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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 203—The Liquor Control Amendment Act
(Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention)**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 203, The Liquor Control Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention). Are we dealing with this? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 203, The Liquor Control Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time I've had the opportunity to introduce this bill for second reading. In fact, the Liberal Party has, over the last number of years, tried, or at least attempted to raise the profile of this issue by calling upon the government to take action on dealing with FASD. It's unfortunate in the sense that as parliamentarians we bring forward private members' bills, or through question and answers, question period, we raise the issue and call upon the government to take action and do something in regard to this particular disorder.

The point that I try to hammer home in as many opportunities as I get is that this is a disorder that is a hundred percent preventable. FASD occurs when a pregnant mom makes the decision to drink while she's pregnant, and the consequences of those actions are fairly significant.

We believe that the government does have a role to play in terms of education and, in a good part, that education can be promoted and encouraged by passing Bill 203.

It was just even a few minutes ago that I found out that the government allowed for a program at the Mount Carmel Clinic that provided preschool

opportunities for young children to be able to get one-on-one counselling and assistance for those that have FASD, a program that no doubt had a great deal of value to it, but the government has allowed that particular program to come to an end. That is very recent. We're talking just last month.

It is very discouraging when I hear things of that nature, because the New Democrats like to come across as progressive thinkers on social policy, but that just has not been the case with this government.

To the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) who mocks at that particular gesture, I think that he needs to reflect on just how much this government is not as progressive when it comes to social actions.

In fact, what will likely happen is you'll get someone like the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) stand up and she'll talk about education and we don't need the legislation. It can be very, very frustrating when we get ministers of the government not recognizing the value of good ideas that come to the floor of this Legislature and want to really make a difference in the province of Manitoba.

Ultimately, I believe that anyone that is progressive in the social area would see the merit of this bill and allow for it, at the very least, to go to committee.

I would suggest that the government of the day only need look at someone at Judy Wasylycia-Leis who has talked about having a federal bill. That doesn't mean that the government should offload its responsibility and say, we'll wait until Ottawa decides; it's Ottawa's responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the government is wrong. It is not Ottawa's responsibility. Manitoba can play a lead role in this issue, and we look for leadership from the Province of Manitoba on this issue. It can be very easily accomplished by this government bringing forward or supporting this legislation. At the very least, allow for the bill to go to committee. If Judy Wasylycia-Leis can see the merits of this bill, I don't understand why it is that the government of the day doesn't see the merit for it.

In fact, I would suggest to you, if the government of the day was still in opposition, that

this is indeed a bill that they would be in favour of, speaking of and calling on the government to bring it forward. Why? Because when the NDP typically are in opposition, they're looking for good ideas and they're asking for the government of the day to act on them.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP are in government and today's NDP are not behaving like New Democrats. They need to recognize that this is, indeed, a bill that will make a difference. I very much want the NDP to realize that I am singling them out as a political party for not behaving in an appropriate fashion, because it's out of frustration that I have had to re-introduce this bill. Every time I introduce this bill, this government adjourns debate on it, Mr. Speaker. They're even scared to see what the public would have to say on the bill in committee.

* (10:10)

So I'm holding them to task, Mr. Speaker, as a party that talks about social responsibility but does nothing when it comes to providing the opportunity inside this Legislature to pass good legislation that would make a difference. The lives that could be altered in such a dramatic way by passing legislation of this nature is overwhelming. We have individuals today that have FASD because the government has stood to the side and done very little in terms of the promotion of education, of trying to educate individuals, and it goes beyond mothers.

I can honestly say, and I've had the good fortune of being married to my wife for over 25 years. She is my childhood sweetheart, and, Mr. Speaker, when we were teenagers, we had no idea that drinking while my wife was pregnant was dangerous to our future child. It's not something that is widely known, as government, I think, believes. I do believe that there is a need, not just for certain sectors, but the entire sector, public as a whole, to be aware of the consequences of drinking when you're pregnant.

There is an opportunity here. You know, we had smoking labels that were put on cigarette containers. You think about the impact that that has had, both on the smoking generation and the non-smoking generation. It has heightened the level of awareness as a direct result of putting those labels on cigarette packages.

The bill also asks for us to identify restaurants where there are alcohol beverages being served and obligating them to put up signs. In Ontario, they've

actually acted on that issue already. I believe they call it the Sandy's Law.

Mr. Speaker, this is, indeed, a very progressive piece of legislation that could have a serious impact on the lives and the future lives of hundreds of Manitobans. It can provide education, education that is desperately needed. I would like to see the government move more aggressively on dealing with the consequences of FASD in providing the necessary programming, but I'll save that for another debate.

Suffice to say, I call on the government to, at the very least, allow this bill to pass the Chamber. Stop adjourning debate on this bill. Stop allowing this bill to die on the order paper. Have the courage to allow it to go to committee where the public can have the opportunity to provide input on what I believe is good responsible legislation. I ask the government to do the moral right thing on this issue and allow it to proceed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): I stand up to speak about the leadership that we have shown in Manitoba around FASD. We know that FASD is a preventable disability, a spectrum of disorders that happen to children within the province of Manitoba. We are very fortunate in Manitoba that we have been working since 1999 to address these issues, to address the issues through prevention and education. Most recently, we had made a large announcement that spoke about support services that we will provide to individuals with the diagnosis as they transition to adulthood.

