

**Second Session – Forty-First Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXX No. 80A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, November 7, 2017**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
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MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, November 7, 2017**

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Please be seated. Good morning.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Madam Speaker:** As previously agreed, this morning the House will be debating Bill 209, The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act at 10, with the vote to take place at 10:25.

The House will then consider the private member's resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Burrows on Immigration from 10:30 to 11:15, and from 11:15 to 12, the House will consider the private member's resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) titled Conflict of Interest Legislation in Manitoba is woefully inadequate and must be overhauled.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, as House leader, wondering if because of Judy's unable to speak temporarily, if it were possible if we could get leave of the House to move to the resolution which the MLA for Burrows has and do that first and, hopefully, by the time that's completed that the MLA for Kewatinook would be ready to speak on her bill.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to begin the morning by moving to the private member's resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Burrows on Immigration? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

So just to clarify, then, it will be from 10 to 10:25, 10 to 10:45? *[interjection]* Okay. And just to

clarify for the record, the resolution will go from 10 to 10:45.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**Res. 27—Immigration**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I move, seconded by the member from River Heights,

*WHEREAS immigration has enabled Manitoba's population to grow and as a direct result all Manitobans are better off as a whole; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Nominee Program is the sole reason for the high number of immigrants coming to the province; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans wanting to see family members immigrate to the province has become the driving force behind the success of the program; and*

*WHEREAS since Jean Chretien and Gary Filmon agreed to the program in the late 1990s, so many things have changed and the program is critically important to the province.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider having an all-party committee conduct public hearings on a Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program and provide to the Legislature a series of recommendations on the future direction that should be taken with respect to the program.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Burrows,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider having an all-party committee conduct public hearings on the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program and provide to the Legislature a series of recommendations on the future direction that should be taken with respect to the program.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'm happy to have this opportunity to stand and bring forward a resolution that asks this government to consider having an all-party committee to conduct public hearings on the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program.

I don't believe that it's news to anyone that I am, in fact, very passionate about immigration in our province. Perhaps this passion comes from growing up in the community that I did or my travels or my studies. I can only speculate, Madam Speaker. All I know is I'm incredibly motivated to be a strong advocate for immigrants. So I hope the minister considers this resolution.

This resolution is all about working together. Immigration, specifically the Provincial Nominee Program, has enabled our population here in Manitoba to grow. It has provided us, Manitobans, the ability to be proud—proud of our diversity, proud of reuniting families and proud of our flourishing province.

Madam Speaker, the nominee program was created in the late 1990s, and what was so opportunistic here is that it was created under what I like to call a mirrored government; Jean Chretien was our Prime Minister and Gary Filmon was our Premier. We currently have a Liberal Prime Minister and a Conservative Premier, which gives me hope that we can restore the program to what it once was.

Now, I won't spend too much time on the fact that the NDP destroyed the program. We already know that, and, with a little arm-twisting and, you know, sleeping on marble floors, the government has started to improve the program.

I believe the greatest thing that this government has done for the Provincial Nominee Program since forming government is they opened up a line of communication between MLAs and Immigration Manitoba.

When I first got elected, I was asked to leave Immigration Manitoba central office because, supposedly, lawyers and politicians weren't allowed to sit in on seminars. I called every possible line and left tons of messages. There were no lines of communication, and, Madam Speaker, it was very frustrating.

This government, however, has been incredibly helpful in restoring a line of communication. So, for that, I want to say thank you to the minister responsible. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that I have taken full advantage of this line. With that said, there's still so much to be done.

On average, I get 10 immigration cases brought to my constituency office or, myself, Monday evening at McDonald's a week. And I imagine other MLAs are receiving similar caseloads. So that

would average 570 immigration cases a week, and that's a lot.

The questions and concerns that I am hearing are pretty consistent. People are questioning why they are being rejected even though they meet the criteria. They are questioning why they have to pay \$500 when historically the program ran fine without the money. They are questioning why they have been waiting over three years still to this day to hear if they are going to be accepted. They are questioning the fact that the program used to focus on family reunification, and now there is no way to bring the families to Manitoba. Madam Speaker, these are incredibly fair and legitimate questions, and they need to be ironed out.

I genuinely want to work with this government to improve the program and, Madam Speaker, they can take the credit; I don't care. But I am offering my experience and, keep in mind, I have literally travelled across the world to help people immigrate to Manitoba through the Provincial Nominee Program. And my constituents, they are being very gracious in offering their experience with the program—things that worked well and things that we could learn from.

Madam Speaker, this is a unique ask, but we should be working together as a province to make the Provincial Nominee Program a success story, and what better way to do that than have an all-party committee conduct public hearings on the program to form some recommendations?

I hope that all MLAs will consider supporting this resolution. Thank you.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** I'm just wondering why does the resolution fail to criticize decades of mismanagement of the Provincial Nominee Program under the NDP?

\* (10:10)

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** You know, I'd like to thank the member from St. Norbert for the

question, and, if he was listening to the resolution, I actually do criticize the NDP, not that that's the point of the resolution. Everyone in the House is very aware that they did destroy the program. But I do believe that together we can come, even the NDP, and repair it to what it once was.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Oh, Madam Speaker, it's an interesting position for the member to take, look—seeking an all-party committee and seeking some unanimous support here in the House and then going after particular parties and trying to make this political, but if she does want to go down that road, I'll give her a equal opportunity.

How does the government's changes to the PNP program create barriers for newcomers trying to come to Manitoba?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** The member from Concordia asks a great question, and, no, I don't really want to go down that road, but you're right. One of the barriers that the current government has put in place that needs to be further discussed is the \$500 fee for applicants to be forced to pay if they are accepted into the program. It is a huge barrier and it is taking advantage of immigrants. Thank you.

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I do want to thank the member for bringing this resolution forward. There is—a number of steps have been taken to improve the PNP under our government. and I just wondering if the member would believe that this would be creating additional red tape for the program.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

No, I don't believe it would be creating additional red tape. I actually think it's an incredible opportunity where we're going to get more Manitobans engaged. We're going to hear first-hand—it's like a committee meeting. We're going to hear first-hand from Manitobans what the real issues are because I know I'm hearing them. I have no doubt that other members in this House are hearing the issues too, so why not come together, use all of that knowledge to try and create a solution.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I can already hear alliances being broken here in the House this morning. I thought we were all starting on the right page, but maybe not.

Maybe I could just ask the member, Madam Speaker, she made—she wasn't elected but she has some knowledge of the program under the Harper

government. I'm wondering if she can comment on the support that the Harper government had for Manitoba's very successful Provincial Nominee Program and the barriers that that created for people trying to come to Manitoba.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member from Concordia. As far as the Harper government goes, I do not know to what extent he was personally involved with the provincial nominees. All I know is the nominee program here in the province under the Harper government did not—was not successful, and so I can't imagine there was a huge influence from his governing.

**Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan):** I thank my friend and colleague from the North End, of Burrows. I have a question about wording in the resolution itself, suggesting that Provincial Nominee Program as the sole reason for immigration to Manitoba.

Of course, could the member explain: Are people allowed to immigrate other than that program, or why does she not appreciate immigration outside of this program for our beautiful province of Manitoba?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan for the question; it's a great one. I am actually extremely appreciative for all the ways that you can immigrate to Manitoba, whether that be tourist visas, visiting visas. There are many streams.

What is very unique about the Provincial Nominee Program is it's something that is the initiative of our province, something that we want to be proud of, something that we can tangibly do to make a difference, and the Provincial Nominee Program, in the past it was focused on family reunification. The other streams of immigration are not focused on family reunification. It was very specific and very—it was a great tool for our province.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Like the member from Burrows, I do also have many individuals come into my office seeking help. I've also spent time working in a Member of Parliament's office. I do know how successful it is for folks to come through the federal stream, but I just wanted to know from the member why she thinks it's important to put an emphasis on family sponsors and on community links in the application process for the Manitoba nominee program.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for Concordia again for the great question.

I think that the reason I put so much emphasis on family reunification is because it is one of the only ways to immigrate to Canada to be with your family. We need this program to continue focusing on family reunification. We want to encourage people and to continue to be proud of moving here, and oftentimes—would you want to be split up from your family members if you immigrated to a new country? I feel that it would be fair to say no, you wouldn't, and so we want to have a way, an outlet, that immigrants and their families can move to Canada and, in our case, Manitoba.

**Mr. Reyes:** Yes, the member and I, we go to similar events; we represent the same type of segments of population here in Winnipeg, and I see her father a lot—frequently, and I applaud her father for doing the work that he's been doing federally for a long time.

