per cent above his self-imposed targets of 6 per cent below 1990 levels. The more he taxes energy users, the higher the greenhouse gas emissions go in Manitoba.

So in spite of unveiling this year's restudy of environmental cleanup, how does the minister expect Manitobans to trust his NDP rhetoric when he has no plan and no time frame for greenhouse gas emission targets? When will the minister unveil a target for greenhouse gas emissions, not just more false hope?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, a very strange question coming from Conservatives that are on record across this country as opposing the greenhouse gas emission targets. So it's hard to take them seriously when it comes to any questions on the

environment. And I really—I certainly welcome that interest.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know, we are all loyal servants of her majesty. That's—I'm talking about Mother Earth. Surely the opposition can join together with us to work for Mother Earth by making sure that there was support across this province for efforts to reduce climate change, not only to mitigate against greenhouse gas emissions, rather than urge natural gas electricity, and work to enhance our resilience to climate change. That surely is one thing that can bind Manitobans and these legislators together.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, Mother Earth certainly needs help, and I don't think she's going to get it out of this minister.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP's recent announcement in their losing fight to clean up Manitoba's environment is simply a rehash of old announcements: the coal ban was in Budget 2011, biomass programming is not new, eco—in government vehicles have been used for years, and energy efficient programs for buildings are decades old. Manitobans get the picture: platitudes designed to put out self-made NDP fires like lying about not increasing the PST, weak bullying legislation, forced amalgamations of rural municipalities and high crime rates.

So when will the Minister of Conservation stop with the rehash, announce his targets to reduce greenhouse gas emission levels in Manitoba, or does he just not have any, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Mackintosh: You know, the members opposite may have missed the fact that Manitoba and our government will be the first in North America to ban the use for heating of coal and petcoke, Mr. Speaker, and so we are at the forefront of looking to ensure that fossil fuel burning in Manitoba will be reduced.

But, Mr. Speaker, I understand why American Republicans might have supported the coal industry; you know, there are some jobs there, some pressures there. But for Manitoba Conservatives to support coal and natural gas, those aren't jobs in Manitoba; those are jobs in Alberta. The jobs in Manitoba are geothermal, biomass and hydro. Will they please stand up for jobs in Manitoba and stand up for Mother Earth.

Bill 33

Request to Withdraw

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Bill 33, the forced municipal amalgamation bill, continues to exemplify

a poorly drafted, poorly thought-out process by this minister and this government. The timelines set out last fall in the bill were never achievable and are certainly even less achievable now. With Bill 33, this government has destroyed any working relationship that previously existed with Manitoba's municipal governments.

Will the minister pull Bill 33 today and start over with true consultations with Manitoba's municipal governments?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): The members of the opposition often have made comments with regard to Bill 33, the modernization of municipalities, and we've put on the record the reason why we feel it's important.

But I've asked my critic and members of the opposition, if they feel it's—you know, some changes need to be made, we're open to hearing from them. And we asked them where they stand on it instead of just criticizing everything we put forward, Mr. Speaker. I've asked the critic to come and meet with me and have a conversation as to where he feels that we can make the bill better. So my door is still open. My telephone is available. Any conversation he wishes to have, I'm pleased to have it with him.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this minister has been told by municipalities his narrow parameters of population base only are flawed. Municipalities with a large seasonal population have told him this fact repeatedly. As well, flooding in some of his targeted municipalities has created a huge stress for those municipalities locally.

When will the minister and this government finally begin to listen to local governments, pull Bill 33 and start over on a constructive basis?

Mr. Lemieux: I've had the opportunity to meet with many of the municipal leaders, many reeves, mayors, councillors, over the last year or so. We've had discussions with regard to not only the Building Canada Fund but also with regard to amalgamations. We've consulted with them. We've worked with them. Many municipalities are engaged and they're talking to their neighbours and having discussions as to where they want to see their municipalities be, and not only in five years but 10 years and 20 years.

* (14:20)

So I firmly believe, and the government believes, that many municipalities want to move

forward. They don't want to miss the economic opportunities that are passing by them.

And I would just ask the member opposite again, you know, if he has any suggestions other than just trashing and slashing and attacking everything, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear it.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Mr. Speaker, so much for confidential conversations, I guess. I told him to pull the bill and he's still not listening, so.

Mr. Speaker, no respect, unrealistic timelines, unrealistic parameters, unanswered questions about policing costs, localized flooding in parts of Manitoba, a destroyed working relationship—what more does this minister and this government need to understand how out of touch they are with Manitoba's local governments?

Pull Bill 33; that's my recommendation to the minister. Pull Bill 33, start over again with a respectful dialogue with all municipalities.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, you know, finally, Mr. Speaker, we hear something. Just like the Leader of the Opposition said, put a halt, you know, to the floodway; put a halt, put the brakes to hydro development. Just do nothing—just do nothing.

Times have changed since the days of the horse and buggy went around and people measured, you know, their municipalities by that. Those days are over. Municipalities are having some difficulty. We're trying to work with them to ensure that there is economic development taking place in rural Manitoba.

Members opposite don't see it that way. We know where they're coming from. They're just against not only bill 2013 that we put forward with regard to a huge increase to municipal funding, but they're against any kind of proactive movement in any direction to help municipalities in Manitoba. A shame—you know, the minister—that member should be ashamed of putting forward a position of do nothing—

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

Amalgamation Municipal Collaboration

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government has repeatedly stated that municipalities have the right to determine their own destiny in regard to amalgamations.

My question's simple: Does the minister stand behind his statement that municipalities can determine their own destiny?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): You know, Mr. Speaker, if they'd take the opportunity to actually read the bill and go through it, just to address a point that the member opposite made earlier, is that, you know, when floods happen or natural disasters take place, there's flexibility built into legislation to address that, and we've talked to municipalities about that. If they're encountering any kind of natural disasters or anything that happens that are not allowing them to be able to put forward a plan, we want to work with them, and we want to be flexible enough to deal with them that way. They know it.

Members opposite seem not to know it, and they, again, just want to attack a bill that they haven't read, they're not sure what's even in it. They just want it—the idea is that they want to turn the clock back a hundred years back to the horse-and-buggy days.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, in a recent letter to the RM of Langford, the statement is made: Amalgamation plans are intended to develop in partnership with all parties working collaboratively to ensure amalgamations are locally designed. Key words: locally designed. In spite of that, the same letter strongly suggests the RM of Langford consider amalgamation with the Town of Neepawa.

How can the minister even suggest that his heavy-handed directives allow locally designed amalgamations?

Mr. Lemieux: You know, Mr. Speaker, our government, for at least a decade, have been talking about regionalization, whether it deals with sewer and water projects—we just announced a program in Neepawa recently where the Town of Neepawa embraced a water program that the Province had put forward.

And, you know, again we talk about regionalization. We're talking about partnerships amongst municipalities, neighbour working with neighbour to tackle not only natural disasters that may affect them but also talking about sewer and water projects, recreation projects, personal care homes and other development that take—is taking place in rural municipalities and rural Manitoba.

So we're talking about partnerships, people working together to be able to develop a better Manitoba.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, municipalities have been told to consult with their residents. They have been told they must amalgamate with adjacent municipalities. They have been told repeatedly they can determine their own destiny. Now the minister is telling municipalities who they should amalgamate with.

My question's simple: Why is the minister so focused on disrespecting municipalities and, indeed, disrespecting his own process?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Speaker, right from the very beginning of the process when we announced it in the Throne Speech and at AMM, we've talked about municipalities working together in partnership. We have field consultants that are working with all municipalities to try to address the kind of concerns that they might be facing with regard to amalgamations. We've been working with them and standing side by side with them to make sure that amalgamations will work with them and for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, just to address a couple of the comments made by members opposite, the fact of the matter is many of the municipalities are talking to each other and are wanting to amalgamate. So we know that there's a lot of positive things that are going to come forward because of a result of it.

And, you know, members opposite just don't want to see it. That's their prerogative. I know they're living in the past, you know, and the world is not flat any longer. We understand that—

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

ER Services (Minnedosa) Physician Vacancy

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Last week, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) confirmed that, yes, there are doctor shortages in Minnedosa and, yes, there are ER closures coming to Minnedosa hospital and, yes, there will be nurse-managed care.

The fact is the Minister of Health had time to respond to the doctor departures in that community and avoid this situation that is right now unfolding in that community.

Why has the Minister of Health been so ineffective of keeping doctors in Minnedosa—one doctor even leaving after one day on the job—and why has she been so ineffective in ensuring access to acute health-care services for the people in this community?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question. It does afford me an opportunity to correct the record. I checked Hansard and I did see that there were some insinuations about why a physician left this particular community. I can assure the House that, indeed, there were some personal circumstances in that case, which can happen in physicians' lives, and that was a decision that that physician made.

What I can tell the member and all members of this House is that the regional health authorities will continue to work very aggressively to recruit. The member opposite does neglect to mention, of course, that we've seen a net increase of over 500 doctors, a hundred of those in rural Manitoba, and we're going to continue to increase.

Mr. Friesen: I checked Hansard too, and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) said there's no plans to close the ER in Minnedosa. Now, that statement sounds very similar to the statement of the Premier when he said the idea of the NDP raising the PST was nonsense, and we know how that worked out for Manitobans.

There's 2,500 people who live in Minnedosa, many more in the surrounding RMs, and they depend on the ability to receive emergency medical services if and when they need them.

How can the residents of Minnedosa and the surrounding area have any confidence that this minister can keep the ER open when the record clearly shows that they say one thing and do another?

Ms. Oswald: I've been explicitly clear that certainly it is in Manitoba and every jurisdiction in Canada that it is more challenging to recruit to rural and northern environments. It's for that very reason that Budget 2013 includes \$4.5 million to increase medical residencies, in particular emergency residencies, so that we can provide more opportunities. It's why we're providing free medical school to those individuals that will commit to work in underserved communities.

Clearly, we have seen a net increase. Manitoba, in fact, according to CIHI, has the highest percentage

of increase of doctors working in rural Manitoba in the West. We're going to keep working on that.

This is in stark contrast to a net decrease in doctors every year the Tories were—

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

ER Services Physician Shortages

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): The minister knows that we have the highest incidence of doctors who train here and then leave to go practise elsewhere.

This minister has said that Manitobans deserve access to quality health care regardless of where they live. Well, last week the member for Kildonan said that it's possible that there could be some service interruption, and he said because of temporary doctor shortages there might be some adjustments to the ER. Now, how should the community interpret the member's use of the term adjustments? Would that be like the adjustment to the Vita ER which the minister temporarily closed 10 months ago and remains closed to this day?

*(14:30)

When will this minister get around to the work of addressing compromised ER services and doctor shortages that are plaguing this province?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I'll take this opportunity to correct the record again. I can inform the member that, in fact, over the last two years nearly three quarters of our medical school class are—they are staying in Manitoba. We're seeing more family doctors staying, Mr. Speaker, increasing from 65 per cent in 2010 to 79 per cent in 2011.

Further, when there are service interruptions and ERs are under nurse-managed care, people are getting excellent care using the expert services of our nurses that can provide a wide breadth of care.

I've heard time and time again the members opposite completely disregarding the value of nurses in our system. Maybe he got old Connie Curran on the blower over the weekend.

Bee Population Decline Further Study Request

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, last week when I asked the Premier about a very serious environmental concern regarding crop

pollination due to a declining bee population in the province, he questioned the existence of scientific evidence on this issue.

Now, I'm sure that the Premier has fully capable research staff of his own, but recognizing just how urgent and severe this issue is, I'm going to table just some of the reports with the hope that this will expedite immediate action on his part.

In Ontario, Mr. Speaker, the government is already aware and has convened an expert panel. Manitoba should do no less.

I ask the Premier: Will he convene an expert panel to look into the declining pollinator population in Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for River Heights, for the question. This is an important subject.

The member knows full well this is the first government in the history of the province that brought in an insurance program to protect bee producers in Manitoba to ensure that they have adequate supply of bees for the honey production they do.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency at the federal level is reviewing the science on this. If he has additional information, which I asked him to provide last week, I want to thank him right now for tabling it in the Legislature.

We are aware of the Ontario initiatives in this regard, and I do note that some of the major organizations are still addressing the role of pesticides in the loss of bees in our jurisdiction as well as other jurisdictions, the role of weather, the role of what happens with early frost, all those kinds of issues.

We want the bee industry to do well in Manitoba. We want the honey producers to do well in Manitoba, which is why we supported them with the first ever insurance program, and we are in touch with them through the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) on a regular basis to identify how that industry can continue to do well in Manitoba.

Killarney Lake Algae Reduction Strategy

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it's better to prevent the problem in the first place rather than having to pay insurance afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, another serious and urgent environmental issue is the toxic algae overwhelming Killarney Lake. The blue-green algal blooms have deteriorated water quality to the point where the beach is unusable and tourists no longer come as they used to. It's having a drastic impact on the community, estimated at over a hundred thousand dollars a year.

A central problem here has been the lack of help solving this issue from the current NDP government.

I ask what action the Premier will take today to help the people of Killarney restore the lake to health.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the question of Killarney Lake and algae blooms is a very important one, and we want to ensure that there is less phosphorus going into these lakes, which is why we brought in legislation to do that, which the members of the opposition opposed.

They opposed legislation to reduce the amount of phosphorus going into lakes, phosphorus to the city of Winnipeg sewage system, phosphorus through local sewage systems, phosphorus through septic fields which are leaking. We've brought in regulations to deal with all of those matters.

And there is a lot of phosphorus in Manitoba because of the agricultural activity that goes on here. We're working with agriculture producers to reduce their cough-phosphorus footprint, including the weather—the winter spreading of manure.

Those are important regulations that we're bringing into play, and we are in touch with the people around Killarney Lake of what methods can be used to reduce the algae blooms in that lake, but they have to be methods that are approved by the federal regulatory agencies. And if they are not approved, that means there has not been sufficient science established to prove that it will be safe and will be a long-term solution.

Feasibility Study

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about reducing phosphorus inputs, but this is not enough, because science has clearly established that the major source of phosphorus causing the algal blooms on Killarney Lake is from the sediments within the lake and the phosphorus is released during the summer and made available to the algae bloom.

Now, options which are environmentally acceptable and in at least one case have been used

elsewhere in Canada include iron and Phosfloc. These have shown promise in helping lock the phosphorus in the lake sediments and so it's not released during the summer.

Will the Premier today announce that he's funding a feasibility study to look at the use of agents such as iron and 'phostlock' to help the situation in Killarney Lake?

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for the question. This is a useful question, I believe, because the search for reducing algae blooms in any of our lakes in Manitoba is an important one.