There is a lot of information that I'm going to put on the record today that will demonstrate the leadership that we have shown. But I also want to put on the record that we do support our federal colleague, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, and the work that she is doing to lobby the federal government to mandate warning labels on bottling. We also realize, with the work that Judy is doing, that we encourage all members of this House to work and to speak with their federal colleagues and address this issue. It's only one piece of the solution. We know through strong campaigns, through our partnership with the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, through the \$700,000 that they have invested in With Child-Without Alcohol that it's making a difference. We're getting that message out. But more importantly, as we are educating young people within phys ed and health-care curriculum, we're giving them information. We're providing that

information at an early age and we will continue to do that.

Through Healthy Child Manitoba, we provide a number of resources for early childhood development and support for families. We will continue to do that as we do that through the prenatal benefits, as we do that with our parent child coalitions and get the information out to people. We will continue to work with all of our partners to address those issues.

We have programs such as Roots of Empathy, where we provide that information about child-rearing a small infant. We provide that service with volunteers within the school system. Children see first-hand developmentally what happens with the child, and we use that information and use that technique as a way to pass on that information to children, Families First home visitors constantly providing that necessary support.

Another piece that can happen that is very important is ensuring that we have a strong mental health and addiction system, a system that provides services to all Manitobans, but specifically around FASD, providing those services to women, making sure that women have access to detox services, to treatment services. We have come out and we have made ongoing investments within the last year that talk about the redevelopment of a strong mental health and addiction system that is going to ensure that we increase the beds for women and that women will be able to access that service.

FASD is very complex when we talk about prevention and intervention. Nobody wants to see children dealing with those issues and those concerns, but we also have to realize that those children bring to us many, many gifts.

I had the opportunity to meet a young woman who asked to meet with me to talk about her experience. She's 18 years old. The diagnosis was FASD. She wants to talk to all Manitobans and talk about what it's like, why she's different, what makes her special and how we can continue to work to support her. She has made a commitment to work with all Manitobans, to work with us to get that message out so people better understand who she is. We all support her on that. Her goal is similar to all of ours in this House and in Manitoba; is that we don't want children born with FASD. We need to make sure that we're getting that education out and that prevention.

In the last announcement that we made, we were able to have announced the first of its kind, Spectrum Connections. This is the agency that will work to support families and individuals as they transition into adulthood, and when we support them, ensuring that we wrap around services to them that help them with housing, help them with employment and things that I take for granted every day, ensuring how to organize your home and providing that support. The community is very excited about it as we work along with them to develop this program.

We also have been able to announce four FASD specialists for across Manitoba. These FASD specialists will help to train professionals who are working with children with FASD, but also we'll be ensuring that we work the community groups and look at prevention strategies.

We've been able increase the number of Stop FASD programs from four to seven sites. These next three sites will all be in rural and northern Manitoba. This is a very essential program as we provide the support to families, to moms and dads, and provide them information about how to best support their child that has the diagnosis of FASD and help transition them, but also how do we help support them to prevent other children in that family being diagnosed with FASD.

*(10:20)

The latest announcement also provided us with funding to ensure that we had a co-ordinator specific for women's mental health and addictions program in Manitoba. That will help us as we further develop our strategy to increase and improve services.

We've been able to enhance the diagnostic services, a partnership through Health and Healthy Living and Healthy Child Manitoba. These diagnostic services are essential to ensure that children are diagnosed at an early age and that we are able to provide them with the educational and social supports that are necessary.

We also have been able to expand the FASD Youth Justice Program to The Pas. This will again help ensure that we're able to provide those services to youth within the community to ensure that they have the supports that are necessary, that they are involved in recreation, that they are involved in the schools, and that they are finding a positive quality of life.

We also have developed a strategy to celebrate the innovation within FASD research in Manitoba.

We are very fortunate that we have some national and international renowned researchers in our midst here who have committed themselves to FASD, to the research around prevention and supports for individuals and families. What we've done is we've asked them to come up with innovative ideas, and we will provide them with research awards with that. As we provide them with these research awards, we will continue to ensure that we are showing the innovation that we have proven over and over again.

I know that I have many colleagues that want to stand up and share their insights about what we're doing. Am I saying that the work is done? Not at all, Mr. Speaker. I'm saying we've made some positive movements to prevent as well as educate and provide treatment to children diagnosed with FASD. We have more work to do, but I think, by the actions we've taken, by the \$8.5 million that we've invested through Family Services and Housing, Health and Healthy Living, Education and Justice, that will make a difference, and we are committed to work with all of our community partners as we go forward. Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for bringing forward this bill because I think it is a step in the right direction, and I do want to acknowledge the Liberal Party right now for their efforts in moving forward the issue of FASD.

I think they have a very severe interest in this, a very critical interest in this, and it is something I think that they're acknowledging that more has to be done. I'm very pleased to be here to make a few comments on it as well, and I guess some of my perspective on it I take from my background in nursing as well plus the background I had working with missing and exploited children in a previous life.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more that we need to do to address this issue of FASD because it has a devastating effect on the children themselves and then also on their families. I think it's something that as a government it is an area that we do need to move more aggressively forward with.