I just wanted to ask, I've talked to many immigration consultants who see that the \$500 application fee, when a applicant becomes successful, they've talked to applicants who see no problem with that fee because that fee actually goes back to training, to refugees, English training and faster processing times. I just wanted to know her comments on that.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member from St. Norbert for the question, and he's right, we run into each other quite often at many events.

With respect to the \$500 fee, it's not a determining factor. It will not determine whether or not an immigrant will come to Manitoba. Unfortunately, it is a fee, though, that historically we did not have when the program ran successfully, so using it as an excuse to pay for other training that may be needed is not viable, because we didn't have it in the past when, in fact, wait times were even shorter, the program was even more successful.

So, the only way I can perceive it is that immigrants are being taken advantage of because they are willing to pay the fee in order to immigrate to Manitoba.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Once again, as the member is someone that works in the newcomer community, she'll have a good sense of this. I thought it was an appropriate place to ask this.

She may have remembered that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) made allegations that the vast majority of newcomers depend on social assistance, that they create high unemployment rates.

Does she feel, with her experience in the newcomer community, that that statement is true?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member from Concordia, and that statement is absurd.

**Mr. Smith:** Again, I do thank the member for introducing this resolution, but we know that the PNP is one part of the process to bring people to this province. The federal government plays a major role in facilitating immigration to Canada and Manitoba as well.

Just wondering if there's any discussions between the provincial and the federal Liberals for a long-term plan of settling immigration and refugees in the province.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** See, Madam Speaker, it's ideas like that that are brilliant and we should be discussing inside of this committee.

As far as I'm aware—I'm not the minister responsible for Immigration, so I don't know if there are lines of communication opened up between the feds and the Province with respect to immigration, but there should be, and nothing defeats the purpose. Like, we totally can make that happen.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Again, this is maybe not directly in line with the resolution before us, but it is something I think the member, being a young person in this province and working with the newcomer community, might have some insight onto, and something I'm interested in as the Education critic for our caucus.

What would the impact of this government's tuition fee hikes have on the newcomers who are coming to this province trying to make a better life for themselves?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I'd like to thank the member for the question, and it doesn't pertain specifically to the resolution. And I can say that the increase to tuition, it does not help in any way, but again, doesn't pertain to the resolution. Thank you.

**Mr. Curry:** You know, it's almost a year and a half ago that people in my community demanded that we get rid of the NDP government because of their mishandling of so many files, including immigration. But since then, when working with communities through the PNP program, there wasn't any mention that people in my community have asked for an all-party committee on this.

I'd like to ask the member, who exactly is demanding this all-party committee, or is it all her brainchild?

**Ms. Lamoureux:** My brainchild, I like that. No, it's not all my brainchild, but I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan for bringing forward the question.

The people who I've been consulting with are majorly—they are my constituents. It's people who are consistently coming to me and asking me questions and wanting updates on their statuses. The other people I've consulted with are immigration consultants, and as the member from St. Norbert pointed out, they're not necessarily upset with the track that we're going down, but they know that there's so much more that still needs to be discussed and is not being discussed. They want to have the opportunity to bring these ideas forward, and I believe a committee like this would allow for that.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

\* (10:20)

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is now open on this resolution.

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak on the member's Resolution 27 on immigration.

So this morning, we here are—we are here to talk about immigration. I, myself, am a son to immigrant parents. My father immigrated to Canada in 1968 from the Philippines and, God bless his soul, he's still alive and well, working to this day at the tender age of 71, the same age as the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino).

So, Madam Speaker, with reference to Resolution 27 on immigration, our PC government knows that immigration is a driver of economic growth, a way to address targeted labour market needs and the gateway for innovation in our economy.

During the time when my father came here, Manitoba was in need of skilled workers in the garment industry. So, just like now, under a Progressive Conservative government and, just like in 1968, under a Progressive Conservative government, we recognize that recruiting and settling skilled workers will help us grow our economy while adding to Manitoba's diversity—just

like back in 1968, when my father immigrated to Manitoba along with the other garment workers and nurses from the Philippines, many of whom are still alive today and remain close family friends.

I'm also proud to say that those same garment workers will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in Manitoba next year, a truly remarkable accomplishment for my father and those who came with him to Manitoba.

So I'm somewhat puzzled when the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) puts forth a resolution on immigration when it was a 'panitoba' PC government, which was led by our former Premier, Gary Filmon, a great Sisler Spartan, I may add, along with former MLA for River East, Bonnie Mitchelson, another Sisler Spartan alumni, who helped create what we know as the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program.

On June 29, 1998, Manitoba and Canada signed agreements on the realignment of settlement services and on provincial known as the Provincial Nominee Agreement. The objective of the Provincial Nominee Program was to provide Manitoba with a mechanism to increase the economic benefits of immigration to Manitoba based on industrial and economic priorities and labour market conditions.

I am proud to be part of a continued lineage of Progressive Conservative MLAs coming from Sisler High School, especially two former MLAs who I mentioned earlier, who've I've great—who I have a great deal of respect for knowing that immigration is important and it is still important to Progressive Conservatives and our PC government.

But what we inherited was a mess, Madam Speaker, and, under the NDP, the PNP became so poorly managed that both the stream for skilled workers and the stream for business suffered.

Thank God Manitobans made the choice, the right choice, by electing a PC government last April to fix the finances and repair the services, services and programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program.

And may I remind those who sit in opposition, they made people who put their lives on hold overseas wait for up to three years, and only to get their PNP applications refused.

The previous government made not only applicants wait but their family members wait, causing them a lot of grief and anxiety. They say

they represent immigrants, but the NDP represent immigrants poorly, as a backlog of more than 5,100 applications had compiled, some dating as back as 2013.

And I'm sure the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) experienced what all of us new MLAs, especially my colleagues who served in the City of Winnipeg, experienced: having meetings with constituents who would tell me their family members waited and waited, only to be denied.

False hope, shattered dreams because of NDP mismanagement.

But there is a bright side, and I would like to call it blue-skies, as opposed to sunny-ways, approach.

Our PC government, under the direction of the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart), has ensured the current Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program now has enhancements by improving processing times and fast-track nominations to provide job-ready, skilled workers, including international students with opportunities to build a prosperous future in Manitoba.

Manitoba's rich in diversity with abundance of ethnic communities across our province, and this was on display this past Sunday at the opening ceremonies of the Philippine Basketball Association of Winnipeg event held in the constituency of the honourable member from Kildonan. And we were also joined by the honourable members from Southdale and Burrows as well—[interjection]—no, Madam Speaker, it's called the Philippine Basketball Association of Winnipeg. We see not just players of Filipino ethnicity, but East Indian, Chinese, indigenous, European backgrounds or, let's just say, all people, because as a province, as Manitobans, we embrace all who come to Manitoba to make Manitoba their home.

My father took that chance and made Manitoba his home, and I'm proud to say that my father, along with two other gentlemen from the Filipino community, formed the first ever Philippine Basketball Association league, back in 1973, and all they had were eight teams, where now, the current league today has around 80 teams. It just shows you how much the game of basketball has grown in our province, and you could correlate it—how much immigration has grown in our province as well.

Speaking for myself, from the growing Filipino community in Manitoba that I belong to, I've seen the growth of this particular community when it

comes to immigration first-hand. Whether it's in the highly populated areas in the northwest part of the city, the rural areas where I visited this past summer in towns such as Russell, where my good friend from Riding Mountain is the MLA, or locally in my constituency of St. Norbert where I see the growth just recently, when I went to mass this past Sunday at Mary, Mother of the Church.

And I can say the same thing for the East Indian community, the African community, the Chinese community, that these communities are growing because I represent my diverse constituency of St. Norbert in Richmond West, Waverley Heights, Fairfield Park, Bridgewater Trails, South Pointe, Prairie Pointe, and, last but not least, St. Norbert.

And, as a PC government and as the MLA for St. Norbert, we know immigration is important. Our PC government wants to see immigrants succeed who have applied through the Provincial Nominee Program. And that is why a new labour market strategy will support renewal of the PNP by better matching skilled workers to Manitoba employers.

Manitoba's 2016-2022 labour market projections indicate a strong need for skilled immigrants. These projections indicate a need for almost 170,000 job openings, 25 per cent which are to be filled by newly skilled immigrants.

The new PNP includes innovative partnerships with industry, priority selection of skilled workers, priority selection for business nominees and a cost-recovery model that reinvests revenue into improved settlement and training supports.

What else has our PC government accomplished? Well, as of April 2017, the backlog created by the NDP has now been cleared, and what we have found out, some of the former backlogs dated back to 2008. Want more good news? The full elimination of backlog has allowed the department to guarantee return of a service of six months' processing time for 80 per cent of applications.