Phosphorus is one part of it. I wish the members of the opposition would support that initiative. This may not be the only solution. If there's research and we—I understand there is some on—under way right now in Manitoba looking at the role of iron in algal blooms. We would be happy to take a look at that research and see what can be done.

We have also done a very important experiment with cattails, a natural solution. Cattails absorb phosphorus from out of the water. They can be harvested and replanted on a regular basis.

So all of these natural solutions are ones we're willing to consider, as long as they don't just solve the problem in the short term but they actually restore the health of the lake for the long term. There are many short-term solutions which do not actually help the long-term health of the lake, whether it's iron, whether it's cattails, whether it's phosphorus. All of the above need to be considered, and I thank the member for the question.

Bill 20 Infrastructure Projects

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, our government is making record investments in the building and renewal of critical infrastructure across the province of Manitoba.

In Brandon, this has meant important investments on our dike and levee system, upgrades to the Keystone Centre, investments in the Brandon University Wellness Centre and Healthy Living Centre, the repaving of Victoria Avenue, the \$44-million completion of the eastern access route. Mr. Speaker, record investments are being made in Brandon and throughout the province.

Can the Minister of Finance please advise the House on why Bill 20 and the province's Building

and Renewal Plan are important to our continued economic prosperity?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): And I want to thank my colleague the member for Brandon East for asking an important question such as this.

Mr. Speaker, it's never a—easy decision to raise a tax. We get that. But the 1-cent-on-the-dollar increase that we have moved forward on through Bill 20 is dedicated, every nickel of that increase, to very critical infrastructure that Manitoba to families depend on. As Finance Minister I will stand and I will present what—transparently and accountably where that money is spent on projects across this province.

That is—stands in stark contrast to what the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) has said, harkening back to the good old days of Gary Filmon where they cut—

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

ER Services Closures

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Let's talk about emergency room adjustments a little more.

Mr. Speaker, the communities of Killarney and Boissevain are now sharing on care—on-call emergency services. The communities of Glenboro and Carberry have—continue to share on-call services; in fact, it's been over a year now. And, in fact, even over this past weekend, neither one of those facilities were open for on-call for a period of time.

Mr. Speaker, this is all in addition to the emergency rooms in the region which have been closed on a permanent basis under the NDP's watch. As a result of all these closures, distances between ERs are now very significant, and this, of course, brings into question timely access to emergency rooms.

Mr. Speaker, is this the new NDP standard for service delivery in Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question.

We know that all municipalities are deeply concerned about ensuring that there's good emergency service in their communities. We're working with the regional health authorities every day, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we can recruit and,

indeed, educate right here at home more health-care professionals—doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners—so that we can provide more opportunities for good primary care and emergency care across Manitoba.

Now, as I've stated before, Mr. Speaker, you may have heard me say this, that indeed we have seen a net increase in doctors in Manitoba every single year since being in office. CIHI does report that we have the largest per cent of increase in—of rural doctors in western Canada. That being the case—

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

* (14:40)

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, this clearly speaks to NDP mismanagement, because we have the most ERs closed we've ever had in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, Prairie Mountain Health has indicated there are at least 16 doctor vacancies in the region and recruitment is ongoing in Brandon. The system has deteriorated and the service delivery has become very fragile. Additionally, these closures have caused confusion among rural Manitobans.

Is this the type of health care that Manitobans can expect into the future, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, I happen to believe that the member opposite is sincere in asking his questions, and it makes me wonder, then, why he would vote against a budget that includes \$4.5 million to increase residencies across Manitoba, including residencies for emergency medicine.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that when members opposite had their hands on the wheel that their decision was to cut the spaces in medical school, to create a sense of scarcity with doctors in the province of Manitoba.

The Leader of the Opposition was in the Cabinet when those decisions were made. It's a little bit like taking a rock, smashing the window and then complaining when it gets chilly in the house.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

Time for—

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

National Ukrainian Festival

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today and congratulate the organizers of Canada's national Ukrainian fest on their incredible 48th festival over the August long weekend. At the National Ukrainian Festival, Manitobans celebrate the Ukrainians' Independence Day and experience the flavour of old traditions and culture through song, dance, costume and delectable Ukrainian cuisine.

The idea for a Ukrainian festival in Dauphin came about at a meeting of the Dauphin Chamber of Commerce. Dauphin was chosen as the site for the festival because of its historical connections to the Ukrainian community. The founding group was established in 1965 but faced many challenges. There was no model for them to copy, and so everything had to be organized from scratch. Many long hours were spent around numerous kitchen tables, brainstorming, adapting and revising plans for the first Ukrainian festival. Event organizers had to seek out volunteers to help fill the Dauphin curling rink with interesting exhibits, and they had to organize competitions and games that would appeal to youth.

Today's visitors to Canada's National Ukrainian Festival can participate in a whole range of events. They can visit the festival marketplace, where vendors sell traditional Ukrainian clothing and music. They can explore the cultural area, where they can find displays and demonstrations showcasing many different aspects of Ukrainian-Canadian culture or learn how to cook traditional Ukrainian foods like pyroghy, which are perogies; holubtsi, which is cabbage rolls; beet-leaf buns; nalysnyky, which is a type of crepe; pyrizhky, which is cabbage buns; kolach, which is paska; and bread decorations, doves, at the culinary exhibit.

The heritage village is another exciting attraction to visit where there are traditional structures and artifacts. Tourists can see pioneer homes and the St. Mary's orthodox church. They can also visit the Ukrainian musicians hall of fame. It's clear that at the National Ukrainian Festival, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to congratulate the organizers of this year's National Ukrainian Festival for making this year's festival a

memorable one, and I wish them all the best as they begin planning for next year's festival.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, for families looking to explore our neighbourhood this summer, there are—there is much history to discover in Kirkfield Park. Today, I would like to highlight one organization in particular that offers us a chance for us to learn about our past.

The Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia is a wonderful little museum in our community. The museum depicts early economic, political and social and community life in the parishes of St. François Xavier, Headingley, St. Charles and St. James.

Featuring an authentic Red River frame log house built by Hudson's Bay Company officer William Brown in 1856, a modern display building depicting early settler life and the original 1911 Municipal Hall Building of St. James-Assiniboia, the museum transports visitors into a time long past.

On July 27th, the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia held its annual Pioneer Heritage Day. This free community event's historical exhibits, displays and pioneer games from the 1890s transformed the museum site into a time-travelling settler experience right on Portage Avenue.

The member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) and I spent part of the day at Pioneer Heritage Day and enjoyed the great lineup of poets, fiddlers, dancing and some amazing historical theatre performances depicting life over a century ago in the communities that now form west Winnipeg.

In those early days, Mr. Speaker, every community member contributed to getting work done and ensuring that the community continued to flourish. Today, curator Bonita Hunter-Eastwood and her team are also engaging in community building. They are bringing people from the neighbourhood as well as from across the city together to eat, to be entertained and to share in a part of a collective history.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia on yet another successful year of Pioneer Heritage Day, and I hope it continues to be an annual tradition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Roxy Theatre

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, a dedicated group of volunteers have worked together for many years to maintain the operation of the Roxy Theatre in Neepawa. When the Roxy closed, a group formed that felt there was a need for the facility in Neepawa and developed a fundraising plan to make that happen. Those volunteers met their goals, both in fundraising and put together—putting together a larger community-based group to volunteer staff the theatre. Over the years there have been many times that extra costs of repairs and maintenance rose, and the Neepawa theatre—volunteer—centre volunteers have always rose to the challenge.

Recently, the Neepawa Theatre Centre was once again challenged with a need to install digital technology at a cost of approximately \$120,000. This work included the upgrade to becoming a full digital facility, including surround sound, a new screen, projectors and new input boards. Undaunted, the volunteers went to work, holding fundraising events and making sure the Roxy Theatre continues to serve Neepawa and area residents. They were able to raise the needed funds, install the equipment, hold a grand opening for the project in late May, which I was privileged to attend. The theatre was closed for 14 weeks while the changeover was completed, and the theatre has never looked or sounded better.

I wish to commend the board of the Neepawa Theatre Centre Incorporated for their hard work and dedication. I also wish to thank donors and the many volunteers who saw the need and raised the \$120,000 that allowed this wonderful facility to continue to operate. This is truly a community effort and they truly rallied behind this cause. I might add that this is the—this fall will be the 25th anniversary of this theatre being run by the community group.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating them on their accomplishments, and I hope to enjoy a movie at the Roxy in the near future.

I would seek leave to include the names of the board of directors in Hansard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to include the names in today's Hansard proceedings? *[Agreed]*

The names will be added to the Hansard.

Chair, Marilyn Dietrich; booking, Danielle Arsenault; concession, Don and Kim Denoon;

facilities, Frances McCarthy; secretary, Jenna Kilburn; treasurer, Audrey Heffell; volunteer co-ordinator, Judy Taylor; sponsorship, Archie Freed; members at large, Leslie Strelczik, Sarah McKinnon, Jaimie Willis

Bill 18—Safe and Inclusive Schools Act

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Mr. Speaker, as a parent of three children who have gone through Manitoba's public education system, I know how critical it is that our schools are safe, caring and accepting places where all students feel respected.

No child can learn when they are being bullied. Moreover, every child who is bullied is robbed of the self-confidence and self-esteem they need to grow as people and realize their own individual potential. That's why our government has introduced Bill 18 which addresses bullying in our schools, targets cyberbullying, requires schools to establish a respect for diversity policy and supports students looking to establish gay-straight alliances.

Many of our schools have already taken action in this regard. In my constituency, the gay-straight alliance at Vincent Massey and the Youth for Diversity club at Collège Churchill are making an enormous difference in creating an accepting school environment. These groups help promote safe, welcoming schools that allow students to feel included and supported regardless of ethnic, cultural or sexual identity.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very concerned, however, that the official opposition has spent months actively blocking this important bill. I for one am no longer prepared to be a bystander while the opposition plays games with our children's lives. Instead I'm using my time today to speak up on behalf of Bill 18, because we need to take action on bullying and we need to do it now.

* (14:50)

I understand that Bill 18 will be called for debate this afternoon. I hope the opposition will stop blocking the bill and allow for Manitobans to have their say on this important bill, which will strengthen antibullying legislation by including and supporting the rights of students to start antibullying clubs such as gay-straight alliances.

A.J. McCormick

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I'm honoured to stand before you today in the House to acknowledge Teulon author A.J. McCormick for her dedication

and willingness to share her writings with others by launching her first self-published novel on Thursday, July the 4th, 2013, McNally Robinson, here in Winnipeg.

Amy Julie McCormick was born in Sudbury, Ontario, in 1956 and grew up in Winnipeg where she got her first recognition as an exceptional creative writer at the age of 10. She has called Teulon her home for the past eight years with her husband and her pets. As an author of previous works of fiction and poetry and recipient of short-story awards, she draws her inspiration from worldly travels with great sensitivity and passion. As a flight attendant for years, she has the opportunity to visit and explore landscapes, history and people.

Her first novel, *Primetimes*, is set in 20–or 3010 and uses Scotland as a backdrop for a 'prognastic' farmer. The novel outlines the importance of using time frame we are given to do great things and make the most of. By setting this novel in the future, she feels it a way to allow people to think about what they should aim for and believes by 3010 we may just have to simplify and appreciate our connections.

Since the launch, Amy's book has made McNally Robinson's bestseller list and creating quite a buzz. Often writers forget what they are important as their art of writing as their readers are. There is a bond created between the writer and the reader. I commend A.J. McCormick for her commitment to this work, her passion. This is a beauty thing of writing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule 31(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). The title of the resolution is Strong Public Health Care.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that pursuant to rule 31(8) that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for Concordia and the title of the resolution is Strong Public Health Care.

Ms. Howard: I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on

August 8th, 2013, at 7 p.m., to consider the following reports: Auditor General's Report—Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated January 2012; Auditor General's Report—Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated January 2013, Section 9—Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Reporting; Auditor General's Report—Annual Report to the Legislature—dated January 2013, Chapter 2—Citizen Concerns—Part 1—Business Transformation and Technology (BTT), Chapter 3—Information Technology (IT) Security Management, Chapter 8—Senior Management Expense Policies.

The witnesses for this meeting will be the Minister and Deputy Minister of Finance and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on August the 8th, 2013, at 7 p.m., to consider the following reports: Auditor General's Report—Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated January 2012; Auditor General's Report—Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated January 2013, Section 9—Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Reporting; Auditor General's Report—Annual Report to the Legislature—dated January 2013, Chapter 2—Citizen Concerns—Part 1—Business Transformation and Technology (BTT), Chapter 3—Information Technology (IT) Security Management, Chapter 8—Senior Management Expense Policies.

And the witnesses to be called will be the Minister and Deputy Minister of Finance and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, would you resume debate on Bill 18—*[interjection]*—just because you asked for it.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We will now resume second reading debates of Bill 18, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools), standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach who has unlimited time.

Bill 18—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): This has almost become a bit like Halley's Comet, this bill, you

know; once a month it circles around the Legislature. It was introduced in December on the 6th, and then on May 6th the government got around to calling it, and then on June 10th and July 3rd, and now here we are on August 6th, a month later, and they finally decide to call it again, Mr. Speaker. I'm—clearly, it's not a priority to them. They call it once a month, and then we have to sort of restart our debate and our comments again.

And I'm not sure why, you know, we heard the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) stand up. I wonder if he's as passionate in his own caucus and trying to get the government in to call the bill more than once a month, Mr. Speaker. He's either quiet as a mouse in the caucus or doesn't have the convictions that he says he has in the House. But I certainly have no concerns about speaking to this bill. I'm always happy to speak to this bill and to talk about things that might have meaningful results for our students, for young people in the province of Manitoba. I'm always looking forward to the opportunity. I'm always pleased to stand up and to put some facts on the record regarding this bill.

And, when I left off a month ago, when last this bill was called, Mr. Speaker—and I have to sort of review some of that because it's now been a month since the government called the legislation—but, when last the bill was called, I was reviewing a study that was published in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board newsletter. It was published April 19th of 2012. The summary was prepared by a David P. Farrington and a Maria M. Ttofi. And it was prepared in 2009, and it's referring to the school-based programs to reduce bullying and victimization, systemic—systematic review No. 6.

And what this study was, Mr. Speaker, that I was referring to when this bill was last before the Legislature, is it was a compilation of all the different pieces of analysis done when it comes to bullying. In fact, you may recall, when last I spoke of this, this particular survey looked at 622 relevant articles that were published between 1983 and May 2009. And then the survey, it reviewed all of these studies, looking for studies that included all of the following programs specifically on antibullying in schools, involved kindergarten from—students from kindergarten to grade 12 and used a standard definition of bullying, measured outcomes, had a control group and a possible way to measure the size and effectiveness of the program. So what this particular review did is it took all of the studies that had those key characteristics, things that could be

measured when it comes to antibullying, and then summarized them and put in a summary the things that would be effective in having an antibullying program.