I think if people really understood the far-reaching effects of FASD and there was a collective movement to try to address this and work more collaboratively and closely with the health professions that are out there, with the community groups that are out there, I think we might start to get

an ability to move forward on this issue. It is not an issue that is easy to manage, and I think everybody would acknowledge that. That is why the preventative aspect is so important because it is so significant in this area to try to get in front of it because that at least can deal with some of the devastating effects that may occur to a child born with FASD.

I think what the legislation is attempting to do is to at least try to make the effort to do what is possible. It certainly isn't going to fix the problem, but at least it is a step in the direction to try to, in fact, get in front of this and work with the public and work with parents in seeing what we can do to prevent it.

A lot of it is creating awareness amongst the public about what it means to drink while pregnant. Certainly many, many years ago, it was not unusual and in fact, not even that many years ago, for people to take drinks while they were pregnant, for women to drink while they were pregnant.

I think that has been proven now, in many instances, to have some quite devastating effects on children. If we can put warning labels on bottles in liquor stores, in washrooms, I think it at least is making the public more aware of what they can do and empower themselves to be able to act on this.

Will it reach everybody? No. We know there are many people that may not ever make it to the bar, may not even watch TV ads but, in fact, there are other opportunities for public education in those areas as well. At least what this does is it attempts to reach some of the people that we could help address the problem with. If it helps a handful of people right now, hopefully that can increase as time goes on too.

I don't understand the hesitation in the government and their timidity to try to move in this direction and to move that tiny step forward. Certainly, if people are aware of the birth defects that are caused because of fetal alcohol syndrome, and you work with those babies or you hold those babies, I think people would have such a greater awareness of the huge need that is out there to address this.

I recall when I was a nurse, working in a nursery and holding a crack-addicted baby. That is an unbelievable experience because here you have a child that absolutely does not want to be touched, cannot stand to be touched or have their skin touched. It's a horrible experience to have to stand there, look down into a little bassinet and see a little

baby in there, who had no part in creating his circumstances, and laying there with these eyes that are just so compelling in what they're seeing or not seeing. It really strikes at your heart, and it makes you realize that we, as adults, as health-care professionals, as legislators, have a huge responsibility to protect these children.

Here in this legislation, I think there's a chance to at least do something and I would urge the government—I know that this government likes to take a lot of good ideas from the opposition. They've done it before; they are going to do it again. Here's another one. It's something that is the right thing to do, so we would encourage them—take this legislation, pay sincere attention to it and do something to help these children who need so much help, because FASD is such a devastating condition for a child, and it is 100 percent preventable. That is the sad part of all of this.

* (10:30)

So I would urge this government to take this further, speed up what needs to be done on prevention of FASD. Take this legislation, embrace it, use it and pass it and let's get on with trying to prevent this horrible, horrible situation that happens to children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, I'm pleased to be able to speak on this bill. I certainly welcome any contribution on anything as significant as dealing with some of the real challenges we have in this province with addictions and, I think, with the very real attempts we all make to find the right balance, in this case, with a legal product that many people enjoy in moderation, alcohol. But a product that can certainly cause significant difficulties either in terms of over-consumption or in terms of pregnant mothers. Certainly we see evidence of the impacts that FAS and FAE can have on children.

I also welcome the comments from the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), not his more political comments. I would say that I don't look to the Member for Inkster for any advice on the New Democratic Party. He might want to spend a bit of his time working with a party that he actually ran for federally, the federal Liberal Party, as they go through their political trials and tribulations. I certainly leave that to the Liberals in this House. I'm kind of wondering actually if the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) is reconsidering a career in

federal politics given some of his questions the last few days in the House.

But I do take seriously the comment that the Member for Inkster talked about when he did say that perhaps 25, 30 years ago there was less of an awareness of this being a concern. I would certainly echo that. Growing up in Thompson, I don't think there was any real sense with consumption of alcohol that would have an impact in terms of pregnant mothers, but that's changed. That has changed dramatically in the last number of years. It's changed because we've seen the impact. We know the science.

It's also changed, by the way, because there is a significant amount of education and awareness that's out there. I see time and time again, pregnant women who are very clear right from the start that they will forgo the consumption of alcohol. One goes to licensed premises—I was at a restaurant yesterday—and you'll see posters that are put up, very significantly available to members of the public, pointing to that difficulty. So there's been a great deal of public awareness.

That's not to say that FAS and FAE do not continue to be a difficulty, but in many cases it's not so much a lack of awareness but the continuing aspect of the addiction itself. We have to, I think, understand that there are women who do have a problem with over-consumption of alcohol. Obviously it's very difficult for them, even when they're pregnant, to stop that consumption. That is, indeed, one of the real challenges out there. It's not so much just the question of awareness because in many cases they may be aware of some of the difficulties but it's no different from many of the other aspects of addictions. In many cases, people are aware of the negative impacts but continue because of their addiction to a particular substance, and in this case, alcohol.

I'm, by the way, not a believer in prohibition. I want to make that very clear. It didn't work when it was tried nationally and it was tried in the United States. I do respect the fact that there are communities in Manitoba that do prohibit sales of alcohol in their own confines. Certainly everybody's aware with Steinbach, but many First Nation communities in northern Manitoba are what we call dry communities. I think it's important to recognize that and I think one of the key elements again is the overall public education.