Improvements in Manitoba's immigration system, not because of a protest by camping outside the minister's office in a sleeping bag, but real, worthy work undertaken by my colleague and good friend from Portage la Prairie. So, just like what our government has proven through positive action and improving services, program services like the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, we will take no lesson from the previous government. And why jeopardize a now improved and enhanced Provincial



Nominee Program, for the member from Burrows, who's suggesting that we consider having an all-party committee?

Listen. It's great to debate, and I applaud the member for putting forward this resolution. Our government has engaged with Manitobans through town halls and prebudget consultations, where the member was present last year, in St. Norbert, and, again, I applaud her for attending, unlike the members opposite.

We will always take recommendations, advice and input under advisement, and we will always do what's best for the interest of all Manitobans. And Manitobans made that choice on April 16th of last year.

My father moved to this province, which allowed me the opportunity to serve this great country for 10 years in the Canadian Armed Forces, to receive the education and work experience as a business owner. And I used that experience to get elected and serve the people who welcomed my mother and father to Canada. What a great country Canada is, and what a great province Manitoba is.

And our PC government wants to continue to do what's best for Manitoba, for a better Manitoba—a better Manitoba for newcomers, as we want to continue to be the home of hope, just like it has been for my father for nearly 50 years.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there any further debate?

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I—pleased to rise in the House today to put some words on the record regarding this particular resolution. You know, I guess this will be—probably the last time I get to speak before Remembrance Day, so I would like to say, on behalf of this whole Legislature, that we—a thank you to the men and women who serve our country and who have served our country to defend our way of life and the freedom that we now enjoy.

Of course, we know that often we take for granted the rights and privileges that we have in this country, that just to be in this House today and in this Chamber today to express our views in a peaceful and democratic way—I think that's something that we can never forget why that is possible and it's large part by the men and women who have served this country. And so, again, I want to thank all our veterans and, on this Remembrance Day, I know I'll see a few members

from both sides of the House at the Remembrance Day ceremonies.

\* (10:30)

Last year, the member from St. Boniface and I attended the Remembrance Day ceremony at the—in St. Boniface so I'd like to—and, of course, the member from St. Vital, as well, so we always appreciate the teamwork we have in this Chamber when it comes to representing the people who I think deserve our representation the most.

The PNP program is a great program and, of course, I—my colleague from St. Norbert had indicated that this was a initiative under the PC government in the '90s, course, spearheaded by Bonnie Mitchelson of that time.

**An Honourable Member:** Thank you, Bonnie Mitchelson.

**Mr. Smith:** Exactly, a good thanks to Bonnie Mitchelson for that. Yes.

I know that was—it was a—it's a great idea. Ultimately, the federal government is responsible for immigration to the country of Canada, but we wanted to, you know, fill in the gaps and fill in the labour market gaps that were so badly needed at the time and it continues to be needed.

So this PNP program's an excellent program to do just that, and I know that since the past 17 years under the previous administration who basically—well, I know, I mean, other members have referenced this before, that they've made a mess of the entire situation and unfortunate that there are good people that are trying to come to this country, come to our province to deliver and bring their skill set to us. And, of course, it was politicized under the previous administration, essentially driven to the ground where you've got this incredible wait time for people to come to this province. It's almost embarrassing to do that.

But I'm pleased that our government on this side of the House reduced the wait times, the backlog. We implemented a small fee. We believe that many of the people coming to this province have the ability and the means to pay for that so we know that that was not much of a hindrance to come to Manitoba. In fact, it just sped up the process and I'm very happy to see that that's the case.

I—in my question and answer, or the question-and-answer portion of the—this resolution, I did ask the member from Burrows if her and her

federal colleagues were in discussion about a long-term plan for people coming to this province. We've seen some refugees come across the border, escaping what they think is a—or what they felt was persecution or possible persecution just south of the border, and it does leave a few questions on a table with respect to, of course, the security of the people coming across the border.

We've seen a young gentleman cross in the middle of winter, lose some of his fingers due to frostbite, and what a horrific story that is. This gentleman fled—of course, coming from Africa he had no concept of what a Manitoba or a northern hemisphere winter is actually like, and so of course he was ill prepared. Losing digits such as fingers was a tragedy for him. He has made a full recovery, of course, but, you know, I think it just should open our eyes to seeing that there's—there is an issue here and it needs to be addressed.

Of course, it does also open up the opportunity—or the unfortunate opportunity of security risks at the border. The border's that porous. You know, it's one thing to have people coming across the border like families looking for refuge; it's another thing for more nefarious types coming across the border, and we just don't know who's coming, who's not. And I think that's something that perhaps—you know, the Liberal Party of Manitoba does often speak for the federal Liberals in Ottawa so they can—I can imagine that maybe at their next joint caucus meeting have a discussion with the Prime Minister and of course the minister of immigration and see if there's some kind of conclusion or some kind of a solution to this problem and, hopefully, that they can do that.

I—again, I do appreciate the member for bringing this forward. I know we have a 'goord' working relationship with both parties here and I know that the member from Burrows and I often attend a lot of the same events.

Just this weekend the member from St. Norbert and this member from Kildonan and the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) and myself were at the Philippine Basketball Association that morning and, of course, at that time we always go forth non-partisan. We always enjoy ourselves and I like to see the member from Burrows at a number of events. I know that we are both quite involved in the Sikh community. I've been named Andrew Singh Smith, and I think we'll find a Punjabi name for the member from Burrows at some point, but I can't think of one right now.

I do want to thank the member from Burrows for putting her name forward to run for leadership of the Liberal Party, I know it's quite an honour and especially someone at such a young age to do that. It's good to see a new generation of people being involved in the political process. I do want to thank Dougald Lamont for winning the race, ultimately, but I do know that the member from Burrows has a bright future in her party and I do want to commend her for all her good work in that.

One thing I do want to highlight, though, again, and I mentioned this in my question-and-answer portion, just wondering about the red tape of creating another committee on this PNP. I mean, I understand the role of committees in this House and this Chamber are to examine and perhaps discuss the more detailed of minutiae of legislation and of programs, but, at some point, if, you know, creating an extra committee just to discuss something that I don't know is necessary at this point.

Like I said, we've relieved the backlog on the PNP program. We have a huge number of people coming from all over the world with great skill sets to fill that labour market gap. I'm just not sure how essential that committee would be. Sometimes it's good to discuss these things, but sometimes you just get a bunch of politicians together to talk for the sake of talking, and I'm a little bit concerned that that may not be as productive as we all hope, although well intentioned it may be.

I would like to say that I—as my colleague from St. Norbert had mentioned, you know, he, himself, is a son of immigrant parents, and, myself, my grandparents were immigrants. Of course, they immigrated before the PNP program was in place, and they told me stories about how they were not well placed to—in the employment sectors here in the province, and they had to make their own way. And the PNP program's great because it just narrows and it brings a bit of a—makes it a little bit more efficient, I guess, is a good way to put it, more efficiently allocates people into the sectors that they would most be best suited for, and, of course, that not only helps themselves but it helps us and it helps employers in the province.

You know, I talk to a lot of employers, especially small-business owners in my community, and a big thing is they always say, well, it's hard to find jobs, especially some of the things like fast food and those types of industries where it's just hard to get people to come and work for them. You know,

there's a lot of people coming to Canada that may have a great skill set but they want to settle in and get working right away; that might be a great opportunity for them just to get their foot in the door to settle into the province and the city. And, you know, and a lot of people coming from other countries are quite often very hard-working, very entrepreneurial and industrious, so we welcome them with open arms because we know that every time that someone who brings that hard-work ethic to the province, we all benefit from it. And I do recognize there's a need for the PNP program, and I think that our government's done an excellent job, so I do commend the minister on that—on the great work that he's done and the—look forward to the continued progress in that—on that program.

So I do thank the member again for her—for bringing this resolution forward. Again, I don't know if it's something that is overly necessary at this point, but I do recognize that there is always a need for more immigrants and more people to come to the province. So, again, I thank her for that and continue to work together at—our caucuses do work quite well together, and I do appreciate that. It's not too many times that that happens. You've seen at the federal level it doesn't happen quite often, and I know it's nice to see that Friendly Manitoba does actually mean something here, it's not just a licence plate saying. So—

**An Honourable Member:** Brilliant idea.

**Mr. Smith:** Yes, it's a brilliant idea. Thank you.

Again, I thank the member again, and 'accruiate' the—all the attention that's being paid to the PNP program that was spearheaded by the PC government in the 1990s under Bonnie Mitchelson.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** I thank the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) for bringing this very important private member's resolution. I would like to respond to the negative statements by the member for Burrows, but before the negative ones, let's speak about the positives.