And I started, in my comments a month ago when last this bill was called, to talk about the different things, the different aspects of the study that said would be part of an effective antibullying strategy. So just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, the summary that I'm quoting talks about the different things that they found in the review of 622 studies that would be hallmarks of an effective antibullying strategy. So I wanted to go through these individually and then compare them to Bill 18 because there's something that's striking in this, and what is striking is that all of the—all or most of the elements that they considered in reviewing these 622 different articles and studies would be worthwhile and effective in antibullying, none of them appear, or almost none of them appear, in Bill 18. And that seems concerning because we want to ensure that there's actually legislation that's going to make a difference for kids.

And we've heard, actually, from the member for Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), in fact, that this bill could not only not make things better—because it is the weakest antibullying bill in North America, Mr. Speaker—but could actually make things worse. And there's actually some—there's some statistical basis for that, and I'll get to that in a second. But I wanted to keep you enticed and keep you listening in terms of what would be coming next. And that'll be something to listen for, about how, in fact, the bill could actually make things worse, let alone not even make them any better.

* (15:00)

So the most effective elements of an antibullying program that were associated with a decrease in bullying, let me go through these now, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the first one they found in reviewing these 622 studies was that an effective bullying—antibullying program contained parent training meetings. Now, what this is about is ensuring that you are talking to the parents, that it's not just all student-focused. Now, obviously, it's important to have a student-based focus in many different ways, but we shouldn't exclude the parents, because parents obviously play a critical role in this, whether that's intervention or education, and I think that the government often forgets that parents have such an

important role. They talk about, in their own individual press conferences or news releases, that Bill 18 is unique because it requires the reporting of bullying to the principal, but they fail to mention that it doesn't have anything specific about reporting that bullying to the parents. Now, why would you want to leave the parents out of that equation? I don't understand, Mr. Speaker.

So, on the one hand, the government talks about Bill 18 and they say, well, you know, it's important because it requires that there be reporting on bullying to the principals, but they don't have that same requirement to report the bullying to the parents. And I think as a parent, individually, Mr. Speaker, I'd want to know if my son was involved in bullying on either side of the equation, to be frank, because, you know, one would hope, obviously, as parents, that we hope our kids wouldn't be involved in that. But I'd want to know if my son was involved in bullying or was being bullied. That's something that, as a parent, I'd want to know, and I'd want that to be reported to me, yet Bill 18 is silent on that. Bill 18 doesn't speak to that and to ensure that parents are involved.

Now, this particular review of the 622 studies, Mr. Speaker, says and indicates that parents should be involved, that to have a successful program, the critical element is having parental training and parental involvement. And I can understand why that would be. It's no surprise to me; it's no surprise to me at all that parental involvement would be important because you'd want the parents to be understanding what to look for, understanding behaviours that might be problematic or that might be symptomatic of bullying behaviour, either being bullied or having somebody bullying your child. You'd want the parents to be on alert because parents should, in many ways, be sort of on the front lines of this.

Now, I understand and I recognize that not every student or child is lucky enough, is fortunate enough to grow up in a home where their parents are actively engaged or maybe where they even have parents, Mr. Speaker, and that's a very unfortunate reality of the world that we live in. But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't be involving those parents who are engaged, those parents who want to be actively involved and actively working to try to prevent the bullying from happening to their kids or to prevent their kids from being bullied.

So I wonder why the government failed to put this particular provision in there to have something

specific on parental training. Now, maybe I found out the answer last week, and the one benefit about the government only calling this bill once every month is that you do find out a lot of things in between there. Those 30 days in between are actually very instructive. You learn a lot of things about what the government is thinking in those 30 days, Mr. Speaker. And we heard the Attorney General, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), in referencing Bill 219 in private members' debate, the other antibullying bill, before the Legislature right now that actually has some degree of teeth in it, unlike the weakest antibullying bill in North America, which is Bill 18. But we do know the member for Minto, he said, well—and he referenced it in the House that they wanted to study the whole issue around building more before they actually commented on Bill 219, that they needed to actually do some research on bullying. And you wonder what kind of research they did, then, on Bill 18, because the member for Minto said he didn't have enough information to put words on the record regarding 219 because they hadn't done enough studying or research on bullying, and yet he now says, of course, that bill—*[interjection]* Sorry, Bill 214. I'm corrected by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). The member for Minto, though, said there wasn't enough research done within their own caucus to comment on Bill 214, so how is it that they know that Bill 18 is the most effective way.

And I suspect, Mr. Speaker, and I've certainly gotten this impression from talking from those in the community, those in the education system, those who would be involved, that there was not a lot of consultation before Bill 18 came forward, that this was a rushed bill, that there wasn't the kind of discussion and research necessary. So perhaps, I think, the member for Minto, the Attorney General, was being very revealing, and I think he was being very honest in saying the government really hasn't done much research. The government really hasn't done a whole lot of studying on the whole issue of bullying. That's why they couldn't comment on Bill 214, and that's why they brought forward the weakest antibullying bill in North America.

Now, I appreciate him being honest and being forthright about that, Mr. Speaker, because it goes to my point. So, when we look at the study done, the Hamilton-Wentworth study, it indicates that one of the critical things that should be in an antibullying bill is parental training and meetings. And why that's absent from Bill 18 is concerning.

And I think it has a lot to do with what this government—how they feel; how they feel about education generally; that they feel it should completely be a top-down exercise, that parents shouldn't have involvement in that discussion, that parents shouldn't be involved in the education of their children.

And I feel very differently, Mr. Speaker. I think the parents have a critical role. A critical role in terms of—not just when it comes to the safety and security of their kids in school, although that's important, but beyond that. I think that they certainly should play where they are able to and willing to, to play a more active role in the education of their kids.

So I was disappointed when reading Bill 18 that it omitted the whole issue of parental involvement, because I think there is a resource there that is not being utilized properly, it's not being utilized fully. And, in some ways, I'd say it's disrespectful, Mr. Speaker—in some ways, I would say that it is quite disrespectful.

Now, again, I don't know that every parent would want to or fully be engaged in that particular discussion, but their opportunity should exist—the opportunity should surely exist. And I don't know if the—if these were listed in preferential order or order of affect, Mr. Speaker, but certainly in reading this review of the 622 studies on antibullying, it is listed as the No. 1 thing that should be contained in an antibullying strategy. So I was surprised that there was nothing in Bill 18 regarding parental involvement.

So that's something when this bill moves to committee, if the minister has an open mind to listen to suggestions, I would certainly hope that if there are those who are coming forward—and I'll look forward to asking the presenters. I'll ask them about whether they believe that there should be more parental involvement in terms of the bullying programs, Mr. Speaker, that that's something we could look at; that's something we could look to incorporate within the bill to make it a more effective and a stronger bill.

But, of course, that also relies on a government that's willing to listen—that's willing to listen to those presenters when they come to committee. Now, we didn't see that entirely with Bill 20, Mr. Speaker. Those members who were on the Bill 20 committee, either every committee hearing or just some of the hearings, that were no; that the government really wasn't interested in listening to suggestions at that

committee. They laid some platitudes to some of the presenters but didn't even try in some ways; that we saw many ministers sitting on their BlackBerrys, reading the newspaper and not really listening to presenters at Bill 20.

And that's too bad, because, you know, even if you have a disagreement, I would say, Mr. Speaker, with a particular position on somebody on a bill or with presenters on a bill, you should at least be respectful. And we were disappointed that many of the government members were busy trying to break a record on BrickBreaker, or whatever they were doing on their BlackBerrys, but not really interested in listening to presenters.

And so I would hope that when this bill goes to committee that we would see a bit of a mind shift in the government; that the government would say, well, now we are willing to listen to some different presentations and we are willing to listen to some ideas. Because I think one of the ideas that might come forward from presenters is the whole idea of parental involvement and how do we get parents more involved in the issue of antibullying when it comes to their schools. And not just parents, Mr. Speaker, there can be others involved.

I—this morning when I was driving in from my home this morning, I drove past the Robb Nash bus. It was touring, I guess, in Winnipeg or in Manitoba—I'm not sure where they were headed off to. A nice touring bus though, Mr. Speaker. And I drove past and it's got the big Robb Nash emblazonment on the side and it looks like sort of a heart monitor or something like it on the side. And I thought as I passed the touring bus that it might now be good to have somebody like that involved, too, and to have discussions with somebody who's a recognized expert in the issue of antibullying, who is invited into the schools—not just across North America.

I looked at the licence plate for some reason and it was registered in Alberta, so I'm not sure if that Mr. Nash's hometown or not, but the bus is registered in Alberta anyway. And he travels across the country and he does these discussions with young people in the schools. And I'm glad to hear the Minister of Education's (Ms. Allan) met with him and maybe she makes my point—maybe she makes my point. Maybe having him and others come to committee and give different presentations I think would be, well—*[interjection]* Well, and I'm glad that the minister now—and she's—we've got her halfway there. You know, so it's because it's—I've said in the past there's

sort of two steps to this whole process. There's the passing the bill to committee, which is certainly one step, but it's ensuring that the government has an open mind before we get to committee.

* (15:10)

Now, we know we haven't been able to get past step No. 1 because we've never gotten assurance of step No. 2. The open mind is never going to be there. In fact, we've heard the opposite. We've heard from the government that they're not willing to listen to people demonstrated by Bill 20, I'd say, Mr. Speaker.

As members opposite—I know my friend from Emerson remarked to me both privately and publicly about how disappointed he was by the government's conduct in the Bill 20 hearings, how they didn't listen, how they were chastising presenters, Mr. Speaker, how they were on their BlackBerrys, returning emails, reading newspapers, doing anything but trying to listen to presenters. But we don't want a repeat of that. We don't want that to happen again. Now we suspect this might even be worse because, unlike the Bill 20 hearings, the government has already said on these hearings they have no intention of listening to anybody. So who can imagine the disrespect that could be happening at this committee when the bill finally does go to committee. So we're trying to prevent that.

So I know that the Minister of Education has indicated that she's looking for the bill to go to committee, and I hope she'll give a public assurance that she is opened to ideas around amendments. That they won't conduct themselves in the same way that they've conducted themselves to the hundreds of people who came out to make presentations around Bill 20 because the government's got a pretty bad track record, and I don't personally intend to be fooled again, Mr. Speaker.

I remember when it came to the issue around the pork moratorium the government said: Oh, we want to listen to Manitobans; we want to hear what they have to say. And we had about 320 or so presenters, maybe 270, around that range, come out to that committee and they ignored them. They ignored them in the committee again. They were on their BlackBerrys, they were reading newspapers, they treated the public, the people who were coming up to make presentations, with utter and complete disrespect, and that didn't, I think, reflect well on this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It didn't reflect well on any of us as legislators. I think, in particular, it didn't reflect well on the government, because, ultimately,

they should be there to listen. They should be there to listen to Manitobans, and so I took a lesson from that.

I took a lesson from those hearings on the pork moratorium that not only do we as individual legislators have to be more respectful, but the Legislature as a whole needs to be more respectful to those Manitobans. And I thought maybe a lesson would've been learned from those hearings, that things would've improved when we got to a different hearing, but it clearly didn't. Clearly, not much had changed, and so I was so disappointed when the Bill 20 committee started up that members of the government just weren't going to listen. They just weren't interested. They weren't even going to pretend to listen, Mr. Speaker. They tried to do everything else but give the appearance that they were listening.

I was disappointed the Premier (Mr. Selinger) didn't come. You know, I know that he was invited or he—sorry, he invited Manitobans to come to that particular committee to come and speak to Bill 20 and then he didn't show up himself. Now, I—realistically, I didn't expect him to be at every committee hearing. I thought he might, you know, show up for a few. I was surprised he didn't come to any, though, Mr. Speaker. He didn't show up for five minutes, didn't come in and pour himself a cup of coffee, sit down at the table, look at a couple of presenters, nod his head and walk out. Didn't even do that; he didn't want to show up at all. So that was disappointing, obviously, and I suspect that we're not going to get much more respect from the government on this particular committee, and I think that's disappointing because we know we'll have people who have different opinions when this bill goes to committee.

I don't know what the overwhelming consensus will be from those who are going to be making presentations, Mr. Speaker, but we'll have different opinions for sure, and I think that we should all be listening to differences of opinion. There'll be some that perhaps don't agree with my position, and that's okay; that's part of it, and I welcome those presenters. I'll welcome them as gregariously and as enthusiastically as I would those who do agree with my position, because it's not just about trying to find people who would agree with everything you say. That's not what this process is about. It's about ensuring that we have a real democratic debate and, at the end of it, that we're open-minded enough to hear different suggestions and different ideas. And

that's one of the things that we haven't got from the government.

Now that was a bit of a sidetrack, courtesy of the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), but I do want to get back on track, Mr. Speaker, in going through the different lists, the different things that were found within the study of—the study of the 622 studies that looked at how to best reduce bullying in a school context. So I mention the first one which dealt with parental training in meetings, and I certainly hope that the government will take that to heart and will look at different ways to involve parents or guardians in this discussion to ensure that their kids are safe at school so they feel part of the school and that's something, ultimately, what we all want. So I look forward to the government considering that recommendation.

Now the second one that appeared in the summary of all these studies was improved playground supervision. Now, on this one, Mr. Speaker, I've had some discussion with educators about how this can be an important part of reducing bullying and, certainly, it makes a lot of sense when you talk about improving playground supervision because we know that a lot of the bullying takes place on the playground.

Now there are, unfortunately, different ways that things can happen in terms of bullying, cyberbullying being a key one, Mr. Speaker. And disappointed that, you know, Bill 18—that the minister—probably for political reasons—but the minister talked about Bill 18 being a response to cyberbullying, and yet it really deals nothing at all with cyberbullying—very little, in fact. There's very little measures within the bill that deal with cyberbullying. Now I understand, from a political perspective, why she would try to make that public spin, but we certainly don't see, in the context of the bill, much to do with cyberbullying, unlike other bills before the Legislature like Bill 214, for example, which is very specific to cyberbullying.

But, in regards to the second point that the author makes in summarizing all of these studies, they indicate that improved playground supervision would be something that is critical, within all the studies that they've reviewed, in terms of reducing antibullying. Now I've checked closely with Bill 18, and, of course, there's nothing in Bill 18 that deals with improved playground supervision—quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker—doesn't reference it at all, and I think that's disappointing.