I also want to stress too that I think that the Liquor Commission itself has a significant role to play in terms, not only in education on this matter, but on the control of the sale of alcohol. I, by the way, am a great believer in the Liquor Control Commission. I think it's a fine Crown corporation. I've seen the examples in other jurisdictions where there's been privatization of the sale of alcohol.

I just want to point out, in my own community, some of the real differences that the Liquor Commission is making in terms of its social mandate. In my community right now, the Liquor Control Commission has done a number of things to deal with the sale of alcohol that I consider to be very positive. It has restricted the sale of what are often called mickeys. They're certainly less available, at a cost, by the way, in terms of sales, as I understand it. Why? Well, the size of choice of the bootleggers was the mickey, and the Liquor Control Commission has taken a significant revenue drop to prevent a situation in which the bootleggers are in a position to be able to distribute the alcohol.

Another thing they've done, and I think this is again an example of the social responsibility of the Liquor Control Commission, right in my own community, they actually have a new policy which restricts the sales in the Liquor Commission to people that are already, should I say, under the influence. That has been very significant. They apply it generally and across the board. That is very important. It's a way of helping break the cycle, Mr. Speaker, of people who are addicted to alcohol, and I want to point again that this example of a Crown corporation that is actually losing sales—not following the bottom line, which you might get with a privatized liquor store—but in my community they've made a very significant shift to a more responsible sale of alcohol.

By the way, I want to credit the many hotel owners and the various distributors in my community because they also, I think, have been leaders in that. I point particularly to Manfred Boehm. He's been a leader in that in terms of the Thompson Inn and the Burntwood, certainly the Mystery Lake Hotel.

I want to say that is important as well because, for the member to bring forward one particular aspect in this and then take some great umbrage at the fact that we may want to debate such an important matter, I think misses the point here. That is that there are various aspects to issues related to alcohol, over-consumption of alcohol. There are

various aspects related to fetal alcohol syndrome. I think that's something that was already referenced, is both an issue of awareness but also an issue of addictions.

I think, certainly, as I listen to the Minister for Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) and I listen to people who have raised issues on this debate before, it makes sense to have warning labels at the federal level. We are one province out of 10. We're about 4 percent of the population. I would suggest, by the way, that we can argue the point back and forth, but I think the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) should recognize that one of the greatest difficulties now is often—it's not just a question of awareness, and I will not argue at all that we need some degree of continued focus on awareness. Obviously we do, but it is, indeed, that very difficult addictions cycle that many pregnant mothers feel they are not in a position to stop the consumption of alcohol.

I want to point out too, by the way, that we're now into our second and third generation of FAS and that is a problem. If you talk to medical practitioners and teachers, for example, and other professionals dealing with kids with FAS and FAE, we're now starting to see another generation. That's putting a particular additional challenge, Mr. Speaker, in the sense again that it's an intergenerational addiction that we're dealing with.

So I want to say that certainly I appreciate the member for bringing this forward. I certainly believe this is a matter of serious concern. I do support having a national approach. Judy Wasylycia-Leis is moving forward on that, and I'm glad the member's acknowledging the fine work of Judy Wasylycia-Leis in doing that, but I want to suggest there is a broader approach that's needed here, and I do just want to finish off by saying that I do commend the Liquor Control Commission.

Thank goodness we have a Crown corporation, in this case not a privatized company, that has a sense of social responsibility. They've been there in terms of FAS. They've been there in terms of FAE. They've been there in terms of responsible sales and consumption. They're working with the private sector. I know in my own community, the many responsible hotel owners and restaurant owners. I think it's very important, as we deal with some of the challenges out there, to reflect on the fact that that's the best balance when it comes to alcohol, a regulated system with a Crown corporation that has a significant role to play in terms of distribution, but

also where we all accept the need for social responsibility and education.

* (10:40)

That's one thing, by the way, regardless of where we stand on this particular bill, I think no one could accuse anyone in this House of not wanting a more socially responsible approach to the consumption of alcohol. We all know that in our own communities, there are people dealing with it as an addiction, and I think we all have to be part of the solution, Mr. Speaker.

So that's why I want to again emphasize the fact that I think the federal approach is important here, but I want to put on the record how much I do support the work of the Liquor Control Commission in my own community and across the province. They are making a real difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important measure and one that should be passed with great rapidity. Sadly, it is an area where the current NDP government have been very neglectful. They have started by not even collecting adequate information on the extent of FASD in Manitoba.

Of course, the Conservatives ended the registry in 1993. The NDP have not reinstated it, and they have not supported our bill to have reporting of FASD. The result is we still don't know with any level of certainty or accuracy what the incidence is in Manitoba. We don't know whether the measures that the NDP are taking are having any overall effect or not, whether the incidence is going up or down.

There is a major problem with this government, that the effort to prevent FASD is inadequate. They have failed to support labelling of alcoholic beverages, which is now required in many, many countries: France, Sweden, Finland, the United States, Ireland, Armenia, Iceland, Portugal, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Honduras, Spain, and others, have all got labelling of alcoholic beverages, but in Manitoba we are behind because this government has failed to act.

Labelling has been widely recognized as effective. It's been very important in the effort to reduce smoking and to reduce lung cancer. We are at last seeing some effects of that, of course with a variety of other measures, including banning

smoking indoors, but the government here is not even moving on supporting labelling of alcoholic beverages.