We all know Manitoba is a friendly place, such that our licence plate says Friendly Manitoba, and, indeed, we Manitobans welcome newcomers. We not only welcome them, we appreciate them, we value them because our economy will benefit from skilled workers and their families.

All of us want Manitoba to be an attractive home for newcomers and whoever—people coming from all over the world. We understand the importance of

attracting young families and skilled workers to settle down in Manitoba and make it a permanent home.

\* (10:40)

Some of Manitoba's most influential business leaders, policy-makers, health-care professionals and educators are newcomers who came through the provincial nominee program. They work hard to improve our province and make life better for Manitobans. They're not only employed in government, they're also very much a part of the business community.

Instead of celebrating provincial nominees achievements, it was unfortunate the Premier (Mr. Pallister) says they have high rates of unemployment and use of social assistance. This is particularly troubling. I'm very much involved in my community, and the preponderance of people who are unemployed is so small compared to the number of people who are gainfully employed from the very beginning, few weeks after their arrival.

I, for one, I have the opportunity, and that was in 1992 when we came, there was recession. Thankfully, fortunately, after a few days of sleeping in and getting over the jetlag, when I first went out to look for an employment, readily I found one. And that seems to be the experience of many, many new immigrants from my community and from other communities. Because the community is such a close-knit community, we help one another; there's always a neighbour or a friend or a relative of a relative, or a friend of a friend, who will come and help refer that person, the newcomers, to their workplaces. And, thankfully, because of the good reputation of many members of my community as far as work ethic is concerned, employers tend to be considerate and even partial to members of my community who are applicants, or who are wanting to find work in the community in Winnipeg.

I have here some stats—just a sec—that will more or less tell a story of how our government has managed the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. We acknowledge that it was our former colleague, Bonnie Mitchelson, under her watch who started the nominee program; however, when our party took over in 1999, it was intentional that we will improve this program and we will make sure it will be the best nominee program in the country.

So I'd like to share with the member for Burrows a few stats, and also the rest of my colleagues. In

1999, and that would still be part of the Conservative government's legacy, 500 applicants were nominated. In 2000, and that's under our watch, 1,095 came; in 2001, 970; 2002, 1,530; 2003, 3,115. In 2010, 12,180; 2011, 12,340; until 2015 over this, way higher than this summer, which—

**Madam Speaker:** When this matter is again before the House, debate will remain open.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

### Bill 209—The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** As previously agreed, the House will now move to private member's Bill 209.

The honourable member for Kewatinook, on Bill 209, The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux), that Bill 209, The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Ms. Klassen:** Thanks to the members of the House for letting me recover from a rowdy caucus meeting this morning.

I'm going to quote from Bonnie Bricker: Since Reid passed away there have been at least three or four other families in similar situations who have come up against PHIA and not been able to get help for their loved one, which has resulted in suicide.

Madam Speaker, mental distress, suicide attempts and drug overdoses are serious issues that plague many people within our province. These issues are multifaceted and treatment—beyond treating physical well-being is much needed for the patient to live a healthy and normal life.

A major component to surviving these ordeals is the support of loved ones, family and friends that care for the patient. Just as a person who has survived a major heart attack is greeted with family upon successful recovery, so, too, must these people.

But for the loved ones to be there for them when they get out, they must first learn that they have women gone in to receive treatment. I am sure that everyone of us have visited loved ones in hospital

care. The heart-wrenching feeling of hoping and praying that they are okay is indescribable.

There have been circumstances where family members need us to be there for them, but we are not always made aware. In the current health-care system a patient's loved ones are contacted when an individual has a heart attack or stroke, ensuring that they can receive both physical and emotional care in their hospital visit. However, this does not always extend to all incidents where a person can be sent to the hospital.

When a person is admitted for mental distress, suicide attempt or drug overdose there is no guarantee that their family and friends will be contacted to know that they will need to come and support the one they care about. This is due to the language currently used within The Personal Health Information Act and our Mental Health Act.

Bill 209, the mental health amendment and personal information amendment act, aims to change this. The bill aims to clarify the language used so that a patient's circle of care can be contacted in the case of brain and mental issues when there is reason to believe further health or safety concerns exist for that individual.

We know that mental distress, suicide attempts and drug overdoses can be as a result of or leave a person feeling as though they are alone in the world. Being admitted to a hospital and not having your friends or family there can you—can leave you feeling even more hopeless than when you went in. That can only reinforce the problem that the patient is facing and stands to make things worse.

The medical professionals aim to save the life of the patient. But we know the road to recovery does not end at being discharged from the hospital. It is largely family and friends that are needed after surviving a suicide attempt or surviving a drug overdose or those facing a mental issue.

Ensuring that doctors and other health professionals know that they are capable and allowed to contact the loved ones of a patient, particularly those admitted for the aforementioned issues, is critically needed. This is an issue we hope to put an end to.

I hope today that we are able to support this bill and continue to support Manitobans in times of crisis.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (10:50)

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** I thank the member for bringing forth this bill. Any time that we are looking at reviewing or changing aspects to any acts or bills, there's a process you go through to consult with many of the stakeholders who will be impacted or will possibly benefit from these ideas. And I'm just wondering if the member for Kewatinook could share with the House the stakeholders and the various people that she did consult with when coming up with this idea for the bill.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Yes, thank you for the question. This bill was drafted based on the recommendations of our brain—our Liberal brain health report of which we consulted with over 60 organizations and individuals, attended 11 events and held a forum. We worked closely with Bonnie Bricker of Mood Disorders in drafting the legislation.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** I think that we all are quite aware that, although there has been a lot of information in the media and certainly in schools about mental health, there still remains a stigma for those who have been diagnosed and living with some of these struggles. And I'm just wondering if the member for Kewatinook thinks that maybe these amendments could potentially infringe upon the rights of those living with mental illness and who do not want their information shared, even with family.

**Ms. Klassen:** Thank you for the question. We modelled the bill after the BC legislation, which is considered by advocates the most open in informing a circle of care. Obviously, those are those personal issues that she's referring to that where such a circumstance may exist. And obviously, it is still within the rights of the physicians and the medical team there to determine what is the best course of action in regards to those specific cases.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** Again, I'm curious about the BC legislation that this idea was largely based on, and wondering if there is any data or research that has come out of that legislation where people have felt that potentially the health-care workers or those in charge of the care of those with mental illness have maybe misinterpreted or made the improper decision at that time. Just wondering if there's any data that the member is aware of.

**Ms. Klassen:** In drafting of the brain health report, one of the large issues we encountered was families' inability to get the information. And so, that's what we kept hearing over and over at those—with those organizations and those—and at those forums. And so, that's why we were—we wanted to table this sort of legislation to clarify, because it is actually the clarification that we're—piece that we're after just because when somebody goes in for a heart attack, family and friends are contacted, but that is not the case when it is specifically a self-inflicted injury.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** Just to refresh a little bit that our government had started a review of all of our FIPPA and PHIA rules and looking over how we can maybe improve or assess how well they are working at the present time. And I'm wondering if the member, at the time that we were doing our review, did she voice any of these concerns in that review last spring?

**Ms. Klassen:** Yes, it was through our—my—one of—my colleague, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that brought up this in those circles. We understand that Minister of Health was committed to having a review of the mental health and addictions, but we're still slowly waiting for those to actually be put into place, so I thought, you know, make sure he's advocating for those people and making sure that Bonnie Bricker—we won't have another sample of what Ms. Bonnie Bricker had to go through.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** And, of course, when we talk about mental health care and mental illness issues, that's sort of within the broader scope of health care in general, and certainly the member for Kewatinook has been paying attention to some of our struggles with dealing with the federal health-care transfers, and certainly those increases being reduced, which would definitely have helped to go towards more mental health services. And I think that that's a lot of what these amendments and this bill is speaking to, is our need to look at what our mental health services

and what we offer Manitobans and how we need to do a better job at that.

So I'm just wondering if there's any comments about how the federal transfers can—have affected our mental health-care resources.

**Ms. Klassen:** Yes, and I have been working diligently for our First Nations and our people to get more money here in Manitoba. And one of the benefits of doing that was we—the funding went directly to the Aboriginal organizations, something that was never done before under the Conservative government, whereas they continuously slashed programs that would decrease the number of mental health issues in our North.

And so I am very proud to stand by what the federal government has been doing in respect—we now finally have a mental health crisis team that continuously goes into our northern communities and addresses those issues bang on.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** And I know that we have heard some very touching and personal stories from the member from Kewatinook in terms of her own personal experiences and support networks through various needs in her communities, and I'm wondering if the member can acknowledge some of the potential negative outcomes from some of her amendments that she's proposing within this bill. It's important not only to be able to support your stands, but also to recognize the potential impacts it can have that may not be all positive.