And, once again, the government seems to be not interested in having meaningful legislation that actually is going to make a difference. They are interested in having the weakest antibullying bill in North America and trying to spin it as something else. Now, of course, ultimately I don't think that's worked very well, and I think the government's probably disappointed at how poorly they've been able to roll this out and manage the messaging on this, and that's fine. I mean, that's—they've not done a good job at it, and I think the public has recognized that, Mr. Speaker, and they'll continue to understand what a weak bill this is in terms of bullying and then the fact it might make things worse, not make things better.

But, when you look at the improved playground supervision, Mr. Speaker, that obviously would involve perhaps teachers or others in the playground to ensure that they're able to see what's going on. It's not just about eyes, though, in the actual playground. It's knowing what to look for because often we think of bullying as—it's quite often a physical response—a physical reaction—but there might be more subtle things that are happening that teachers, educators or others could pick up in the context of looking at the schoolyard.

So I certainly do hope that the government will look at that as a suggestion and meet with educators and meet with some of the teachers and talk to them about how that could be improved—about how and who should be doing that type of supervision. Perhaps it could be dedicated individuals. It could be those that are within the school system itself.

I appreciated the federal government, Mr. Speaker, coming out with different ideas about having—training individuals within the school system—young people to be involved as leaders within their own school system and to be actively involved and actively engaged with all students to be looking for bullying of any kind.

I thought that the federal government did a good job of coming up with an idea and working with an organization and working with an outside organization, partnering with them. And there are many groups that would like to partner, I think, in these kinds of initiatives. Now I don't know if it would be, you know, the right thing or the appropriate thing to do to partner with a group in terms of this kind of supervision of a playground, but I simply leave it as an idea that when you're talking about bullying measures that, certainly, one of the

things you could do is you could have an outside organization that's involved in trying to reduce bullying in the school context.

And I think that that's something that the government has missed, and I think it's been a missed opportunity because I think the government feels that, because they are the kind of government that they are, that everything has to come from the government itself—that it has to come from—down from on high, from the minister's office, and it can't be done by anybody else. It's simply the government knows best, and I think that that is not true and I think that that is unfortunate.

I'm just looking now at the federal government's announcement—this is done by Mr. Moore who was then the minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages—since been replaced in that ministry anyway, Mr. Speaker, by the MP for St. Boniface, Ms. Shelly Glover, who's taken on that new responsibility.

*(15:20)

But I did see that there was the announcement back in early June, and the government did the announcement together with the Canadian Red Cross and partnered with the Canadian Red Cross in terms of empowering youth to be involved and to actually go and help train young people as facilitators—that they would be involved in different workshops and activities, not targeting one specific kind of bullying, but believing that if—you've got to get youth involved from the age of 17 to 13—have them become facilitators and trained and, together with the Canadian Red Cross, and have them in their schools being the leaders on this, and to look for all forms of bullying. That makes sense and that seems to be the kind of approach you'd want to look at. It involves young people being leaders within their own communities, within their own schools. It involves identifying the activity of bullying, not specifically to one kind of bullying, but trying to stop, generally, the whole issue of bullying and to have it done by youth.

And that makes a lot of sense, I think, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the fact that that's the approach that the federal government has taken. I look forward to seeing the outcome of those efforts, and, I think, by and large, it's gotten a good response, and that probably throws this government off a bit because this government is used to bringing forward legislation that's divisive, that doesn't have wide support, that ultimately divides people and causes

people to come and speak against the government. We've certainly seen that in this legislation. We've seen that in Bill 20. We're seeing that in Bill 33. I think we're going to see it when it comes to other pieces of legislation before the House right now.

But what happened when the federal government introduced their antibullying measure is that it was widely applauded. Certainly, obviously, the Canadian Red Cross, who is working with the group, spoke well of it, but also educators within the school boards in different parts of Canada came forward and said that it was a good approach to bullying. Those parents of kids who had been bullied, often tragically, came forward and said that that was the right approach.

And so you can actually have an approach that isn't divisive. You can have an approach, I think, that's effective. You can have an approach that, ultimately, has success without dividing people, Mr. Speaker, and that's difficult for this government to understand. And I'm sure when they saw the announcement by the federal government, they probably went, oh, this is going to be a bit of a hornet's nest, to use a popular phrase for today, and, ultimately, they may have been surprised that it wasn't. They may have been surprised that the vast majority of those who were commenting on the particular piece of legislation or the initiative, not legislation, brought forward by the federal Conservative government was widely accepted, was widely praised as being something that was going to be effective and the right approach if partnered with an outside organization. It'll have some involvement with parents and, ultimately, it involves youth being leaders within their own schools and looking broad-based—in a broad-based way, for bullying activities.

And so there are ways that this can be done in a way that's unifying, in a way that's protective, and the way that's productive, and all of those things aren't being done under Bill 18. But it's not too late because the government has an opportunity to bring forward amendments to help change their direction to make something that all Manitobans can support, and, ultimately, I think that's a goal that all of us should look for.

But, on the issue of improved playground supervision, Mr. Speaker, again the example that I brought forward, I want to bring forward for the minister and others, is that you can actually work with other organizations and outside organizations to

achieve some of these goals, as demonstrated by the federal Conservative government and their operations with the Canadian Red Cross. And you can do that in a way that is, I think, instructive and is helpful in a lot of different ways.

So improved playground supervision, again, I think there are—they can mean a lot of different things, but it's certainly something, I think, that the government could meet with the different school divisions on, meet with our independent schools and talk to them about the kinds of things that are happening in the playgrounds. Now this would be age-specific. It could be different for different ages, of course, but it is something that you could look at to improve safety for kids, and you could find the different dynamics. It's probably different in different communities as well, and those are the kind of ideas you want to look for, and you want to say to educators and you want to say to administrators: Well, we think and we understand that improving playground safety is one way to reduce bullying, an effective way. It's been shown by this particular study, this review of 622 different cases in terms of reducing bullying to be an effective thing. How would that work within your school? How would that work within your particular school context?

Now, that would require some consultation, and I understand that consultation is not the strength, is not the hallmark of this government. This government is not big on consultation. They don't like listening to other people. It doesn't, for whatever reason, it just doesn't fit within their ideology to reach out and to speak to those other individuals who are involved.

They think that they know best. They gather in Cabinets, they gather in caucus and try to tell people that they know best about this, that or the other thing. We've seen that with Bill 33. *[interjection]* I hear from my colleague from Morden-Winkler about how they've done that in terms of Bill 33 and how they've gone to these individual municipalities—elected officials—elected officials—and called them names, called them insolent children and essentially tried to overturn the results of the last election by saying, you know, we're not interested in terms of how you got elected, in terms of how you are elected to your individual municipal bodies. We're going to change everything—we're going to decide to change everything. You know, they just decided to go in and gerrymander all the individual election results from these individual municipalities. And that's how they do things.

That's how they do things when it comes to being top-down managers, Mr. Speaker. So we know that that's how they operate. They don't want to consult with people. I listened to the very thoughtful questions from my friend, the former president of the AMM from the great constituency of Agassiz—the wonderful constituency of Agassiz, mister—the newly named but wonderful constituency of Agassiz. And the former president of AMM, he put forward some very thoughtful questions today to the minister, again, about amalgamation, about why it is that they're not consulting with individual municipalities. And the minister couldn't answer, because there really isn't an answer. It's an ideological answer. There's no policy answer. There's no real reason you can give for not consulting with people who are impacted by your decisions before you make those decisions. There isn't really a good explanation. None exists, other than that's how you're ideologically driven. That's what you believe. That's how you feel. You don't feel you should have to talk to people. You don't feel that anybody else has anything of merit to give you in terms of ideas or instruction.

And that's the challenge with this government. They don't want to listen to individuals. They don't want to listen to people, Mr. Speaker, whether that's Bill 33 or Bill 18—minister has said she's not going to listen to anybody; she knows best. Bill 33—government says, we're not going to listen to municipalities. We're not interested. Bill 20—government says, we don't want to listen to you. We're not going to call for a referendum. We don't think you know what's best for the province of Manitoba. There's a pattern here. When you start to link these bills together, what you find is that they all lead and they all point to a government that isn't interested in listening to anybody else—a government that doesn't believe that they should have to listen to anybody else.

Now, some people might label that as arrogance, Mr. Speaker. I've certainly heard that from constituents and from Manitobans. Had a great time visiting some pavilions on the weekend at Folklorama; had a great time visiting my own home community and Pioneer Days at The Mennonite Heritage Village museum in Steinbach. And many people at all of these different locations, when we got to talking about politics, as sometimes the discussion turns to, referred to this government as arrogant. And I'm sure that the members opposite, the 36 NDP MLAs, have heard the same thing. I'm

sure that they've also heard from their own constituents that the government has grown arrogant, that the government has grown out of touch. And one of the things that's symptomatic of that arrogance is that they're not willing to listen to people. They're not willing to listen to anybody else. They believe that they know best and that nobody else's ideas have merit, and that is certainly concerning. And it's disappointing and it's not what we would expect from a duly elected, democratic government in the province of Manitoba.

But I think that they would do well to do what the federal Conservative government has done, for example, in this one case on bullying, and say, we're going to listen to some other individuals, some other organizations like the Canadian Red Cross, or there's others, I know—Salvation Army, many good organizations in Manitoba doing wonderful work, Mr. Speaker, who could be involved in an initiative to say, how are we going to help to reduce bullying in the province of Manitoba. So the improved playground supervision is certainly one.

Now, I want to go onto the next point, Mr. Speaker, within the survey, and—sorry, it's not a survey—the review of the 622 different studies that were done on antibullying measures and the things that are common in them that would be effective, done by David Farrington and Maria Ttofi. And one of—the third point that they point out that's common in successful antibullying strategies is disciplinary methods, that there has to be some discipline involved in terms of reducing bullying. Now, this seems to also be lost on the government because, when I looked at Bill 18 and my colleagues looked at Bill 18, what we saw was that it's completely silent on the issue of discipline, that there are no real consequences for bullying.

* (15:30)

Now, we've seen this in the context of different—of how the government deals with different things, Mr. Speaker. We've seen it in the context of the criminal justice system or the justice system that the provincial government is responsible for. We know that the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), for example, isn't interested in consequences—doesn't believe in meaningful but important measures against individuals who ultimately commit crimes. Now, of course, there are some crimes that are lesser. I don't want to put them on hierarchy of scale, but, obviously, even within our criminal justice system, we rank crimes as different sorts of things, and they

have different sorts of punishments. And so we know that if you don't have meaningful but measured consequences for those crimes, that ultimately they get committed over and over again by the same people.

Now I don't think that it's a stretch to say that it wouldn't be much different when it comes to bullying. That when you look at bullying, that there has to be meaningful but measured consequences for those who are doing the bullying. That without any kind of discipline, without any kind of consequence, if you will, Mr. Speaker, that you're going to have the same sort of act committed over and over and over again.

And I think that's why it shows up, Mr. Speaker, as one of the key elements, or one of the key findings, in the review of the successful bullying programs—is that the most successful bullying programs have, contained within them, disciplinary methods.

Now that doesn't happen within Bill 18. It's one of the reasons why it is the weakest antibullying bill in North America. And, when you look at the absence of any sort of disciplinary methods, Mr. Speaker, within Bill 18, you have to wonder why. You have to wonder why the government wouldn't have put in any sort of references to discipline.

Because I think if you asked Manitobans, if you did what's commonly known as a 'streater' in the news business, Mr. Speaker, and you went and talked to people down the street, and you asked them the question, what are the kinds of things you would like to see in a disciplinary—or sorry, in an antibullying policy, I think one of the common answers you would get is some sort of discipline, that there be some sort of consequence for bullying.

I certainly know that's true when you talk to parents who have children who've been bullied. Now they're not looking for revenge, Mr. Speaker. They're not looking for retribution, but they are looking for something that says, what happened to my son or daughter was important and what happened to my son and daughter was serious. And that there are some sort of results for that, something that might prevent the individual, who is doing the bullying, from doing it again.

Now that doesn't always have to be, you know, something as severe as a suspension or something like that, Mr. Speaker, but it has to be something. There has to be some signal, and it should be

progressive. It should be progressive, so that the more often somebody's involved in bullying, the more likelihood that the individual punishment would be worse—would be more severe, Mr. Speaker. Because you have to know that if you continue—not unlike the justice system—if you continue to do something over and over again, you're likely to continue to do it over and over again, and that causes individuals to be victimized or to be bullied in this particular context.

So, when you look at different pieces of antibullying legislation, the hallmark of 'successful'—successful ones often involve that kind of disciplinary measure, and that disciplinary measure is progressive; as individuals continue to bully, the consequences become more significant. And that makes sense, Mr. Speaker, but there's nothing in Bill 18 about that.

And I don't know—probably members opposite—some of whom I'm sure have never even read the bill—are probably surprised to hear that. And I would challenge them—don't take my word for it. Read the legislation. It's online. It's been distributed to you. I think we get, you know, five or six, sometimes, printed versions of bills. I know that sometimes it feels like we get more than we need, but, you know, we're adequately served here in the Legislature.

And I would ask them—I would ask the members opposite, the 36 NDP MLAs, you know, to go and to read the bill, and to come back to me and tell me where they find the different issues around disciplinary measures. If you find them, come back and show them to me, and let's talk about that, and let's have that discussion. I'm certainly willing to have those discussions.

We had a nice discussion this morning with the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) regarding an important issue. And, you know, he came to me last week and he said, it's something we want to discuss, and we sat down. We had a good discussion. I felt informed by some of his comments. I hope he felt informed by some of mine, Mr. Speaker.

And, at the end of that discussion, I said to the member for Radisson, well, I think this is something that we can support. We came to, sort of—and I had some suggestions and some ideas, and he incorporated them into his comments. And I thought that what we did this morning, in terms of ratifying the resolution, was something that we can all take pride in. That we all—I think it achieved something in that.

And so there's no reason why that can't happen as well on Bill 18. I challenge the members opposite to read the bill and bring forward these different suggestions and these different ideas. And I'd ask them to look at the issue of disciplinary methods.

And I'm happy to share this report and any of the research that I've done. I know the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) has said that the government really hasn't done any research on bullying and they sort of took, I guess, a shot in the dark on their bill. And I appreciate his admission; that was nice of him to say and that was an honest comment I think from the member for Minto. And that kind of honesty helps us; it helps us determine how things came about in the Legislature, and, when he acknowledged that they really haven't done any research, that that's good for us to know because it knows where we're starting from.

And so I have lots of research, Mr. Speaker, that I'm happy to share with the government and—on this particular—in fact that my friend from Morden-Winkler has provided me more research just this morning. Just this morning he provided me some additional research of what's going on in North Dakota I believe it was—*[interjection]* In Wisconsin, sorry, in the nearby Wisconsin, and what they're doing on bullying. Far more aggressive I would say than what's happening here where we have the weakest antibullying bill in North America. But I appreciated him sharing that information.