In spite of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the government runs the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, which has a virtual monopoly on the marketing of alcohol in Manitoba, this measure would be very, very easy for the government to implement. The government appoints people to the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission board and, sadly, these appointees have not done their duty to Manitoba, which is why we have put in legislation and a bill, which we hope the government will support and see the light, to make sure that people who are appointed to boards like the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission are interviewed by people in the Legislature so that we know that we're going to have people who will support labelling of alcoholic beverages when they get appointed to this board.

Labelling has been important in a variety of other conditions. The Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) herself admits that this is a fully preventable condition. Yet, with all the talk of the minister and the NDP government since 1999, there's no evidence yet of any overall reduction in the incidence of FASD in Manitoba.

Indeed, for all the talk that the government has made, we are seeing programs like the valuable program at the Mount Carmel Clinic cancelled, closed, no longer available under this minister. The Minister of Healthy Living said: we are committed to working with all our partners. What happened to the Mount Carmel Clinic? Isn't it a partner anymore, Madam Minister? I would say that this is very important because, with these children, it can be identified early on. Quite frankly, this is a bit like immunization, that the approach to them by family, people around them, the opportunities which were there are no longer there at Mount Carmel Clinic, to enable these children to grow in an environment where they can do better is huge. The opportunities to improve, after a child with FASD is born, must not be neglected because these children can learn, but they learn a little bit differently and they need help in a little bit different way because of the way that their brains work.

The government has talked sometimes about the cost of implementing this, but the reality is, compared to the cost of looking after children with FASD, the cost of labelling is very small. Lifetime

costs of a child with FASD is probably about \$2 million, the bulk of which ends up on the public treasury in the province. The fact of the matter is that, if we have 150 children a year born with FASD in Manitoba, then that is a cost that we are putting onto future generations primarily, of \$300 million each year, just because we are not preventing FASD.

We are not putting an adequate effort into this and we should start with this effort—labelling alcoholic beverages and making sure that, everywhere alcoholic beverages are sold, there are in fact notices informing people of the risks of FASD.

NDP inaction has led and is leading, year by year, to huge additional costs for Manitoba taxpayers because they've failed to act adequately in preventing FASD. You can take those numbers of \$300 million and multiply it by nine—\$2.7 billion—that's the extra cost that this government has caused for Manitobans as a result of not preventing FASD. Those costs come not only from health care, Child and Family Services, Education and the Justice system and to ordinary Manitobans as a result of the problems in our society, because we are not adequately preventing FASD.

There are other items which need better attention. The supports for families who look after children with FASD in Manitoba are inadequate. The support for foster mothers who are looking after FASD children are inadequate. I hear this, day after day, from different foster parents.

The provision by the government of \$50 for a child going to school doesn't match up with the costs that many schools are now charging for their children in order to go to school—a public school system. Yet the wide variety of costs, as reported recently in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, amounting to much more than \$50 in many, many cases is just an example of the inadequate type of support that there is for foster parents and indeed for natural parents looking after children with FASD because, where possible, we like to keep the natural families together.

The MLA for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) talked about efforts, trying to say that we won't do anything because this is a federal responsibility. We know how long and how hard Paul Szabo has worked to have effective legislation to label FASD, effective action at the federal level. We know that, without provincial action, this is not going to happen. It needs provincial action and this government is

dedicated to inaction when it comes to this question of labelling alcoholic beverages.

It is an abdication of the normal responsibility of the Province and the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission. We're going to continue to emphasize this point, time and time again, until this government finally someday, hopefully, starts to realize that something needs to be done and they need to act. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, Bill 203, The Liquor Control Amendment Act prohibits anyone from selling or serving a beverage containing more than 0.5 percent alcohol without a warning about birth defects caused by consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

* (10:50)

Two forms of warning are required: warning labels on bottles, cans and other sealed containers of alcohol beverages unless they are sold by the case or carton; and warning signs posted in places where alcoholic beverages are sold or served. We know that labelling is a responsibility of the federal government under the Food and Drugs Act. If federally mandated, manufacturers could add the warning label as part of their existing bottling and labelling systems.

Our government supports Judy Wasylycia-Leis, MP for Winnipeg North, in her work to petition the federal government to require warning labels on alcoholic beverages. To implement a labelling program in Manitoba without it being federally mandated would mean that each of the 22 million bottles sold through the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission would have to be removed from its case, labelled, replaced and the case resealed.

Now, I heard one of the members opposite saying, I already read that. Well, it's probably true because I have spoken on this bill before and so this time I would like to take a slightly different tact and say that one of the things that the sponsor of this bill wants to do is to have a patchwork quilt of systems across Canada. They want Manitoba to do something but there may be nothing done in other provinces, and—

An Honourable Member: Isn't that like what Tommy Douglas did in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Martindale: Well, I'm glad that the member mentioned Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan because he started medicare there and then the

federal government, in their wisdom, a Liberal federal government, made it a national program, and that was in the 1960s—I believe 1966 was the exact year. And what has happened since then? Well, there were a number, a large number of federal programs that applied throughout Canada, and that was a good thing so that we didn't have a patchwork quilt of programs with different standards, and different amounts of funding and different provincial inputs across Canada. But what happened? The federal Liberal government was the one that began dismantling a lot of those programs, and there are many, many examples.