**Ms. Klassen:** That is a very good question, and I can easily ask that of the Progressive Conservatives, as well, because, you know, a lot of their policies that are putting forth are literally ending up with people dying and suffering irrevocable damage. You know, the—one of my constituents in Churchill, due to the cuts, he wasn't able to fly out after he had a stroke and now is irrevocably damaged because he wasn't able to get the help that he critically needed at that time. We're still waiting for the stroke unit that was promised, and so we'll keep plugging away at doing our job and we hope that this government does theirs.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

#### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** If not, debate is open.

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** I'd like to start by saying that I believe that this is a very good opportunity to speak about a subject that many

people kind of shy away from, or maybe are even afraid to talk about, and that is the mental health of our citizens. It certainly is a concern for more than a small portion of our population, but yet the stigma that can follow sometimes a diagnosis, or even previous to the diagnosis, some of the behaviours that are displayed before you know what's going on, certainly has been an issue and one that we all should be working harder to be able to open up and talk about, share our views and our supports for one another, because we should never take our mental health for granted. When you are in a healthy position, you can offer your support to those who maybe are suffering and need that extra support.

\* (11:00)

I guess, in a note of friendly comedy banter here, I just have taken note that the members for Point Douglas, Kewatinook and Burrows have all sported a little bit of the Conservative blue and it's a little bit helpful with the mental health of boosting my arguments here that maybe we're all a little Conservative at heart, after all. And, again, I think that laughter and comedy is actually one of the most effective tools when it does come to mental health. If you haven't laughed or smiled in a while, you may want to look into that and help boost your mood here and there.

Madam Speaker, Bill 209, the mental health and personal health information amendment bill is definitely one that took—I took interest into. We've—I've had definitely some personal experiences within mental health in—both in helping to support others and receiving support myself, and there's always a difficult balance when considering privacy rights and disclosure of information without consent when necessary.

I think that we all can agree that the more people who are in your support circle, the better the outcome will be, regardless if you're talking about physical injury or illness or a disease or even a mental health issue. The more people involved in your care and in your support after your care, certainly, is a determinant of a better outcome for all.

Our government recognizes the importance of protecting privacy legislation in a society that has not yet removed the stigma for certain illnesses and conditions. As much as we talk about removing stigma, I think we are sorely lacking on the actions to do so. There is still ridicule. There is still mockery out for physical disabilities, for physical differences as well as mental illness and mental health issues.

Although some amendments can stem from very good ideas within this act and intention—and the intention is it is the responsibility of our government to properly consider all impacts of changes to ensure that our citizens are not inadvertently harmed. That is both the responsibility and the work of government, is to make sure that we are not rushing into decisions based on our emotional stance and, certainly, we all should feel emotional about subjects.

That is not a bad word, it is not a negative word to be emotional, and for our society to try to paint it in a negative light I think is detrimental to who we are as a society and who we are as individuals because those who are freely able express their emotions are a heck of a lot in a better position than those who hold it in and express it in different forms, mostly anger.

So, Madam Speaker, this is why our government launched a review of both The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the FIPPA, and The Personal Health Information Act, or PHIA as we shorten it. We wanted to look at some of the impacts of our decisions and how they affect some of the decision making in the health-care professions and other institutions as well who are required and have an obligation to share information.

We wanted to make sure that the individual's privacy is protected. It is one of the fundamental aspects of receiving good care. When—especially speaking about mental health, when you go into your doctor's office and you are sharing personal information and sometimes thoughts that you yourself don't even understand, it is paramount that you know at—that you can trust that health-care provider not to be sharing information that doesn't belong outside of that discussion you are having. And that is one way that people will open up and actually share the deepest thoughts in order to receive the help that they so desperately do need.

So the PHIA, or Personal Health Information Act, was enacted in 1997 with significant amendments made in 2010 and 2011, and our government recognizes the need to hold open consultations with the ultimate goal of keeping the act up to date. It is paramount to get the balance right between respecting personal health information and ensuring patient needs are being met, Madam Speaker.

With the progression of technology and increased use of social media it is important to review our laws and make sure they are relevant and effective with the changing demographics and

behaviours of our society. Understanding the effectiveness of increased information sharing where it benefits children in care, our government introduced The Protecting Children (Information Sharing) Act. However, this was not done without consulting with experts and those who it would impact. Information sharing is important, but it is only beneficial when done properly from the beginning.

Madam Speaker, I had mentioned earlier that we live in a society that has struggled to remove the stigma for certain illnesses or conditions. I would like to share a personal story from back in 2006, shortly after my third child was born. I'd struggled with some very disturbing thoughts, lack of sleep, obviously, with a newborn.

I did not know what I was suffering through, but I did know that I felt alone and isolated, and I put my effort into hiding these scary thoughts and feelings that I was having in terms of not being fit to be a mother, that the world would be a better place without me in it. But I couldn't leave my children. That is what held me here and kept me going and reaching out for help.

I remember reading an article, Madam Speaker, about postpartum depression. It put a name to what I was feeling and what I was experiencing. That was the first indication that there was hope out there for me. And I sought help, and I remember reaching out to my doctor at the time, and I said, I do believe I'm experiencing depression. And at the time, it was not well supported, I would suppose, and the response I got was, oh, Sarah, you're just overwhelmed with a new baby, and you're tired.

That was not the response I was hoping for, Madam Speaker. It had taken me a long time to work up the courage to admit that I was struggling, that I was not functioning where I needed to function, where I started to believe that I was a bad person. And I pushed it and I said, no, I do believe I am experiencing depression.

And the response I got was, well, because you used the word depression, I am obligated to send you for help. That, too, was not very helpful, although it did result in me seeking out help and being referred to someone who did identify that I could use support, both in therapy and medication. And I'm very thankful that I was surrounded by very supportive family members and friends to help me seek the help that I needed.

However, the outcome of that was we—the very next year, when I had recovered and I was no longer taking medication because I had learned the tools to support myself through some of those tough situations, we had sat down to renew our mortgage. And one of the questions was, have you ever suffered from depression? Madam Speaker, my treatment was four months long in terms of the medication, and I recovered well and I became a support for others. And I answered it according to what the question was, and I was told I was going to be denied for the insurance on our mortgage, that I had to be depression-free for two years in order to be reinstated for this insurance.

And it was one of the first times that I felt that it was a negative impact for actually doing the right thing: seeking help and getting treatment.

Madam Speaker, that was voluntary disclosed information. My concerns with this particular bill is the disclosure without consent and the possible ramifications of what that can do in someone's life, and I think it needs a little more research.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I just want to say a couple of things in respect of this bill, and I just want to say miigwech to our sister colleague from Kewatinook for bringing forward this important piece of potential legislation.

\* (11:10)

I do just want to say, you know, when we talk about mental health and, in particular, when we talk about mental health realities, experiences and concerns particularly within the indigenous community, it is something that most of us as indigenous peoples experience it very, very early on. And in particular, with the epidemic of suicide in our communities, it is a very, very serious issue not to be taken lightly and certainly not to be taken lightly in this House, you know, and certainly not to be taken lightly in this House with commentary on members—female members' manner of dress and what colours they're wearing. The two discourses just don't mesh together when we're talking about suicide and when we're talking about epidemic levels of suicide that our people face, which the member from Kewatinook, the member from Point Douglas, the member from The Pas, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), the member from myself, know all too well. As little children, we go to funerals from folks—from our relatives who have committed suicide.

So, you know, I respectfully say that, you know, commenting on female members' clothes is inappropriate at this time and place.

I do want to say that we take this bill very seriously and our suggestion, Madam Speaker, is that this bill be sent to committee to review it in its totality and see how it can move forward.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** I just wanted to put some words on the record regarding this important bill.

There are some concerns that I think we would like to not overlook and I'd like to discuss some of those. I would agree, certainly, with what has already been stated, that these issues hit close to home for many and probably all of us. I haven't asked everybody in this House, but my guess would be that not one of us has been unaffected by this in our family, perhaps in our personal lives. And so we do need to handle this with a degree of delicacy and care and thought as we consider what might happen with disclosing our own mental history or being in a province where the mental health history of others could be more accessible.

As an employer—as a previous employer I was in a situation where I had employees who had struggled in the past and overcome, some had overcome those struggles and for others that was an ongoing thing. And I'm concerned that opening up those very sensitive parts of someone's life could expose that individual to circumstances, knowledge that may adversely affect them or may be unhelpful for them possibly in their ongoing recovery process.

And I think, too, that we do like to talk about recovery as if it's a destination and for some that is the case. But I think for many people it's not something that happens one day and then they leave it behind. It's something that can be ongoing, can even be a lifelong journey. But there is hope, and I think that medical technology and advances are offering us new information which can bring hope to people who are hopeless.