He continues to do research because I know education is something that he—and certainly the safety of children is something he's passionate about. So on this side the sort of the research never stops. We're always looking at different ideas. We're always looking at new ways to try to find ways to make our schools better, safer and a more respectful place for the kids who are going to those schools.

So, while the government doesn't have a lot of research we certainly do and we're willing to share it, Mr. Speaker. It's not something that we consider proprietary or something we don't want them to see. We want them to benefit from the research and to get a better understanding of effective antibullying legislation.

So, when I look at the third point within the study, Mr. Speaker, and it indicates that disciplinary methods is one of the critical things, I would ask the government, I'd ask them to go and take a look at the sort of things that could be effective and the wording

that could be effective, that could be written into Bill 18.

It's not too late. We can certainly make those amendments and have them ready for committee. We can have that discussion beforehand. The Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) and I can sit down. And I always appreciate talking to the Government House Leader, we have good conversations. They don't always result in anything, but they're good conversations though, Mr. Speaker.

We enjoyed the Folklorama pavilion together—we didn't go together, but we saw each other at the Celtic Ireland Pavilion on Sunday, Mr. Speaker. And I think we—she enjoyed an Irish coffee, I don't know if I did, but it was good. And we, you know, it was a great performance. And so we know we have no problem, you know, discussing different sorts of things and having those sort of open dialogue. Again, they don't always result in things but it's good to have that dialogue, it's good to have that discussion.

An Honourable Member: We're entirely ineffective but we do talk to each other.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, well, you know, and you never know. You keep talking and suddenly you stumble upon something.

But I do think if we would, you know, be talking about this particular issue and about the need to have disciplinary methods within Bill 18—*[interjection]* Maybe we could do it over an Irish coffee as suggested by my friend from Morden-Winkler, the last person you'd suggested—you'd think you get the suggestion from, Mr. Speaker.

We could certainly, I think, come to the conclusion that there is a need, that there is a need to have disciplinary methods attached in some way to antibullying legislation. And I'd be happy to have that discussion with her or any member of this House. And I'd be happy to share the information that I have and to share the different research, Mr. Speaker, that we've been able to put together. So it's a key component.

And I started off by saying that if you would go and you would speak to Manitobans, if you would just ask a hundred Manitobans, what are the things that you think would be important in an antibullying bill? What are the sort of things that you think would be important in an antibullying measure? I hazard to guess, and I don't think I'd be wrong here, and I've put my thoughts on the record and people can prove me wrong if they want to find a way—that most

Manitobans would say disciplinary methods and measures are an important thing. That that would be something that we would expect to see in an antibullying bill—doesn't appear in Bill 18.

So I leave that with the government, I leave that as a suggestion, that they can certainly take a look at and try to come up with some different ideas. We've got lots of time, you know, we're not—we're going to be sitting for many months yet I'm sure, Mr. Speaker. And so that time we have, the opportunity that we have exists and we can certainly build that into the Bill 18 amendments as they come forward.

* (15:40)

And it's something that I'm going to obviously bring up as well at committee when the committee starts and the hundreds of presenters start their presentations. I want to ask different presenters, I want to ask them about, you know, disciplinary measures, and do you think that that's something that's important? Do you think that's something that should, in some fashion or the other, be in an antibullying bill? And I suspect that many of them will be shocked and surprised that it doesn't actually exist in Bill 18. Some of them will be very surprised that there are no—just as some members, I think, are surprised—that there are no disciplinary measures within this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. So they'll be surprised to hear that, but I look forward to asking those questions of committee members and hearing their views and their opinions on that because that certainly makes the committee system better.

Now, if I move on through the different things that were cited within the report that I'm reading from, Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that the summary or the report talks about is that one of the key parts that have been found in effective antibullying pieces of legislation or policies is the issue of classroom management and teacher training. Now this makes sense, of course. It's sort of the flip side of the coin of the issue of parental involvement. That was the first thing that I started speaking about from this report, that it talked about the need for parental involvement in the issue of antibullying. I think that's very important. Those of us who are parents or maybe already grandparents here in the Legislature, we would agree with that. We would acknowledge that having that involvement with our—in the lives of our parents or perhaps our grand—oh, sorry, our children or our grandchildren's lives, is critical, and we want to have that involvement.

We want to know what's going on in the school setting, and we value that information or the training that might come from schools when it comes to bullying, that things are different than maybe when our generation was in school, and we want to learn about those sort of things. So that's critical. But this is the flip side of that coin. This says that it's important, you know, in terms of classroom management and teacher training on this issue.

Now I know that some of this already happens, Mr. Speaker. I've been fortunate enough to have great discussions with the different teachers that are involved in my son's life, and I learn at the open houses and different sorts of things how they have training when it comes to issues around bullying.

Certainly I've spoken with my son's teachers in the last couple of years about the issue of bullying. It's always present, I think, on a parent's mind. I'm sure we'll have those discussions with the teachers that he's going to have in the coming years as he proceeds through the public school system. But I do think that it's important to maybe have some interest, some discussion about that within the context of Bill 18. If you're going to have legislation, you might want to have that referencing within there.

How do we marry together that insurance that not only are our parents involved with the antibullying measures, but what kind of specific standards do we have for teacher training. We have great teachers in the province. They're wonderful professionals. They do a great job, and I think that they would value some specific ideas in terms of the training that would come around this particular issue, even just an acknowledgement that it's something that should happen within the context of a bill. I think that they would appreciate that.

I know in talking to teachers around the province, they often remark about the changing classroom environment, and so the whole issue around classroom management, whether it's the composition of a classroom or the size of a classroom, which is often discussed in the context of this Legislature, is important, and to offer teachers some assurance that that training around the management of a classroom is something that I think would be important and something that I think would be very important for teachers. And I suspect that if you talk to teachers they would say that that's something they'd support, something that they would want.

Again, if you would talk to the public and you ask the public, because a lot of this is common sense, and I appreciate the fact that we have these studies and we have this research and all of these studies and research are available for the government, even though they acknowledge they've done no research on the issue of bullying, Mr. Speaker. But it is available and I know that it's common sense.

A lot of it is common sense, and if you would talk to the public they would say it's common sense, which is why I think that increasingly it's one of the reasons why the message has been kind of lost on this bill for the government is that when the public reads the bill, and increasingly people are and have read the bill, they realize that there's not a whole lot to it, that there's not a whole lot to it that's going to actually make a difference in the lives of kids, or that it's going to improve the lives of all kids within the school system. They recognize that it is the weakest antibullying bill in North America and they're disappointed by that. They're disappointed by that particular fact.

And we share that disappointment, but that's why we offer suggestions. You know, we just don't come and bring forward disappointment. We have suggestions for the government. We want to show them different ways that things are being done in different jurisdictions. Whether it's my friend from Morden-Winkler, who is bringing forward ideas from Wisconsin, or whether it's our own bill, Bill 214, before the Legislature, or whether it's the research, Mr. Speaker, that we're willing to provide the government, we just want the best bill that we can get.

We want the best bill that we can get to protect kids. That's what our ultimate goal is about. We want to ensure that kids, all kids, are protected, and that's what any parent would want. That's what I'd want for my son. I know that the other parents in this Assembly would want the same thing for their kids. And so we have a unified goal, but we don't have a government that's willing to listen. We don't have a government that's willing to work with others.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

We know that the government has already said they're not willing to listen, and so that doesn't do well for any of us. It doesn't make things better for the kids, it doesn't make things better for the teachers, it doesn't make things better for the parents and it ultimately doesn't make things better for us as MLAs.

And it's funny, you know, when you talk to—all of us have the opportunity to go and talk to different classrooms and talk to different student groups for a variety of different reasons. We're often invited there to talk about democracy or talk about our role as MLAs and the kind of work that we do. And at the end, you know, there are questions that the kids can ask you, and sometimes you get lots of questions and sometimes, depending on the ages, you don't get that many questions.

But I often take the opportunity to ask the kids questions myself, because you learn a lot; because, you know, there's obviously differences within the age and within the experiences, and things change as you move through your life and things change within the school system. So I often take the opportunity to ask the kids themselves about different sorts of things that are happening. And so, more recently, I've taken the opportunity, of course, of asking about bullying, because it's become more topical. They're very well aware of it and, certainly, we are becoming more aware of it as individual legislators.

So, I mean, I often ask kids, you know, what is it about bullying that you think could be effective in terms of reducing it? What are the kinds of things that are happening? And, you know, you get some very interesting responses. And I've now had the opportunity to ask kids in the city of Winnipeg, to ask kids in rural communities outside of my own, to ask kids in Brandon, to ask kids in my own community as well, about that very thing—to ask them about bullying. Now, almost uniformly, it's interesting that the majority of them say that they don't think legislation itself is going to make much of a difference. And that's an interesting response, and maybe that's just simply because of the age of the kids, but maybe not. And I think there's a lot of, you know, justifiable concern or skepticism that they might have, that ultimately legislation may not have a great impact, may not have a great effect. And as the kids often remind me as they say, because, you know, the bullies aren't reading the legislation; the bullies aren't reading Hansard; the bullies aren't reading the consolidated statutes of Manitoba before they do the bullying. And so that is obviously something that, you know, coming from the—among young people, I think, it's worth considering.

Now, I've felt and I still feel, despite those comments, that to the effect that legislation can have an impact, we should give it a shot; it doesn't hurt. And we should do the best that we can with the legislation, but, you know, to sort of pass a piece of

legislation that is the weakest antibullying bill in North America doesn't ultimately do justice to anything. It doesn't do justice to the kids who may not feel the legislation's going to have much of an impact because this is just going to prove to them the legislation doesn't have an impact, because this bill is such a weak antibullying bill. And certainly for those that need protection, who might actually be relying on the bill, who may be bullied and have heard through their network, through their friends, through the media, other means, that an antibullying bill is coming, they will certainly be disappointed as well, because they won't have the kind of protection that they are hoping for when they're being bullied in the school environment.

But it's common sense, and that comes back to my point. It is the common sense of people who understand what is effective and what isn't effective. And so, whether it's kids or whether it's your—and the fine coffee drinkers at Tim Hortons or other establishments, if you ask them, if you talked to them and you said to them, what are the kinds of things that you think would be effective in antibullying legislation, I don't think that the things that they would list off find their way into Bill 18. If you gave them Bill 18 and you showed it to them and you said, you know, is this what you would think would be an effective piece of legislation, I don't think those who actually took time to read it would think it would be very effective at all.

And we do have—as a Legislature, we have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to pass legislation that isn't just there for the sake of being there, that actually it has an impact, that it has an effect, that it can actually make a difference.

* (15:50)

And that is the concern that many Manitobans have expressed regarding this bill, not the concept of bullying—not at all. I think that almost to a person, the individuals that I've spoken to about bullying in the province of Manitoba have said uniformly that there is a problem and the problem has to be dealt with and the problem is changing—that it's different than when we were in school, that cyberbullying is a much more impactful thing, that cyberbullying is much different because it's 24 hours, that you can't escape the bullying because it now happens at your home or on your computer or on your phone, that it's very, very difficult to get away from.

So, you know, those are the sort of comments that we hear from Manitobans, from young people,

from those who are involved in the issue of bullying. And they say, from a very common-sense perspective, when you ask them, what are the kinds of things you think would be effective in an effective antibullying piece of legislation, and they'll tell you and they'll list off the kinds of things that I've already talked about: involving parents, having parental training about the issue of bullying so they can bridge the gap in between what was their experience when they were in school and what is the current experience; having supervision within the school context or on the playground, that's something that they would probably list off as well; I know that they would list off disciplinary methods, that would show up on the list of almost every list that was brought forward by individuals who are asked about what it would take to have an effective antibullying program; teacher involvement, of course, that's critical, as I've talked about, that's absolutely important, something we need to have to ensure that our teachers are getting the best training when it comes to antibullying and having the best procedures.

Now, in conjunction with that, I notice on the list it also talks about classroom rules, that there needs to be the appropriate classroom rules, and that is found to be one of the effective ways of dealing with bullying in this study of the 622 relevant antibullying programs between 1983 and May of 2009, I think the most comprehensive study I've seen.

I'm happy to share it with the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who hasn't done any research, he acknowledges, and his government hasn't done any research, but it's something that I'm happy to share with him. And it says that one of the important things in an effective antibullying program are classroom rules, that you have to have some specific rules that are set out within the classroom. And this, of course, makes sense, and this also involves working with our teachers and ensuring that our teachers are fully engaged in this process and ensuring that our teachers are at the forefront of this particular process, just as we'd have our parents at the forefront of this particular process.

And I know we, you know, we have to do it in a respectful way, has to be done in a respectful way, and I was disappointed and I shared the disappointment of others when, you know, we saw the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) come out and make a statement on behalf of the parent-teachers association and said that this is what they all believed in and sort of spoke for them, and then when they

had their convention they said something different and they had to clarify the position of the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). And I felt bad for the representatives who were there, and I spoke to them and the different representatives from the school divisions, and they were very concerned.

They were very concerned that it's the kind of thing that the Minister of Education would say, very concerned. They ultimately changed—they changed a policy statement as a result of what the Minister of Education had said, and they felt disappointed that the—in many ways, I think they felt that they were being used as pawns by the Minister of Education. And I understand why they felt that way, and I felt for many of them who came and spoke to me after the conference about the things that the Minister of Education had said. And I'm glad that they stood up, that they stood up and they made their own voices heard, that they weren't going to allow themselves to be bullied, as it were, and that they were going to allow themselves to have their voices heard and to speak up clearly for their own individual constituents that they are representing on that board. And I hope that that was a lesson for the Minister of Education to not play politics with this and not be political in this particular way and to use these groups as political pawns, because it doesn't do any of us well.

But when you look at the issue of classroom rules and one of the things that was found to be very effective, I think that it's important to work with our teachers, to work with the parents to come up with the kind of rules that make sense.

Now, the other thing that—I'm just moving on the list—when you look at the report that looked at 622 different antibullying policies, one of the things that it said was most effective in having in an effective antibullying policy was whole-school antibullying policies, not one-offs. They said that there needed to be a whole-school policy. And I think that that actually speaks to what the federal government announced back in June about not having a particular policies in place for different portions of the school, but having a whole-school policy. And that is, I think, why the federal government in—bringing forward their particular initiative and having the Canadian Red Cross involved in training young people to be involved throughout the school and to look for bullying of any kind and to have them lead that is something that's important. They're not leading without adult supervision but they are involved as, sort of, the mentors on that particular side of antibullying. But a

whole-school anti-policy initiative is what they said in this particular report is found to be an effective antibullying legislation. Now, we don't have that. When we look at Bill 18, it's absent again. It's once again, it's void, and I'm surprised.