For example, the federal government was involved in housing. I think there's a bit of a myth that it was the Liberals that dismantled it, but I think actually it was Mulroney that cancelled the federal housing program in 1993. But the Liberal opposition howled and screamed, how could they do this? Within months, they were the government. Did they reinstate a national housing program? No, they didn't. So, in 1999, we formed the government and in the year 2000, to their credit, the federal Liberal government started signing agreements with provinces, and I think Manitoba was the first.

But, once again, it was a patchwork quilt because it applied to Manitoba but not to other provinces and, you know, what happens when you get a change of government? Well, there go the programs. For example, child care. You know, this is a good example because the Liberals promised a national child care program. I think it was in their Red Book in 1993. I think they promised it in '97. I think they promised it in—when was the next federal election, 2000? Anyway, every federal election they announced a national child care program, and then, just before they lost government, they started signing individual agreements with provinces like Manitoba. I was there for the announcement with Prime Minister Paul Martin. In fact, I got to shake his hand. There were lots of child-care employees there. There were children from a child-care centre. The announcement took place at a child-care centre. Our Minister of Family Services and Housing was there, the Member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), and the media were there. The national media were there. This was a great announcement, we were going to have a child-care program, but where? In Manitoba, because Manitoba wanted it and we signed an agreement. So that was one province out of 10. What about the other provinces? Well, this is the Liberal government having a patchwork quilt of programs across Canada,

and this Bill 203 is just another example of doing something in one jurisdiction but nowhere else, and that's the problem with it. We think there needs to be a national policy on this.

There are many other examples, going back to the 1960s again, the Canada Assistance Plan, national standards and 50-50 funding—I forgot to mention that. None of these programs had cost-shared funding. In fact, I believe at one time housing funding was 75 percent federal and only 25 percent provincial at a time when all provinces were on board. Canada Assistance Plan, 50-50 funding for welfare and child care and other social programs. And what happened? Well, you know, it's kind of ironic because it was the Conservatives who ran up the big deficit. We'll remember that, the federal Conservative government. Every time Mulroney made a cut, you know, the public howled and the media howled and people were critical. But then when the Liberals formed government in 1993, and then in '95 they made a big announcement, they said, you know, we're going to eliminate the deficit—I believe at the time it was \$42 billion—and so a lot of these cuts came in the 1996 budget and the Canada Assistance Plan was one. It was announced, I believe in the '95 budget, and in '96, I believe it was April 1, 1996, the Canada Assistance Plan would be eliminated. So there goes your 50-50 funding. There goes your national standards.

What was the response? Well, we know what happened in Manitoba. The Minister of Family Services and Housing at the time, the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), amended these—

An Honourable Member: You looking at running federally, Doug?

An Honourable Member: Which seat are you going for, Doug?

Mr. Martindale: There are no openings. I'm not running. I'm happy where I am. I'm working for Judy Wasylycia-Leis. I'm campaigning for Judy Wasylycia-Leis, and I'm going to campaign for Ross Eadie and for Jim Maloway because we want all three of them to get elected. But you're distracting me. I'm losing my train of thought here.

I was talking about the Canada Assistance Plan and maybe you don't want to talk about that because it was your federal Liberal government—in fact, the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was part of that government that eliminated the Canada

Assistance Plan, eliminated 50-50 funding for child care and welfare and other programs, and what did the provincial Conservative government do under Premier Filmon? They immediately changed the welfare legislation in Manitoba so there were no minimum standards anymore. I have to admit that part of the problem was that they lost their federal funding. I believe it cost the Manitoba government something like \$120 million in their first year and so they made cuts because there was a real lack of federal commitment and money. So it's quite understandable that Manitoba had to make some changes, which they justified and rationalized the base of not having the money from the federal government anymore, and so we see this pattern here of starting a federal program and then ending it. They said, well, it was because of the deficit of \$42 billion. And then what happened? Well, they had balanced budgets and then they had surpluses. They had surpluses as high as what, \$14 billion? Did they restore some of those programs? No, of course not. But in every election they promised things. They promised a national child-care program, they promised a national Pharmacare program, they've promised a national home-care program.

I'm saying they had the money to pay for it; multi-billion dollar surpluses. So they campaign on the left and they govern on the right. Every election they try to steal NDP voters at election time and then when they get in government they govern like Tories. In fact, I would say that the Liberal government took us further to the right than the Tories. They were the masters at cutting programs, and what happens? Then we get provincial governments making different kinds of decisions partly based on their ideology and partly based on their ability to pay.

So what happens in Manitoba? Well, in Manitoba we probably have the best child care program in Canada and the second most affordable one. We have the best Pharmacare program in Canada, and some provinces have no Pharmacare program.

So, what this member wants us to do is to continue this patchwork quilt of programs where you have something in one province, but not in another because the federal government isn't at the table. Probably medicare is the best example where in some provinces they are privatizing. In fact, the biggest privatizers are probably the Liberal government in Québec and the Liberal government in B.C., but not in Manitoba. Why is that? Because

we have an NDP government. What's standing between the privatized system and an Americanized system in Manitoba? The only thing standing between us and a privatized, Americanized system is the NDP government in Manitoba, and we're proud of that.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): I just wanted to put a few words on the record because I have to agree with the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in terms of prevention and education being so important here. I'm kind of insulted that he isn't aware of all our government has been doing.

I'd also like to interject that it's interesting the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has been speaking to interfering in the choice of people sitting on boards, and here he is speaking out about wanting us to influence boards on the federal government.