A friend of mine was—attempted suicide more than once and was really in a awful situation. But—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

As was previously agreed, a vote on Bill 209 will now take place.



The question before the House is second reading of Bill 209, the medical health amendment and personal health information amendment act.

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now consider, as previously determined, the private member's resolution on conflict of interest legislation in Manitoba is woefully inadequate and must be overhauled, brought forward by the honourable member for Assiniboia.

### RESOLUTIONS

(Continued)

#### **Res. 28—Conflict of Interest Legislation in Manitoba is woefully inadequate and must be overhauled**

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** I move,

*WHEREAS the Conflict of Interest Act in Manitoba has not been changed or updated in 30 years, with the exception of the addition of a Conflict of Interest Commissioner; and*

*WHEREAS conflict of interest legislation is largely intended to assist elected representatives by providing an objective understanding against which they gauge their actions, and to satisfy themselves and the public that they are acting appropriately; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans need an update to the long overdue system of conflict of interest rules that will greatly enhance the public confidence but not*

*compromise the privacy interests of elected provincial representatives; and*

*WHEREAS broader disclosure, which is required in the 21st century, must include all personal and private interests and be extended beyond financial measurements; and*

*WHEREAS the investments markets, federal and provincial taxes, and ease of investing through electronic methods has changed dramatically and quite significantly in the last few years; and*

*WHEREAS MLAs currently do not have to disclose their penny stock holdings, stock holdings, ETFs, bond holdings or property owned outside of Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS the federal guidelines are far more comprehensive than those in Manitoba and the Federal Finance Minister has recently been accused of conflict of interest surrounding property outside of Canada and family trusts; and*

*WHEREAS individuals who are hired as exempt staff or constituency assistants for Ministers and MLAs using taxpayer funds often also serve as members of the Board of Directors of political parties, organizations, or fundraising activities, thus creating a potential conflict of interest based on those competing roles; and*

*WHEREAS it is in everyone's interest to strengthen the conflict of interest legislation with the philosophy "trust and verify".*

THAT IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to update the conflict-of-interest legislation to include better definitions of immediate family, all investment vehicles, property, trusts, corporations in Canada or liquid assets that are traded anywhere in the world by employing the legislative—the legislation introduced by the member of Assiniboia on conflict of interest as a possible framework for new and much-needed made-in-Manitoba conflict-of-interest legislation, which also includes disclosure and appropriate political activities for those who work for or with MLAs or Cabinet ministers.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Assiniboia,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to update the conflict-of-interest legislation to include better definitions of immediate family, all investment vehicles, property, trusts, corporations in Canada or

liquid assets that are traded anywhere in the world by employing the legislation introduced by the member of Assiniboia on conflict of interest as a possible framework for new and much-needed made-in-Manitoba conflict-of-interest legislation, which also includes disclosure and appropriate political activities for those who work for or with MLAs or Cabinet ministers.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, the first piece of legislation that was introduced in '06 when Prime Minister Harper took office was the accountability act. The accountability act was a comprehensive piece of legislation that required office-holders in the government, the parliamentary secretaries, Cabinet ministers and so on, and other people who are Privy Council, to disclose their assets. And it was a very binary choice: you could put it in a blind trust or everything had to be liquidated, and that had to be done before you took office. That was it. And the conflict of interest from the previous regime had been mitigated to a large extent.

However, it has—history has demonstrated that perhaps the conflict-of-interest legislation, though the toughest in Canadian history, was not tough enough.

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

So you can imagine my massive disappointment, when I became an MLA, to see that the conflict-of-interest regulations in Manitoba are a complete and utter joke. They do not even come close to what the people of Manitoba would expect in the 21st century.

Madam Speaker, let me just take a moment. Conflict of interest is for everyone. It's not only for the public, but it's also to assure the public that the politicians are doing the best that they can. The conflict-of-interest legislation has not been changed in Manitoba for 30 years, with the exception of a Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

The conflict-of-interest legislation is largely intended to assist elected representatives by providing an objective understanding against which they can gauge their actions and to satisfy themselves that—and the public that they're acting appropriately.

\* (11:20)

Manitobans need an update to this long overdue conflict-of-interest rules with—in order to enhance greater public confidence while still respecting the private interests of elected provincial representatives.

Broader disclosure, which again, in the 21st century, I think, is what people want—including personal and private interests, that extend beyond simple financial measurements.

Investment markets, federal and provincial taxes, the ease of investing through electronic methods, has changed dramatically in just a few years, never mind the last three decades.

Madam Speaker, MLAs currently do not have to disclose any stockholdings, any penny stocks, ETFs, bond holdings, or property outside of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we've all seen what's going on in Ottawa. The federal guidelines, which are far more comprehensive to those of Manitoba, yet the Finance Minister has found himself in a lot of trouble. He's been accused of a conflict of interest surrounding property outside of Canada and family trusts, both of which are not included in our conflict-of-interest legislation.

There's another aspect—conflict of interest. Individuals who are hired as exempt staff or constituency assistants for ministers and MLAs, using taxpayer funds, often serve as members of the board of directors of political parties, organizations, or in fund-raising activities, thus creating a potential conflict of interest based on competing roles. Who's who's boss?

We need to have a conflict-of-interest legislation with the philosophy of trust and verify. Some issues were made about a presentation I made to an organization called Manitoba Forward. On June 27th of this year it was this presentation that was used, apparently, according to the media, the next day, as a reason to remove me from the PC caucus. This presentation, by the way, can be found on YouTube in its entirety, and I went through why we needed a conflict-of-interest legislation in Manitoba.

And I used a hypothetical example of the marijuana changes, the regulatory changes. Now if you knew ahead of time that company A was getting a licence, or company B was getting a licence, or the distribution method of how this new substance would be dealt with, one could make a lot of money with even knowing it positively or even if you knew the company wasn't going to get a licence. Same goes for mining industry or environmental regulations and so on.

But in this—in the presentation that got me removed, I raised—yes, I raised the issue of conflict of interest and a thought exercise on marijuana.

Today, the government is releasing its marijuana plans, and I'm not suggesting that there's a conflict of interest, but because we don't have proper conflict-of-interest legislation in Manitoba, there's no way of knowing.

This was a huge mistake by this government for not introducing conflict-of-interest legislation right off the bat so when I introduced it in the fall, based on Saskatchewan's model, the government should have seized the opportunity. But, no, they ignored it again.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of responsibility as MLAs. The public needs to be assured that MLAs are not benefiting from those positions, but just not the MLAs. Federally, we had to disclose our—what our spouses were—their intentions, their holdings. Manitoba, there isn't even a proper definition of immediate family. What about spouses? What about common law? What about children? What about children under 18 living at home? Children under 18 not living at home, children over 18 living at home, children or cousins or brothers or sisters all could benefit hugely from having some information that's not available to others, and not one attempt has been made to fix this.

This should have been, like it was with Stephen Harper, the first priority of the government, and it's shameful that the government has not done anything in this regard, and perhaps that in itself is a conflict of interest. Thank you.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period up to 10 minutes will be held and then questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member of another party; any other subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** I thank my learned colleague, the MLA for Assiniboia, for bringing forward this legislation.

I think the issue or the idea of conflict of interest—very topical, given what's going on in Ottawa right now. I'm wondering if the member can share whether or not the legislation that he's proposing would prevent situations that we're seeing in Ottawa with the Cayman Islands offshore accounts tax-savings scandal.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** That's a good question. Madam Speaker. The legislation that I proposed dealt with property in Canada and I did that with the logic that, perhaps, Manitoba did not have the—you know, decisions made in this place could not affect overseas. However, the situation has changed. We now see that it is not acceptable to the Canadian public that there be assets held overseas that are not properly disclosed—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I thank the member for Assiniboia for raising this today because it is topical. There was a real-time example given of changes coming and developments in the cannabis industry. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) came out last week and demanded that his ministers and senior staff declare conflicts. I take it that the member doesn't believe that that timing works and is a reason why this resolution is important. Could the member for Assiniboia expand on that?

**Mr. Fletcher:** Well, I—that's an excellent question. The—this should have been done immediately. The announcement I think he was referring to, last week is just—it just—it's just that, an announcement with no teeth, no substance, no way to back it up, no way to investigate, and what about the family members? It doesn't have to be the individual themselves. In fact, that would be massively unethical and immoral, but within the rules, I guess, this crazy rules—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member's time is up.

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Yes, I'd like to ask the member, the background that he has put into this particular resolution that he's brought forward. Understanding what's happening at the federal level, of course, is one of the things that is of a concern to all of us, but at the same time, provincially, we don't have the same jurisdiction that the federal ministers and/or federal members have, so I'm wondering: Has he conducted a cross-jurisdictional scan to see what the best practices are in other provinces similar to ours?