Now, I've gone through the lists and I'm already—I've got a few more to go, but I'm at—eight different things, eight separate criteria that were found to be the most effective things in antibullying legislation that have proven to be effective, and none of them are in Bill 18. And I was shocked by that when I went through this list. When I came across this study and I had the opportunity one night to go through it—and it's an extensive study, it's a long study. There are summaries of it, and if the members opposite don't want to bother reading the entire study they don't have to, they can just even read the executive summary. And I was surprised when I had the opportunity to go through it that none of the issues that are identified as being important in an effective antibullying strategy appear in Bill 18. Not one, and that concerned me because, you know, you'd think even by blind luck you'd stumble into one—you know, one policy in there that was—that would be contained within this particular study that said that things were effective. But not even by blind luck, and it's one of the reasons why Manitobans have come to understand that Bill 18 is the weakest antibullying bill in North America. It's one of the reasons they've come to understand that, because the research shows that these different things that are effective in terms of antibullying legislation don't appear in Bill 18—they're absent in Bill 18.

So, moving on from the whole-school policy, it also indicates that school conferences would be important and information for parents. Now, I—you know, I again want to stress, because it's contained within this particular report—information for parents—that this is critical.

Now, the issue before—the first element that was raised in this particular study was parent training, having parents trained, and that is something that's important. But information for parents—what rights do parents have to receive information on bullying? And parental rights, I think, are important. The government would probably laugh at this and scoff at this and not think that it's ultimately important and not believe that parents have a right to anything when it comes to the educational system, and I would disagree. I would disagree completely. I believe that parents do have a right to this kind of information. They should be more involved within

the context of their son or daughter's school life, that that information is critical.

Now, whether it shows up specifically in legislation or not, we can have that debate. We can have that discussion about whether or not it falls in the four squares of the legislation, but it's important that it's effective, that it's critical, that it actually shows up in this particular study that it's an important thing to have, and yet it doesn't show up in Bill 18. Nowhere in Bill 18 does it talk about having information for parents. And I think that that's something that we can look towards for amendments, and we can bring forward those sort of amendments. It wouldn't be a cure-all, but it'll be something, and something we can have that discussion on. I think when the presenters come before the committee, I'm going to take the time to ask them those kind of questions—do you think it'll be important to have information for parents on the issue of bullying? And I bet a lot of them would say, yes. I think a lot of them would say, yes. A lot of them would think it would be important. A lot of them will be surprised that it's not actually contained within Bill 18.

I—and I look forward to the hearings in some ways because I think what it's going to do, it's going to show people just how weak this particular bill is. How ineffective the bill truly is, and I hope that the minister changes her position on not being interested in any kind of amendments; changes her position on not being willing to listen to any different ideas.

* (16:00)

And I think the different ideas that I'm bringing forward and the research that it's been based on, that that's really what it's about. It's about getting the minister to say that she's open—more open-minded, to realize that she hasn't drafted a perfect bill.

In fact, I heard the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) actually say, in a different context, that the bill's not perfect. And I actually appreciated that; I actually appreciated that because that's a different position that was taken by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). The Government House Leader said, it's not a perfect bill, and the Minister of Education said, it's perfect and we're not changing it. So, you know, perhaps they'll have a discussion, and, before we actually get to committee, there'll be some sort of a meeting of the minds. And I hope that the Minister of Education's position will morph more towards the position of the Government House Leader, that it's not a perfect bill and that there can be changes and that there should be changes. I'm

giving lots of suggestions, and I'll have more suggestions in the days ahead as we continue on into the fall and potentially into the winter in this legislative session.

But, when you look at these different ideas, when you look at the different ideas that have come forward from just this one study—this is only one study. And I've taken a bit of time; I've taken about an hour and a bit to speak on this, on this one particular study, because I thought it was important. I thought it was important to lay out that there are a lot of different ideas, that there are a lot of different suggestions, and that they're backed up by research. Now the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) indicated he's not done any research and his government hasn't done any research, but there is a lot of research out there. There's an awful lot of information that exists on bullying.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Now not everything that would be suggested would be a right thing to do, wouldn't be the appropriate thing to do. But I think you can certainly look at the best evidence and look at the best practices, Mr. Speaker, and try to come up with the best ideas and the best solutions. And that's not been done by this government by their own admission. And I look forward to bringing the words from the member for Minto into committee and reminding people that the government itself—one of the lead ministers in the government said they haven't done any research on bullying. They don't really know anything about the topic. Because I think it's going to be enlightening—going to be enlightening to people who are coming to committee and to go, well, how did we get here? Is it then the best bill? Is it then the best practice?

And we'll have different research, Mr. Speaker, and be happy to speak to presenters on all sides of this issue. I want to emphasize that again: on all sides of this issue. People will have different views and differences of opinions, and that's good. That's what the discussion's about. That's what we are there to discuss. And then, ultimately, hopefully, we can come up with a bill that's better, that, ultimately, isn't so divisive, that all Manitobans can embrace and agree on, because that's the kind of thing that we are going to benefit by having.

I wanted to note one thing that came out of this particular issue when it comes to this particular study. And the issue around programs—now I want to just quote, if I can, from this particular study, and I'm

happy if any members want to see this report. This is certainly public information, not anything I'm trying to hide. In fact, I think none of the members actually have asked me for any information, so it's just difficult to know where their interest lies. But I'm happy to share it with them if they'd like to.

And what it says in this particular study—it's part of the summation—that some of the strategies actually increased being bullied. Programs that expected students to manage bullying on their own without adult supervision or leadership caused an increase in being bullied.

Now that's important, and that was sort of the hook that I gave you, Mr. Speaker, before, the something that you'd want to listen for about how bullying could actually be increased. And I'll just read that again, because I think it's important: Some strategies actually increased being bullied. Programs that expected students to manage bullying on their own without adult direction or leadership caused an increase in being bullied.

And this is one of the concerns, I think, that some people can have when it comes to Bill 18 or other pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and it might be one of the points that was being brought forward by Robb Nash. I know in one of his articles, when he spoke about Bill 18, and he said that sometimes when you create groups that ultimately separate individuals from the greater student body, that you make things worse. Now this particular point is about not having adult direction or leadership but having students to manage bullying on their own, that ultimately things can get worse, not better. And perhaps that is part of what the member for Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), in his questions a few days ago, was referencing when he actually said that things can be made worse by this bill, not made better.

Now, in the past, I've certainly said that this bill would do nothing to make things better. But, ultimately, they may, according to this particular research, make things worse because it relies so much on having just students figure things out completely on their own.

Now the federal approach, of course, has students involved, and the federal approach has students acting as liaisons and mentors within their school context, but it's done under supervision. It involves also the Canadian Red Cross, Mr. Speaker. And so I think that that is something that is important.

The Leader of the Official Opposition also, I think, raised the issue of false allegations, and I think that's something that's important to have on the record as well. We know that we not only need to guard against instances of bullying, but we also need to guard against false allegations because false allegations of bullying is, in some ways, a form of bullying itself, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that needs to be guarded against. And we don't see those safeguards contained within this particular piece of legislation; that Bill 18 is silent on that. And I have seen other jurisdictions, where there are measures that deal with issues of false allegations, but we don't see that in Bill 18. So, once again, we see that it is a very, very weak bill. I wanted to spend a little bit of time—in fact, not only a weak bill, but the weakest antibullying bill in North America.

I wanted to speak a little bit about some of the comments that came out of the western premiers' discussion on the issue of bullying, and it goes back to mid-June, and I know that it wasn't the only point of discussion among the western premiers, which was attended by our Premier (Mr. Selinger) as well. They also spoke about issues in relation to immigration and skills training, the visa process, lots of different issues that were discussed at this particular meeting. But they certainly did discuss the issue of bullying.

And I, again, harken back to some of the initiatives that were brought forward there, by the federal government. And there's been discussions, I think, federally, as well, about what can be done within the Criminal Code. And I don't ignore that, Mr. Speaker, because there's some important elements around that, and I know there's been discussions.

I think the federal Justice minister, Mr. Nicholson, is taking a look at the entire issue about the sharing of intimate images being done without consent and being done in a malicious fashion, and I think that that is something that's important. I think that discussion is something that is something we could—that has merit. I think it's something that certainly is worth looking at, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad the federal government is, in fact, taking a look at that.

In some of the cases that we've seen—tragic cases—that involve cyberbullying, Mr. Speaker, cases where intimate images were shared and shared so widely that individuals actually took their lives.

They're tragic. And so when you look at what kind of recourse could happen from that, could having a separate Criminal Code provision that would make it a crime to share those images without consent and in a malicious fashion, could that have an impact?

Now, ultimately, it harkens back to the comment that I made before, that some young people may not necessarily feel it's going to have a difference because that sort of a thought process doesn't go on, but I think perhaps having something that's widely known—it being available in the Criminal Code—could make a difference, Mr. Speaker, when they know that there are real consequences for sharing those images without consent and, more broadly, within the community in a malicious fashion.

So I want to commend the federal government for that examination, and I look forward to the outcome of that in the days and the weeks ahead, Mr. Speaker.

I do know in terms of the conversation that has happened, Mr. Speaker, around bullying, that there's been different jurisdictions that have done things different ways.

Now I'll cite British Columbia as an example. Now British Columbia has spent about \$4 million setting up a website that allows students to anonymously report bullying. The website then passes on the details to emergency responders, if that's necessary, or school authorities.

And the educators within the British Columbia province are being trained on how to deal with bullying as well. So that speaks to the study that I spoke to before, about things that are effective. In this particular context, in British Columbia, they are training, I think, up to about 15,000 educators about how to deal with bullying. A great thing. Good to have that education, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure the teachers are dealing with best practices.

And so that's something that we saw within the context of that individual study, that it'll be important to have. Something we haven't necessarily seen in Manitoba and certainly haven't seen in the context of Bill 18, Mr. Speaker.

*(16:10)

But I think the British Columbia experience is interesting because—now \$4 million is not a small amount of money and I recognize that, but setting up this website that allows students to anonymously report bullying has proven to be effective in other

jurisdictions. And I remember reading about a study in California—a California jurisdiction where they did the exact same thing. They allowed students to anonymously report bullying and it was very, very effective.

Because part of the problem, of course, in schools—and I think all of us will remember this from our school-age years, that—whether it was not so long ago or a longer time for others, Mr. Speaker—that there's a peer pressure to reporting things or there's a peer pressure not to report things. And there's always a concern that, you know, if you report something, whatever the behaviour is, that you might be found out and that you might be sort of cited, and that comes with its own sort of stigma within the school environment.

But this particular initiative in California and now British Columbia, allows students to report anonymously via a website or the Internet different cases of bullying. And then the principals can look into that information. It's not shared publicly, obviously, the person who reported it, because it's not known. But principals can look into that information. Law enforcement, if they need to—if it's serious enough—can look into that information, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's not something that we don't use in different contexts. All members of this House will be familiar with things like the crime tip line where you can phone in and you can report a crime and you can do so anonymously, Mr. Speaker, if you choose. I think there's a reward that's often offered with that, but you can simply phone in and report a crime that's happened, in anonymous fashion. It continues on to this day, it's been there for many years. It's funded in different ways, but it seemed to be successful—continue to do it.

And I know I've talked to law enforcement, they're always appreciative of the different tips that they get when it comes to that particular tip line, Mr. Speaker, and so it's proven to be effective. And that's been the experience in California with having this anonymous line—or this anonymous website that students can access and give information when it comes to bullying.

And I'm not sure why the government wouldn't, you know, consider that kind of an initiative. It doesn't show in Bill 18 at all—it's not at all in Bill 18 in any fashion at all, Mr. Speaker, and so that's disappointing. But it's something that I think is—it's going to work well in British Columbia. I predict that

it's going to come forward with good information. I predict that it's going to be impactful in terms of making our schools safer.

And I want to emphasize that one of the key things about this—not only that it's anonymous, but it returns the power back to those who might otherwise feel powerless. And I sympathize with young kids who are in our school context, Mr. Speaker, who might have information or might want to bring things forward to their principals or to their teachers or even to their parents but feel reluctant to do so. And they feel reluctant to do so because they're worried that their peers or others in their schools are going to find out that they brought forward the information.

And so whether they're the ones being bullied or not, or they're a bystander to the bullying, Mr. Speaker, they feel powerless. They feel powerless to be involved or to try to stop the bullying. But this returns some of the power to these young people—it returns the power to young people because they can now go on in a safe and secured environment in an anonymous way. And we do this with monetary transactions, Mr. Speaker, whether it's purchasing something on eBay or Kijiji or any other sort of site, we make secure money transactions, so why can't you anonymously and securely bring forward information about something that's happening within the school and that might be a troubling thing that's happening in the school? I think that's important. I think it's something we should certainly look at.

And so I appreciated the fact that the government of British Columbia has taken the lead on that. I look forward to hearing the outcome of that, Mr. Speaker, and the different source of things that they will feel will be positive coming out of that experience.

I also know that Brad Wall talked about looking and learning from things that are happening out in eastern Canada. We know that Nova Scotia has a new cyberbullying act and that they're hiring a special investigative unit, Mr. Speaker, to pursue those who have been cyberbullying—that that can be a difficult thing.

Certainly I have had the opportunity to visit the ICE Unit here in Winnipeg—it used to be called the Integrated Child Exploitation Unit. It's now called the Internet Child Exploitation Unit, Mr. Speaker. And in visiting that unit and seeing the kind of work that those officers do on that unit—it's difficult, it's hard work. It's difficult to not only deal with that kind of stuff every day, because they're dealing with

some awful crimes—crimes against children, and they visually have to see it or hear about it.

And I was surprised, but heartened in a way, when I talked to those officers on the ICE Unit that many of them are fathers and mothers and I—it surprised me because many of them are fathers and mothers of young children, and I wondered how they could, you know, do the kind of work and see the kind of images that they see and still be, you know, unaffected as parents. And they told me that that's actually what motivates them and I guess that makes sense. It motivates them, it's what drives them to do this and to go out there and assure that these heinous criminals who are committing these acts against children are caught and brought to justice.

And I was encouraged by that. It made me proud of the men and women who are involved in that ICE Unit, but what I learnt there in the visits that I've had to that unit is that it's not easy to catch these individuals, that it often involves being in chat rooms and watching the different things that are happening in chat rooms. It involves going through thousands of images on computers. Now they have software that helps that process, it can identify a lot of images so, unlike in days past, these officers don't have to view each image individually, but they can't get away without viewing some. But they have software now that identifies those images and separates out the images that are sort of non-descript on a computer and those that might have criminal implications.