Anyway, in the '60s—I agree with him and his wife—as a teenager I didn't know a thing about FASD, and I just thank God my body had an aversion to alcohol when I was pregnant, so I can't brag.

But even in the '70s I worked in Corrections and I am particularly pleased with the development and distribution of information to doctors, what they need to know in FASD and, particularly, Corrections, what they need to know. I do recall once trying to tell a young man, make an impact on the error of his ways on the effect of stealing bicycles—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have eight minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 26—Green Buildings

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions, and we'll deal with Resolution 26, Green Buildings.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that

WHEREAS climate change is one of the most important issues facing the world today; and

WHEREAS reducing greenhouse gases and other emissions, promoting the use of environmentally friendly building practices and

leading by example in order to lessen society's impact on the environment is the responsibility of every individual; and

WHEREAS utilizing green building practices provides significant environmental benefits, such as lessening our reliance on imported, non-renewable energy sources, reducing greenhouse gases and other emissions, and making a smaller impact on the environment by using environmentally responsible building materials; and

WHEREAS, in comparison to conventional buildings, green buildings result in lower energy, water and sewer bills and require less maintenance, repair and renovation in the future, thus drastically reducing operating and maintenance costs and offsetting any capital cost premiums; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has implemented its Green Building policy, requiring a minimum rating of Silver under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program for any new construction or significant renovation project receiving provincial funding; and

WHEREAS studies have found that green buildings, when compared to conventional buildings, have also proven to be healthier living environments for their inhabitants and to provide them with a better quality of life; and

WHEREAS green buildings have an improved asset value, resulting from the positive public image they present, the lower operating costs they require and the increase in property values that they stimulate; and

WHEREAS building new homes or renovating older ones according to environmentally sound practices stimulates a demand for environmentally preferable building products and services, thereby creating new economic opportunities within the province's manufacturing sector; and

WHEREAS green buildings also reduce economic leakage by lessening our exposure to price volatility and long-term supply concerns with natural gas, propane and fuel oil; and

WHEREAS providing affordable housing to low-income Manitobans is a key priority of the Manitoba government, with nearly 5,000 units either newly constructed or renovated across Manitoba since 2000; and

WHEREAS incorporating green building techniques will increase the affordability of future housing projects through reduced operating costs for residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider incorporating environmentally friendly building principles into the design of its building initiatives, including new or renovated Manitoba Housing residences.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Member for Wolseley, seconded by the honourable Member for Rossmere,

WHEREAS climate—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Altemeyer: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite pleased to bring this resolution forward for consideration by the House. I do want to provide a bit of context. I think the resolution has a lot of good detail in it. It's fairly self-explanatory. In this day and age, with any luck, all parties, speaking at least rhetoric or putting some language, whether we be at federal or provincial levels, on the importance of the environment, with any luck, members opposite will see fit to live up to those words and pass this resolution.

There is a very interesting story behind the green building movement. It is very closely linked with the incredible crisis that we are faced with across this country when it comes to affordable housing, and this crisis has its roots in the 1990s, which is a decade that members opposite, be they Liberal or Conservative, want to pretend never happened. Believe me, my constituents want to pretend that the '90s didn't happen either. It was an awful time, with awful decisions being made and a lot of unnecessary pain and suffering inflicted upon the people who didn't deserve it.

The starting point was actually with the federal Liberals. The leader of the provincial Liberals, of course, was a member of the Cabinet, which cut all of the funding for affordable housing across our whole country in the budget in 1995. That decision was mirrored by the provincial Conservative government, which was sadly in power here in Manitoba at that time. They were perfectly happy to see the federal Liberals step out of affordable housing altogether because they didn't care about it either. In fact, when we came to office in 1999, there

was a plan on the books that the Tories had been developing to privatize all of Manitoba Housing. This would, of course, had an absolutely devastating impact on the people who live there.

We all know that privatization affects vulnerable people the most and in a very negative way. But we can see, yet again, that Conservatives and Liberals are marching from the same play book when it comes to ignoring the needs of the citizens of this country.

The legacy that that has left for us, not just in Manitoba but across Canada, is, according to the 2001 census, there were 44,000 households—not individuals—but 44,000 households in Manitoba alone which are in what is called core-housing need. That means they either don't have a place to live, it means the place that they're living in is too small for the number of people who are there, or it means that the family is paying far too much of their limited income just to look after their rent, or that the home or apartment that they're living in is so dilapidated that it is not fit for them to be there either—44,000 households.

Now when you consider that our provincial government's share, when we make a partnership with a non-profit-housing organization to try and construct some additional units, to try and repair some of that damage, our provincial share these days with rising construction costs is on the order of \$100,000 per unit.

If you do the math—and I would encourage members opposite to look at their legacy—multiply \$100,000 per unit by 44,000 households; you end up with a \$4.4-billion problem in Manitoba alone. That is what we are now trying to dig ourselves out from.

I think our government deserves full credit for getting an incredible amount of work done. I can update the news to the House. In fact, since this resolution was first developed, we are now well over 5,000 new units which we have either built from scratch or have renovated or retrofitted, so that they don't fall off the market, that they remain places for people to live. But quite clearly, when our entire provincial budget is on the order of \$10 billion and that's counting all aspects of government, a \$4.4-billion problem is something we are simply not capable of handling all on our own.