**Mr. Fletcher:** Thank you for the question, and he's right; the provinces do not have the same jurisdictional regime as the federal government. However, he's incorrect in that, yes, I have done a scan of other provinces. I came up with Saskatchewan, Brad Wall's conflict-of-interest

legislation, and I copied that because at least that was stronger than what we had here. So, yes. And I can say every other province has stronger legislation than us and newer legislation.

There're some people here—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I will ask an open-ended question. Do you, as the proponent of this resolution—do you propose any penalties for violating the conflict-of-interest legislation besides what is in the law now?

**Mr. Fletcher:** Well, thank you. Wow, you know, penalties—that—what a novel concept. We're not even at the point of finding out. There's no way of finding out if someone's in a conflict of interest because the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has no power or the resources necessary to check it out.

And, by the way, there's so few things that have to be declared, there might as well not be a conflict-of-interest code in Manitoba. We have MLAs that were not born the last time the conflict-of-interest legislation was updated in this House. What a—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Martin:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask my learned colleague an additional question, and it has to do with the—Manitoba's Conflict of Interest Commissioner, whether or not the member for Assiniboia has engaged the commissioner in conversation about his proposal and his views about the necessity to update the current legislation and how it fits in the context of, as he indicated, his cross-jurisdictional scan.

**Mr. Fletcher:** The answer is, yes, I have. And, yes, I think we have a—the conflict of interest—the commissioner's a good person, but I think he's depressed. He's depressed, perhaps not in a medical sense, but just in a public-policy sense because he knows that people with intent or ill intent could do a lot of unethical and immoral things under the current regime and—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Swan:** Yes, I'd like to ask the member for Assiniboia to expand on something he said in his comments. He said that he found an appropriate

philosophy for conflict-of-interest legislation was trust and verify. And I'd ask the member for Assiniboia just to expand on that for the House this morning.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Well, I'd like to thank the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) for quoting Ronald Reagan on a important concept. Yes, just like in nuclear disarming, you want to trust your opponent, but you want to verify that they're doing what the—what you say that they are doing—or you think they're doing. And right now, there's no way to verify. And it's a trust; it's big-time trust.

So—and I don't think that kind of trust exists in the 21st century for public officials, quite frankly.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** The member opposite talks about the need for stronger legislation for a conflict of interest.

Does the member from Assiniboia agree that this process should be thorough and comprehensive, and that the subject matter is important enough to merit more work beyond that of a private member's statement?

**Mr. Fletcher:** I'd like to thank the member for the comment.

And what a—which raises the issue why wasn't it done as one of the first government priorities? We've been here 18 months, the bill was introduced in March. What else could we have—what else can a private member do? The government's only talking about it right now because they are forced to because the independent member resolutions come forward. The government can't block that, and they can't block independent private members' bills either.

So that's how you get things done around here apparently.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Any further questions?

**Mr. Graydon:** In response to the question that I asked before, the member suggested that he had copied the resolution from Saskatchewan, but he didn't mention any of the other regulations that are other conflict-of-interest resolutions or laws in other provinces the same as Manitoba. And so I—I'd ask him to expand on where he got our information that he put forward here.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Well, first, I'd like to explain the difference to the member between a resolution and a

bill. The bill that I introduced was based on the legislation that Brad Wall brought in in 2004. A resolution, which is what we are talking about now, is a statement of WHEREASes and then BE IT RESOLVED.

Do you agree or do you not as a Chamber? That is the difference. So before we get into—maybe the member should focus on just definitions of parliamentary terms before you move beyond that.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The time for question period has expired.

#### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The debate is open to any speakers.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Thank you very much—

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Richmond, on a point of order.

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to address comments made by the member for St. Johns this morning, who said that I had used humour to dismiss the seriousness of suicide.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I absolutely reject this interpretation and am beyond horrified that the member for St. Johns would state such a thing about any member, whether in her own party or another. These words by the member for St. Johns were hurt—were meant to hurt and they certainly hit their mark.

Having experienced a suicide in my own family, this is a reminder to be careful with your words. You never know what someone else is dealing with.

I am disappointed that the member would use this tactic on such an important discussion and choose to ignore an opportunity to set aside partisanship—aside in order to work towards positive solutions.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on the same point of order.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I don't recall specifically saying that. What I did say in my

comments was that the member for Fort Richmond chose an opportunity when we were speaking about suicide and a range of mental health issues, to comment on the dress of two female colleagues in this House. That is what I spoke about.

Now, if the member wants to project whatever she is going on right now onto me, that's fine, but there was nothing but a comment on the fact that she was commenting on the member of Kewatinook and the member of Point Douglas' blue manner of dress today, which is inappropriate for anybody in the House to comment on what anybody is wearing in this House, and certainly not in respect of female members in this House.

Miigwech.

\*(11:40)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Well, I'll take this under advisement in order to review this on Hansard, so we'll come back with the—on a decision on this later, another day. Okay.

\*\*\*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So we'll continue with the debate.

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the opportunity to get up and make a few brief comments on the conflict-of-interest resolution being brought forward by the MLA for Assiniboia.

I do note with disappointment, however, given the member for St. Johns' comments about that it's inappropriate to comment on female clothing, and yet her own leader that sits right beside her made far more offensive comments. I think he said, and I'm quoting: the waitress bringing me lunch is wearing a Star Trek uniform, hashtag 'jizzin' in my pants. End quote. Now, I would suggest those kind of comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are far, far more offensive and require a similar condemnation by the member opposite. But I don't think we're going to get that today or any day.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the subject of the Legislative Assembly in Executive Council—Conflict of Interest Act, we believe that transparency and accountability is a hallmark of any government and should be the hallmark of any government. There are, of course—and we see it scattered throughout the history books—a number of governments that all fall short of this target. During the Q & A this morning with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), the issue and the comment was brought forward, but the

time limits of this larger discussion—and hopefully it will foster a larger discussion into understanding for Manitobans and Canadians at large as to what's going on in our country's capital, in Ottawa with the Cayman Islands offshore tax haven scandal that seems to have engulfed the federal Liberal party as they try to hide their funds.

But, that being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't need to look any further than our own backyard and the previous administration when it comes to conflict of interest and those kinds of scandals that come with it. And of—obviously, when you have those issues and conflict of issues that arise you have an erosion of trust and, really, it's incumbent upon us as elected officials to work to rebuild and foster trust between ourselves and those that elect us.

So I'm sure that a lot of my colleagues are newer colleagues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they may not be fully aware of the background of the situation. So I'm more than happy to share. You know, it actually started back in March 21st, I believe, in 2012. And, as we all are aware, during the committee stage and Estimates—and it can get a bit repetitive and long-winded, especially when members opposite under the previous rules had double the amount of time to make a response to any kind of question. But, you know, at the end of it my colleague, the—actually, the current minister of transportation, asked a question during a Liquor Control Commission hearing, and he asked, is the MLCC a season ticket holder of the Winnipeg Jets? And the acting president of the liquor commission responded, yes. So we—they held—the Liquor Control Commission held 10 season tickets.

And so the minister of transportation, you know, obviously looking for information about potential conflict of interest and that, just asked the minister responsible, the—Jim Rondeau, actually, the former minister—or, member for Assiniboia, whether or not he, the minister, had been any—to any Jets games using those MLCC Jets tickets. And the minister said no, and so, as doing—fulfilling the role of opposition, the current minister of transportation, the member for St. Paul asked—or, East St. Paul asked if they could have a list of those tickets. And Mr. Rondeau indicated that, yes, he would get him that list, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I should note, when we're talking about—you know, when you're talking about 10 season tickets, actually, it doesn't sound like a lot until you realize those 10 season tickets actually equal 440 actual

games. So the—but, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP being the NDP decided to, you know, just put the issue on the backburner and hope that the then-opposition and media would forget this seemingly innocuous question during committee. And it was about six, six-and-a-half weeks later that the question was again asked about where that list was.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it turns out that behind the scenes during this time frame, there was a flurry of activity as NDP MLAs and cabinet ministers quickly got wind that they're—they were going to be exposed for their fleecing of Crown corporations for free Jets tickets. And so in early April, Gord Mackintosh, the minister of Conservation, and a former minister of Justice too, you know, acknowledged and reimbursed the cost for four Jets tickets that he had received.

Stan Struthers, the minister of Finance, who had previously denied that he'd ever received any tickets, somehow remembered that he'd gotten some tickets. And then he proceeded to repay those, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Erin Selby, then the minister of Advanced Education, you know, somehow miraculously realized that she had received some free Jets tickets.