But what troubled me the most, I think, in the visits that I've had to the ICE Unit is when you see the officers go live on these chat rooms, that there's no end. There's absolutely no end to the number of cases that they could investigate, and they acknowledge that there—they don't have any where's close to the resources to deal with the problems of child exploitation on the Internet. That the resources that it takes to be involved either on the chat lines or to be involved in the follow-up, to go and to seize these computers and then bring forward the evidence that—in a fashion that needs to be brought forward in the courts is incredibly time consuming and labour intensive.

But more than that, and the most troubling of all, is that there are so many individuals who are doing these sort of things on the Internet that it's like a fishing—I think it was described to me as fishing in a small pond with thousands of fish and you just simply don't have the time to catch it. And that is very, very troubling.

And so in Nova Scotia what they're doing in terms of hiring these investigators to investigate cyberbullying, I suspect that they're going to face very much the same dynamic. That they are going to be faced with so many, so many, different cases of cyberbullying that they're hardly going to have an opportunity to deal with a fraction of them. But, ultimately, the hope is, I think, that as the word gets out that these things are happening that it will be a deterrent, that Nova Scotia—as the word get outs that the investigators are actually actively and proactively going after cyberbullies that it will prove to be a deterrent. And that even though the chances of getting caught might not be great, they're greater than if nobody was out there doing it and it proves to be a deterrent.

I've spoken in this House about the deterrents of drinking and driving and about how having more officers out on the highways and out on the streets, traffic officers, that it proves to be a deterrent, that, ultimately, we're not going to catch every drinking—or person who's drinking and driving on the roads, but if we increase the chance of getting caught, that increases the chance of somebody not doing it because they believe it's a deterrent. And it's not any different when it comes to child exploitation and it's not any different when it comes to cyberbullies. That if we can increase the likelihood and the knowledge of the likelihood of getting caught is greater, that you're actually going to have a reduction.

And so I'd encourage this government to look at that, to look at a real initiative, because here, again, when you look at what they're doing in Nova Scotia, nothing like that is happening in Manitoba. There's no discussion of having investigations done on cyberbullies in Manitoba. Not at all. It doesn't show up in Bill 18 at all. It's completely absent to it. It's not proactive. It doesn't do that so it won't ultimately protect those kids who are being cyberbullied in that fashion.

*(16:20)

So I hope that the government—and I was glad to hear that Premier Wall indicated that there were some interesting initiatives happening in Nova Scotia and that he was willing to look at those initiatives, Mr. Speaker. It was heartening to see that a premier was willing to look at that.

So there are some more ideas, Mr. Speaker, ideas that don't show up in Bill 18, ideas that don't appear in Bill 18, but ideas that are important. So, whether it's having a website that allows anonymous

reporting or whether it's having those who are dedicated specifically to the issue of looking at cyberbullies, all of those things, I think, are important for the government to consider. All of them would be important for them to look at, and I hope that that's something that the government will ultimately do.

Now I want to—I'd spent some time, I think going back two months ago, and I know that the government only calls this bill once a month, so I haven't had much of an opportunity as we've gone through this process, Mr. Speaker, but I want to resume some of the comparisons from different states. Now I did this back in May, and then, of course, the government didn't call the bill until June and then July again. It's like the Halley's Comet of legislation—it only comes around once a month. But I did want to go through and look through some of the other comparisons when it comes to antibullying bills and legislation.

Now one of the things that I think is important and that doesn't appear in Bill 18, and it's something that I'm going to refer to in committee at some point, Mr. Speaker, that it's important to have in antibullying legislation is statistics, that there's actual real reporting on the issues of bullying. And that's something that we don't always see enough of, and certainly I know that when we look at how we reduce problems, it doesn't matter what those problems are. You need to have data. You actually need to have statistics.

And we see that in other sorts of things if we—I was talking about drinking and driving earlier on, and you'd want data there. I mean, every year we find out the instances of drinking and driving that are happening in Manitoba and in Winnipeg. As my colleague from St. Paul reminds me, I'm talking about facts. Data is the same thing as facts. You'd want to actually make your decisions based on something that is tangible, that's factual.

Earlier in question period the Premier (Mr. Selinger) talked about science. Science is another way to talk about facts, and I'm glad that he has a new-found interest in science. There are many decisions that he's made in this House that had nothing to do with science. In fact, they were contrary to science, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps he's had a bit of a conversion and he now wants to make decisions based on science and facts.

And so I would encourage the government, when it comes to the issue of bullying, to ensure that

they have facts. And I had the opportunity, and I'll have an opportunity in concurrence—I know we haven't got to concurrence yet, Mr. Speaker. You know, things are a little more—things are a bit more elongated in this particular session, but perhaps in September or October when we get into concurrence I'll look forward to asking the question of the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) about facts and statistics, because I asked the Minister of Education about a month ago or so when we were doing the Education Estimates, about how many times in our schools in Manitoba drugs had been found in the schools. This is over the last year or last two years, any statistics that she had on that. Could she provide any information to me on how often illegal drugs were found in our public school system in Manitoba? She had no idea. In fact, she kind of dismissed it. She kind of laughed it off, like, why would we even have that information. It made no sense to her in terms of why we would even look for it—wasn't interested.

So, when you have the discussion about are drugs in our schools getting better or worse, we're doing it without information. We're doing it without facts because we don't know if the problem's getting better or if the problem's getting worse because they don't collect the information. So, if somebody was going to come to me and say, in the context of Manitoba, do you think that the drug problem in our schools is getting better or getting worse, I mean, it would be anecdotal. I'd have to use some anecdotal sort of comparisons. I'd have to talk to teachers or talk to students and talk to parents, and they might have some anecdotal ideas or impressions, but they wouldn't have facts. They wouldn't really know if things are getting better or if they're getting worse because the government doesn't actually collect that.

I also asked the Minister of Education of that same committee about lockdowns within the schools, how often our public schools had been locked down, for any reason, whether that was some sort of outside issue or some issue that was happening within the school. But I just simply asked the question, and I thought this was a fairly innocuous question. Mr. Speaker. I thought she'd have the—you know, it was one of those questions where the—she takes the briefing book and she flips the page and finds the answer.

An Honourable Member: Oh, no, no. She had the answer. What was the answer? Tell us.

Mr. Goertzen: And the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), of course, knows that the government

would have that answer because, being somebody who was involved with the education system on a school board, it's something he would think would be logical, that the government would have that information. Certainly the school board would have that kind of information. And so—and the answer was that she had no idea. She had no idea how many lockdowns had happened within the school system. As the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) would say, zero, nada, zilch. Didn't have any information in terms of what was happening within the school system, didn't know—didn't know—how many lockdowns there'd been. And so, if somebody comes to me and they say, well, is the issue of lockdowns—do we have more lockdowns this year than last year? Is the problem getting better or is the problem getting worse? I don't know, and the Minister of Education doesn't know either. Nobody knows, because they're not collecting the data. They're not collecting the facts.

And I'm going to ask the question on the issue of bullying when it comes back up in concurrence how many instances of bullying there have been within our different schools. And I'm pretty sure I know what the answer's going to be: she has no idea, because they don't collect the data. They don't collect the facts. They don't really know, Mr. Speaker. They don't really know how often bullying is happening within the various schools.

And so all of us stand here and say, well, we think the problem is getting worse. We know it's changing because of cyberbullying. We know, just because of technology, that the issue of bullying is changing, but we don't really know how it's changing, how pervasive it is or how much worse it is, because the government doesn't collect those statistics. Now, why that's important is, going forward, if this is the issue that all of us believe it is—and all of us believe that bullying is an issue, an important issue to deal with—but if it's that kind of an issue, we need to know if things are getting better or worse, but we don't and we likely won't, because the government doesn't collect statistics.

Now, compare that to other jurisdictions in North America which actually in legislation require that certain things be reported, and that's where I want to go with this, Mr. Speaker. So let me look at a couple of jurisdictions first when it comes to the reporting.

In Alabama—I'll just do this alphabetically because it's easier to follow along, Mr. Speaker—in—

you know, in Alabama it says that each school shall do all of the following: report statistics to the local school board on actual violence, submitted reports of threats of violence and harassment. The local school board shall provide the statistics of the school system and each school in the school system to the department for posting on the department website. The posted statistics shall be available to the public and any state or federal agency requiring the information. The identity of each student involved shall be protected and may not be posted on the department website.

So this is Alabama. Now, I know in some contexts members opposite sometimes like to make fun of the southern states, but what they require is that there is reporting. There's actual reporting on violent incidents or bullying, and then that report shows up on a public website so the public can actually determine how often bullying is happening, how often these sort of cases are going on. Now, it indicates, of course, that the names of the individuals involved, they're protected, as you'd expect. That's not public information, but how often bullying happening—happens in the state of Alabama is reported on a public website. That seems like a logical idea in some ways, because you'd want to know—you'd want to know—if things are getting better or if things are getting worse.

Now, I suspect the government doesn't want to do that in relation to Bill 18 because they know with this bill—which is the weakest antibullying bill in North America—that things aren't going to get any better, that there'll be no improvement, Mr. Speaker, so they wouldn't want to have these statistics reported because it'll be obvious and evident to Manitobans that things aren't getting better, that bullying actually isn't getting better. And they can prove me wrong by actually enforcing this and having statistics publicly presented in terms of bullying, but I don't think they will, because they know, ultimately, it's not going to make a difference in terms of improving the safety of kids in our schools.

*(16:30)

I want to look at another state, Mr. Speaker. In Alaska, in the great state of Alaska—never had the opportunity to visit Alaska, but I understand it's something that you want to put on your bucket list and apparently it's just gorgeous, and I know many of my colleagues have had the opportunity to visit Alaska. And their particular legislation says that

beginning with the 2008 school year—so this goes back some time—each school district shall report to the department by November 30th all incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion for harassment, intimidation or bullying on school premises or on transportation systems used by the schools in each school year preceding the report. The department shall compile the data and report it to the appropriate committees of the Alaska House of Representatives and the Senate.

There again, Mr. Speaker, another state—another state that compiles statistics on the issue of bullying and that has specific legislative requirements for the reporting of that—this goes back to 2007 and 2008—each school district shall report to the department—our equivalent of the Department of Education—by November 30th of that year, all incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion for harassment, intimidation or bullying on school premises or on transportation systems used by schools in the school year preceding the report—that's Alaska. so they require that if there is bullying that happens on school grounds or on a bus, that it be reported to the department—to the Department of Education, and then subsequently the Department of Education produces the report and provides it to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

So the equivalent in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, would be Bill 18 would require that all school divisions report instances of bullying that result in a prescribed punishment and that that report then be compiled by the Department of Education and it would be brought to this Legislative Assembly. That all of us would have an opportunity, and, of course, by extension, all Manitobans would have the opportunity to see how often this happens. We'd be presented with the facts and then year after year that would continue to happen and we would be able to see if things are getting better, as we all hope they would be getting better, or—heaven forbid—that things would be getting worse, that they wouldn't be getting any better. Now, that's Alaska.

Now, Alabama and Alaska—you can hardly think of states that are more diverse, both in geography and perhaps in other issues, Mr. Speaker, but here there's commonality—here there's commonality in that they both require public reporting of bullying. Nothing like that in Manitoba. The Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) doesn't know how often bullying happens, doesn't know how often drugs are found in the schools, doesn't know how often schools are locked down for various reasons, really is

blissfully unaware and seemingly happily unaware of almost anything that's happening within our school system.

So let me continue on—let me continue on—Colorado—great state of Colorado, Mr. Speaker, and I'll read you directly from the Legislature, from the consolidated statutes of Colorado.

And I appreciate, by the way, the research that's been done on this—it's good research. It says the policy whereby the principal of each public school in a school district shall submit annually in a manner and by a date specified by rule of the state board a written report to the board of education of such school district concerning the learning environment in the school during that school year. The board of education of the school district annually shall compile the reports from each school in the district and shall submit the compiled report to the Department of Education in a format specified by rule of the state board. The compiled report shall be made available to the general public. Such reports shall include but not be limited to the following specific information for the preceding school year: behavioural on—behaviour on school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel including, but not limited to, incidents of bullying as described by subparagraph X of paragraph A of this section to another behaviour that creates a threat of physical harm to the student or to other students. Now, that's from Colorado, Mr. Speaker.

So you see in the state of Colorado it's different than Alabama and different than Alaska, but there's something that's common. And the common trait in Colorado as compared to Alaska and Alabama is there needs to be an annual report that talks about, and that gives statistics on, the learning environment of schools that includes instances of bullying.

That doesn't appear in Bill 18. Nothing in Bill 18 talks about reporting and having annual reports to the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) on how often bullying is happening in a particular jurisdiction.

Now I understand that members opposite, they don't like to hear ideas from different places. They don't like to hear when other people have other ideas other than their own. That's why the Minister of Education doesn't want committee to happen. That's why she doesn't want to listen to anybody. She's already said she's not going to be listening to anybody's ideas. She's completely closed-minded to

any sort of suggestions or amendments. She's already said that.

But I've given the example of three different states now, in Alabama and Alaska and Colorado, that already collect statistics. Very different states, different parts of North America, but collect statistics on bullying and then report them annually. Put them in a report and allow the public to see it, to see if things are getting better or to see if things are getting worse. And that information is important.

It's not ultimately the solution itself, Mr. Speaker, and nobody is suggesting that it is. Nobody is suggesting that simply by having a report or annual statistics, that that in and of itself is going to reduce bullying. But it's indicative and it's important because you'll never reduce the problem until you know how significant the problem is. You can never actually take action—proper action—scientifically informed, factual-based action—unless you know how significant the problem is.

Even when I talk to the government ministers about bullying today, in the province, and they talk about how serious the problem is, and I ask them to quantify that. What does that mean? Well, you know, statistically, can you tell me what are the kinds of kids that are being bullied and for what reasons? Well, they don't know—they don't know that. They've never done the analysis.

Now we've heard from the Minister of Education that perhaps this fall they're going to do a survey. I don't know of what form or what manner, Mr. Speaker, but they've said they're going to do a survey this fall. Well, they introduced the bill last December, an antibullying bill, and they're going to actually do a survey this fall to try to see what the problem is. It doesn't make much sense to me. It's not factually based. It's not scientifically based.

And yet we hear the Premier (Mr. Selinger) today in question period talk about facts and science and how he wants everything done by facts and science. Not, apparently, according to this bill, where there are no facts and science.