So there—so apparently, you know, that was about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the members opposite, the NDP government of the day decided, you know, maybe it's a—maybe the media and the opposition will just let this go. And so the NDP said, well, don't worry. We're working on a policy, a conflict-of-interest policy so that we can deal with these sort of unfortunate one-off situations.

But it turns out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there's one thing the NDP are very good at, it's half truths and half information. And so, it turns out that they revealed that no, no, indeed it wasn't just those three original NDP Cabinet ministers. Actually, there was eight Cabinet ministers that received free tickets to Jets games.

And so—well, it went on and on. And then finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Friday in a very rare—actually—4 p.m. news conference, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), the previous minister—or, premier, got up and said, well, actually it's 13. The number is now 13 NDP MLAs shook down various Crown corporations looking for Jets tickets. And a number of them, actually, are current MLAs in House: the member for Minto (Mr. Swan),

the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), the former interim leader of the NDP—all recipients of free Jets tickets.

In fact, one of my favourite pictures, actually, is—the member for Minto made the Free Press as he's wearing his Jets jersey, and he's right there, right at the glass, pounding at the glass, you know: go, Jets, go. And apparently, he was pounding on a desk only a few days earlier, demanding those free Jets tickets, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, you know—so, it's no wonder that the member for Assiniboine thinks that there are necessities in terms of beefing up and enhancing our legislation and conflict-of-interest legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think members opposite, whether it's their Jets ticket scandal—and one final, actually, footnote to that is the fact that the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger)—actually, it was interesting. He threw his colleagues under the bus on, actually, a couple occasions, releasing lists, formal lists of the NDP ministers and MLAs that demanded free tickets of the Crown corporations, and interestingly, his own name wasn't on this list.

And it wasn't until November 21st, 2014, so almost two years later, that the MLA for St. Boniface, the then-premier of the province of Manitoba, had to stand in the Legislature and, quote—apologize for, quote, misleading the House—end quote—for attending a Jets game at the Bell MTS centre back on December 29th, 2011, so almost three years prior.

He—apparently, he had forgotten that he'd been in a luxury box, and despite his ability to name names when it came to his own colleagues, whether member for Minto or Wolseley and the other 13 MLAs and Cabinet ministers that got free tickets, he had inadvertently forgot to include himself in that list.

\* (11:50)

So, when it comes to issues like that, I agree with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) that we all need to be held accountable as legislators. I don't think that any MLA should become elected and feel that because of their title, whether it's a minister or just simply MLA, that they're somehow entitled to their entitlements. And that was the, you know, whether that original line is actually from the federal Liberal situation, but it—clearly, that attitude soaked into the NDP as a government for 17 years. They clearly—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

Before we can continue with debate, I just want to warn everyone that we should be not commenting about the point of order that was—earlier this morning. But we should be focusing on the private member resolution.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the chance to speak to this today.

And, you know, there's a lot of ways you can tell when this government's in trouble. And the most sure one is when the member from Morris is actually put up to speak on something, because we've heard yet another negative, backward-looking speech, which completely ignores the point that's been brought forward by the member for Assiniboia today.

But this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the way that this government does crisis management. And it was interesting. And I—actually, the member for Assiniboia didn't mention it, because he only had 10 minutes to put his points on the record. Of course, it was just last week that the member brought forward his organ donation bill, and the government, which had completely ignored it, had refused to talk about it, suddenly had a conversion on the road to Damascus and decided they were going to strike an all-party committee. So I do give the member for Assiniboia credit for raising that.

And, of course, it was only when we had an Opposition Day motion on the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) suggested health-care tax, it was only hours before that motion was going to be debated in this House, and every single member of the government was going to have to stand in their place and either vote against our motion and keep open the possibility of an—of a health-care tax, that suddenly they changed their tune, and out popped the Premier and three ministers, like the horsemen of the apocalypse, to say that they had suddenly changed their mind.

And here today, we have an issue that's been brought forward by the member for Assiniboia, and I think he's been very, very candid today, saying that, you know, he drafted his legislation, but now, you know, with things happening in Ottawa and things happening here, well, maybe there's even more we need to do on the area of conflict of interest. And, as the member says in his resolution, whereas the federal guidelines are far more comprehensive than

those in Manitoba and the federal Finance Minister has recently been accused of conflict of interest surrounding property outside of Canada and family trusts—yes, that's Bill Morneau, the federal Finance Minister, who, of course, makes very, very important decisions.

And how did that story start to break? Well, it turned out—it turned out—that it was discovered that Bill Morneau owned a foreign corporation that owned a villa in the south of France. And, of course, many Canadians across the country said, well, how could a politician forget that he has a foreign corporation that owns property in a beautiful part of the world? But here in Manitoba, we said, well, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was pretty obvious to people in Manitoba that Bill Morneau maybe is just part of a group of politicians, including our Premier (Mr. Pallister), who are prone to forgetting these things. And I agree with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher); the rules need to be changed.

And, you know, the member is right. They haven't been significantly changed over the past 30 years, and there's some responsibility of the previous government and responsibility of the government before that one.

But what do we have? We have a Premier who strides around and says, aim higher, even as he continues to shoot himself in the foot. And it was in the summer of 2016 when, of course, we were asking many questions about the Premier's inability to make sure that his disclosures are fully appropriate, his inability to always tell the same story when he's asked difficult questions, that said, of course, there would be conflict of interest legislation coming forward.

Well, that was back in early 2016, and here we are now, in November 2017, the last days of the session. There has been nothing coming forward for this government, and I think the member for Assiniboia is being very candid by saying, look, I'm bringing this because I want this government to take this issue seriously.

You know, I don't want to drive next to the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), because I think he drives down the road looking in the rear-view mirror. He needs to go to his Premier. He needs to somehow get access to people in his Cabinet—I'm not sure how that would work for him—and say, you know, we actually need to go ahead and do what we promised people we were going to do. We need to move ahead if we are anything vaguely connected with the open

and transparent government that we keep telling people we are—but we're not—we need to do something on this.

So maybe the member for Morris should save some of his vitriol, leave it out of this House, and maybe he should be positive, talk to his Premier, get his Premier to apologize just once for the things this Premier's done, for the things he's said to the media, for the things he's said in this House, for the things he's said to Manitobans, which he is, unfortunately, unprepared to do, because we have a Premier that just can't seem to apologize for his shortcomings.

So I think this is a good resolution. I think it should spark debate, and I think the government should move ahead and change the conflict-of-interest laws. We know there are some members over there that won't like to do that, though. They won't like to do that because it is their hope that they can quietly have them or their families or their off-shore trusts or others benefit from decisions they make, and that's not the way it ought to be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think this resolution has merit and I'm glad I've had the chance to put a few minutes on the record.

Thank you.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** And, yes, I guess my first comments would be that we are not going to take any lessons from the New Democratic Party for whom ethical lapses are routine matters.

And when the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) talks about the negative background remarks from the member from Morris, as he pointed out, the member for Minto and 13 other members of his caucus had no ethics. They had no ethics or integrity and had to be forced to admit their conflict of interest, not once, but more than once.

And what comes to mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the next conflict of interest that was huge. It was a huge conflict of interest. It might be referred to as the Tiger Dams. The Tiger Dams, which were brought forward by the minister at the time, was Minister Ashton, who was going to buy from a friend of his without going to Treasury Board, without any approval of any type and, on top of that, this friend of his made large donations to his campaign and perhaps to other campaigns, because Mr. Ashton did not operate on his own, and there was supervision, and I would suggest at the time that the minister for St. Boniface was well aware of what Mr. Ashton was doing.



And so was the inner circle—the inner circle of the Cabinet—and one of them would have been the member for Minto (Mr. Swan). We already know that he has no ethics or integrity. He has already admitted that today and again, at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it became apparent that perhaps the Conservative Party, who were in opposition at the time, knew about this. All of a sudden, the member for Minto and four other ministers—top ministers in the NDP government of the day—decided to take on their leader and revolt—revolt because of this, this action, this conflict of interest that they had been aware of for a long time.

And the sad part is they didn't notify the rest of their caucus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so the member from Wolseley had no idea. Even though he had breached a conflict of interest earlier with Jets tickets, he did not know at the time that what these five rebels knew. And today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, four of the rebels showed that they had ethics and

they had integrity, and they refused to be part of this party. They did not put their names forward to run again. Only one—only one with no integrity and no ethics actually came back to the trough and said we've got to change things; we have to change things now. After I have breached a conflict of interest twice, he wants to change everything because he's in opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, when it came time—when it came time when they challenged the leader, the five rebels challenged the leader and created a leadership race, the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) did not—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) will have six more minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 7, 2017

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