And I've asked the question to the Minister of Education. I've asked the question to other government ministers: Can you provide me with the data? Anything? I'll take anything at this stage of the game, Mr. Speaker. Provide me with any data that talks about the vulnerability of our kids. We know kids are being bullied. I hear the stories. They hear the stories. Come to our constituency offices. We

hear from our—from parents, but we don't know to what proportion and we don't know all the reasons why. And we don't know, you know, how do we address the problem, if we don't have that data or those statistics, and the government doesn't have it either.

And what concerns me most is that they're not even interested in getting it. I mean, they—it wouldn't be that difficult. It wouldn't be that difficult to ask school boards. And I understand administrators in the different divisions, they're busy people; they've got things to do. I get that. But I don't think that it would be that difficult to compile, annually, the statistics on bullying and how often bullying is happening in individual schools or, collectively, in a division, and to have that reported so we could determine if things are getting better or things are getting worse.

Now, because I want to make sure that the government doesn't feel that I'm just taking out a couple of specific examples and cherry-picking examples, Mr. Speaker, there are more, and I'll give you a few more because I know, to be factual, that's important.

Let's look at Connecticut—the great state of Connecticut. This is as close to travelling as I'm going to get to do this summer, Mr. Speaker. But let's take a look at Connecticut and what they do in Connecticut in terms of reporting statistically. Each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools, and such plans shall establish a section 10—establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain school records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school, and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such schools and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, which would be the equivalent of our Minister of Education (Ms. Allan).

* (16:40)

So here, again, a different method than Alabama, a different method than Alaska or Colorado. But, in Connecticut, what they require is that the individual school shall maintain on their school records data in terms of the incidences of bullying that can be available for public inspection, and then annually

that number will be brought to the Department of Education in a prescribed manner.

So, again, the information's compiled, not difficult to do—not difficult to do in this world of technology—compiled and brought to the Department of Education—and that's in Connecticut—and then the information is made available locally at the individual school level. So, if you're a parent and you want to see the kind of things that might be happening in the school, you could access those records. I don't know that they'd be accessed all that often. But, then, publicly—publicly, Mr. Speaker, you'd get that annual report that is brought forward to the Department of Education.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the good folks in Connecticut, when their legislators or representatives are making legislation, they're doing it on the basis of facts. They're doing it on the basis of real information, of real data. Here in Manitoba, we've heard from the member for Minto, the Attorney General (Mr. Swan); he's told us they've not done any research on bullying. They haven't done any research. We've heard from the Minister of Education who said, well, she's going to do a survey in the fall to find out the issues of bullying in the province of Manitoba, but she's introduced legislation a year before that.

So we're dealing with an absence of information, important information. And, certainly, you would think that, within the context of Bill 18, it would require these kinds of measures, not intrusive, just annual reporting of instances of bullying, either individually within schools or collectively within school divisions or even, you know, I mean, I guess you could even start province-wide. But at least we would know—at least we would know if things are getting better or worse, year to year. And, if you're really concerned about a problem, wouldn't you do that?

I mean, when you look at the different problems that this Legislature often talks about, which one of them don't we actually have data on? We talk about the problem of drinking and driving, and the Attorney General tries to talk about how tough he is on drinking and driving. Well, he would never think of having a system that didn't have—that didn't report the number of instances of drinking and driving. It'd be ridiculous not to have that. You'd want that information.

And the other sort of offence we have data on. We statistically collect how often it's happening—

An Honourable Member: Jets tickets.

Mr. Goertzen: –because it's important—we even found how many Jets tickets were taken. Even that was collected.

But, you know, we collect all of these things, but we don't we collect the number of times bullying happens within our schools? We have no idea? The government stands up and says, pass the bill; it's so important to us. It's critical. It's our No. 1 priority. And yet we have no idea how often bullying happens within our schools. It's ridiculous. It's a complete contradiction—it's a complete contradiction.

You know, we have members who wear buttons here and say how important this is to them. They don't even know how many times it happens. And I'd ask the member now: How many times is bullying happening in—he doesn't know. He doesn't know because his government doesn't collect it. I mean, you know, instead of—he can wear the button, but he should go into the caucus and ask the question, ask the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), like, what do you mean you don't keep statistics on this? What do you mean you don't have any facts?

This is so important to you and you have no idea how often this is happening in the province of Manitoba? It's ridiculous. It's a ridiculous sort of assumption by the member, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at other jurisdictions because I know you're eager for more. I—let's go to the state of Delaware. Delaware does—is a state that doesn't get as much attention as it often deserves, I think, Mr. Speaker, but today it'll get attention in the context of the Legislature. And, within their jurisdiction, it says that each school district and charter school shall establish a policy which, at a minimum, includes the following components: a requirement that all bullying incidences be reported to the Department of Education within five working days pursuant to the Department of Education.

Now, listen to that, Mr. Speaker. That's interesting. That's the first—in our tour of the states, that's the first state that actually puts in a time limit on how fast or immediacy that something has to be reported to the Department of Education. It's not just an annual report. You have to report to the Department of Education within five working days where there's been a bullying incident. Now that's pretty quick action.

Now they—obviously, in Delaware, think that the issue of bullying is so important that they want

real-time data. They actually want real-time data to deal with an issue, perhaps so they could take real-time action or if they saw something that—where things were changing or that they'd want to know very quickly—

An Honourable Member: It's real-time legislation.

Mr. Goertzen: It's—if—might not be real-time legislation, but they would certainly know if there was an emerging problem, if there's a trending problem, and they would know that very quickly. It's more than an annual report; it's every five days—or within five days of something happening. Now that's, you know, that's serious.

I'm not suggesting that that's exactly the way we have to go in Manitoba, but I'm trying to give you a comparative study about how important this issue is in other provinces in—or sorry, other jurisdictions in North America; we'll get the provinces yet at some point.

And yet we don't see that in Bill 18. There's nothing in Bill 18 that talks about reporting instances of bullying. I know that there are former teachers within the context of the Legislature here, and I'm sure that some of them are shocked. They're shocked that there isn't a requirement for that reporting. They should be shocked. Now they might be too concerned and too worried about saying that in the context of their caucus and feel that there might be repercussions for that, but I would hope that they would have enough courage to quietly go to their caucus colleagues and say, I never knew that Bill 18 was so weak. I never knew it was so ineffective. I didn't know it was the weakest antibullying bill in North America, but now that I know, can we look at changes? Will the Minister of Education have an open mind to look towards changes in committee? Because this would certainly be a good start; it'd be a good place to start, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at the state of Florida. Now many Manitobans are familiar with Florida; they have a familiarity because they travel to Florida at times, Mr. Speaker, and so, you know, that I picked the state of Florida for that reason because of the—it's all done very, very strategically, but I know that many members will have a familiarity with the state of Florida. So let's look at their legislation when it comes to reporting instances of bullying.

The school district policy must contain, at minimum, the following components: (k) this is—comes—this comes part of the way through their

legislation. So (k) a procedure for including incidences of bullying or harassment in the school's report of data concerning school safety and discipline required under section 1006.09(6). The report must include each incident of bullying or harassment and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals. The report must include in a separate section each reported incident of bullying or harassment that does not meet the criteria of a prohibited act under this section with recommendations regarding such incidents. The Department of Education shall aggregate information contained in the reports.

Now that's interesting, Mr. Speaker, and then it goes into greater detail in some ways than either Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut or Delaware, but there is one common theme and that is that there is a reporting. There is a reporting mechanism to the Department of Education. And what the legislation in Florida says that there must be a report that includes every incident of bullying or harassment and the resulting consequence, including discipline and referrals.

Now that speaks to what I was referring earlier in my comments, Mr. Speaker, that it's important to have consequences, that there needs to be consequences outlined. Now Florida goes one step further. Not only does it have consequences or referrals for bullying, but they then require that to be reported to the Department of Education. So the incident of bullying needs to be reported, but then beyond that it also has to be reported in terms of what was the repercussion of that, whether it was discipline or a referral. Very instructive, very important, because you know now in Florida that when they're dealing with issues around bullying, they're dealing with information; they're dealing with full information in terms of things that are happening within their individual school system.

Not the case in Manitoba. In Manitoba the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) puts a dart board on the wall, she throws a dart and wherever it lands that's what she decides to do because she doesn't have the information. She doesn't know how many cases of bullying are happening in Manitoba. She doesn't know the reasons for it; they've not done the research. And they don't require the individual schools or divisions to report that to the government and it's not in Bill 18. There's no provision in Bill 18 that requires that kind of reporting, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:50)

And certainly I'm going to have those discussions and, when we talk to people within committee who come forward to—

An Honourable Member: What state are we in?

Mr. Goertzen: It's—we're now, we're referring to Florida, Mr. Speaker.

But, when you look at the—when I talk to people who are coming to committee, I'll be asking them, do you think it's important that we have reports that go to the minister or go to the public about how often bullying is happened? We'd want to know, is that information actually available? Why wouldn't you?

Bullying is obviously a very serious thing. All of us accept and acknowledge that bullying is a problem, but we won't know if the problem is getting better. We won't know if the problem is getting better, Mr. Speaker, if, in fact, we don't compile the statistics. We won't know if things are getting better or if they were getting worse if we don't take the minimal effort—and I would say it's minimal—if we don't take the minimal effort to compile the statistics.

And that's all we're asking. And I don't think it's asking a lot. It's for the government to be open-minded to an amendment on this bill that would allow Manitoba to report how often bullying is happening in our province. Because then we can tell if the problem, in the years to come, is getting worse or if the problem is getting better. And then, as a result of that, we can take the appropriate measures. It's called fact-based decision making. Why wouldn't you want to make the best decisions based on the best information that you have? I think that's what the public would expect from us. I think the public would say, we want you to make your decisions in the Legislature based on information, based on facts, based on data. Not this government, not interested in that. Don't want to know how bad the problem is; just want to pretend they're addressing it, even if they don't have the information. And all the buttons in the world won't give you that data. It won't give you the information.

I know it's a little harder. It's a little harder to ask for the data than it is to put on a button, but I think it's just as important to ensure we actually know what the information is, so that we know what we're talking about. Wouldn't we actually want to go to the public and say, we know what we're talking about. We know if the problem's gotten worse or gotten better because we're asking the school divisions to report to the department and then to the public how

often bullying is happening within our schools. It seems logical to me, Mr. Speaker, even if it doesn't seem logical to the government.

Let's look at the state of Kentucky, Mr. Speaker. Now, in Kentucky, a beautiful state—I've not had the opportunity to visit it, but, you know, I've seen the Kentucky Derby on TV—it looks like a beautiful state, and, if I ever get a chance to leave this Legislature, if the session ever ends, I might have a chance to visit Kentucky. But, in the state of Kentucky, it says: The Kentucky Department of Education shall (b) establish and maintain a statewide data collection system by which school districts shall report by sex, race and grade level all incidences in which a student has been disciplined by the school for a serious incident, including all nature of the discipline, or charged criminally for conduct constituting a violation of any offense specified in the KRS Chapter 508; KRS 525.070 (harassment), occurring on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation, or at school functions; or KRS 525.080.

Now, some of that, of course, Mr. Speaker, is legalese in terms of their particular statute that—though I don't expect members to be familiar with—but the point is, they actually have a data collecting system that they actually require their schools, in the state of Kentucky, to bring forward data and to feed that data into the Department of Education, and, from there, the Department of Education can make decisions on various things related to school violence or bullying. And one would think that that makes sense, that the good people of Kentucky have found it reasonable to have a data collection system—it doesn't have to be complicated, doesn't require setting up another bureaucracy. And I'm always hesitant when I suggest anything to this government—that they might have to set up another minister, a new department, another division and a deputy minister. It's not that complicated. You simply have the school divisions and the schools report back to you the incidences of bullying.

I don't want them to have to fire up another minister or buy her another government car; just simply want the school divisions to report back on a semi-annual or an annual basis. It doesn't have to be within five days, as we already saw from the state of Delaware, I believe it was. We just simply want a system where we know how often bullying is occurring, and now we've seen that that system exists in Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, and there's more, and I

intend to go through more of those, but the point that I'm trying to make is that none of this is revolutionary; none of this is radical; none of this is something that you should consider to be outrageous or something that's not done in any other jurisdiction. I know that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) will want to get up and rant and rave about how this is all some sort of right-wing conspiracy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've already listed off a number of different states, and I'll list off provinces in the future, none of which are dominated, I don't think, by any particular ideology, but all of which have determined that it's important to have data by which to make decisions by. And I want to—as I need to wrap up my comments for today and I've got more to say in the future—but I want to say that all of us, all of us acknowledge that this is an important issue, that the issue of bullying is something that is concerning to us as legislators, to us as politicians; it's concerning to us as parents; it's concerning to those who are grandparents; and it's concerning to those who just simply want to ensure that all kids feel safe within our schools.

We talked this morning about the importance of schooling and ensuring that all kids in the world have access to primary education. I think that we as legislators did ourselves a service by agreeing to the resolution that was brought forward by the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha). I think we all did ourselves a service by speaking well of the importance of having an education or having education accessible to children around the world, both boys and girls. I think we all did ourselves a service by acknowledging that, but we need to do more than that.

Here, in our own jurisdiction, we have the opportunity to bring forward legislation that will stand the test of time, that will not just have a stamp on it that says antibullying bill, but that will actually be effective, that will actually do something in the future so that we don't have to, every year, bring forward something else because the previous legislation didn't have an impact. That wouldn't serve any of us because I think we all believe that all kids need to be protected and that no kids should be bullied for any reason. I believe that that's certainly what motivates this caucus. And we want to ensure that the legislation that we end up with on the other side of this session, whenever that might be, is something that's going to stand the test of time, that it will ensure that kids can actually be protected, ensure that kids are actually going to feel safer, to the extent

that legislation can do that, to the extent that legislation can be effective in that. We need to ensure that we're bringing forward that kind of legislation.

So my point in today's discussion—and I might have opportunity in the future—was to show the different reports that have been studied in terms of what's effective with antibullying legislation.

I looked at a particular study that reviewed 622 antibullying programs and picked out the most significant points of those programs, and I compared it to Bill 18. And what I discovered and what I shared with this House is that not one, not one of the what was considered to be the—not one of what was considered to be the effective points in those pieces of antibullying legislation are contained in Bill 18, not one. Not one showed up. You'd think by accident they would have fallen into one of them but not one.

Then I had the opportunity just to speak about facts and the importance of having facts when it

comes to this legislation, and we looked at several states. And I'll look at several more when I have the opportunity to continue my comments about how they require that bullying be reported and statistically compiled so that those states can understand that the problem, and their citizens—most importantly their citizens and the parents—can understand that the problem is getting better or worse.

Doesn't exist within Bill 18, so my hope is that the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) understands and knows that there are improvements that can happen to this bill, but only if she's willing to listen, only if she's willing to listen to Manitobans who will—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) will have unlimited time.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, August 6, 2013

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