So our approach has been whatever money we can get out of the federal government, and it has been a real struggle to get that to happen. Also

important to note, the Liberal government only came to the table after the Honourable Tim Sale, former Housing Minister, managed to badger them successfully on the federal scene over successive years when he was our provincial Housing Minister.

It's only because of his efforts and of community activists across the country that we got the former Liberals to the table. The only reason we have any money to work with right now is because of Jack Layton's federal NDP amendment to the last Liberal budget which provided, again, some very important resources to all of the provinces and territories. These were not Liberal initiatives; these were not Conservative initiatives. This was the NDP holding those other parties' feet to the fire and forcing them to do even just a little bit of what they should have been doing all along.

So our approach in Manitoba is whatever resources that we can get from the federal government, the resources that we allocate from our own budgets to help provide more affordable housing, we're going to move in a very green direction. The resolution spells out very clearly the arguments for this. The biggest one, of course, from the tenants' perspective is the lower their utility bills, the more affordable their housing unit is to live in.

By investing just a little bit more money up front—and sometimes that's not even the case. It's just a smarter technology or a better building technique which is developed that can be used, but any time that we can put a little bit of extra resources up front to make sure that the construction of the building is done in a green way, it pays enormous benefits.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I'll just give you a few examples of this, Madam Acting Speaker. There's a local group here in Manitoba called Build and they do very simple retrofits in a variety of different types of homes, apartments or houses. They are saving through simple things like new toilets, more efficient water, aerators on faucets, low-flow showerheads and simple changes in the lighting. They are now retrofitting over 100 homes per year. The same is true for another organization doing similar work in Brandon.

* (11:10)

These are groups that we have helped set up and are continuing to fund. It's saving these households \$500 per year each. I'm sure \$500 looks like a lot of money to all of us, but when you are on a limited

income, that is an amazing opportunity. We are very proud to be moving ahead so aggressively in that direction. These programs are taking off like wildfire. It will be very exciting to see them expand across the whole province.

Manitoba, I can share with the House, is actually viewed as a national leader when it comes to combining policies that improve energy efficiency with policies that are geared towards promoting affordable housing.

I just returned from a conference last week that was about energy poverty. It was held in Toronto. There were representatives from both the Build organization I just mentioned, also the Brandon, and representatives from the Island Lake region, the four First Nations communities up there doing similar work. Manitoba Hydro was present. Manitoba was very well represented. It was very clear from the presentations that other people were making that Manitoba is viewed as a national and even an international leader in this area. I'm already getting follow-up phone calls from folks looking for more information about how we have done this, what are the specifics of our green building policy and they're looking to follow our lead.

To just share with you a few other important statistics. Manitoba Hydro has its Power Smart program. It's saving 465 megawatts of power per year. Important to note, Madam Acting Speaker, that we have managed to increase that by 300 megawatts from the year 2000 alone. So almost all of those savings have come under our government's watch. The Power Smart program that existed prior to our coming to office was really very tame. We're also now saving 18 million cubic metres of natural gas. Power Smart, before we came to office, only had about 5,000 people per year participating. We're now up to 70,000 people involved in Power Smart.

Our own home, we switched it over to geothermal in an effort to reduce our impact on the planet. We did that with the help of an earth saver loan from Manitoba Hydro.

So, yes, there are things that individuals can do. Most importantly, there are things that governments can do to help these individuals and households achieve sustainable living, maintain their affordable housing and tread lighter on the planet. Enormous local economic benefits as well.

I think the details of this resolution speak for themselves and I certainly look forward to this resolution being passed by the House. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I certainly appreciate the Member for Wolseley bringing forward this particular resolution.

At first glance I wasn't exactly sure where he was going to head with this particular resolution. Obviously, he's taken the opportunity to make a political statement. I should have guessed that from the NDP government of the day.

Quite frankly, I think all Manitobans are concerned about reducing greenhouse gas emissions and so forth. There's certainly a lot of ways we can do that.

The member goes on and talks about the dark days of the 1990s. I think we have to put things in context here. During the 1990s when the Progressive Conservatives were in government, we saw the federal transfers really dry up at that point in time. Hard decisions had to be made. Not everybody agreed with all those decisions, but hard decisions had to be made.

The Americans are facing the same situation right now in terms of their credit crisis and their financial situation that they're in. They're certainly afraid—they don't seem to be too afraid to go further in debt.

The Progressive Conservatives decided we can only go so far in debt. There's only so much debt that we as taxpayers should have to bear because somebody has to pay the piper at the end of the day. So those decisions were made. If you look at the federal political campaign in view of the crisis we're in and our markets and our credit markets, I noticed all three members of the leading parties last night said that they didn't want to get further in debt. So those are the decisions that leaders have to make, Madam Acting Speaker.

I think it's important you bear in mind some of the statistics that the Member for Wolseley brought out, that the provincial budget here under the NDP back in 1999 was about \$6 billion. That budget has grown to close to \$10 billion. The question is, have we seen an increase in affordable housing and how our people in poverty are being dealt with? I'm not necessarily sure that that can be said for that tremendous \$4 billion increase in a budget over the

last eight years. Unbelievable, Madam Acting Speaker.

I think the other thing that you have to be aware of when you look at that is we're getting 40 percent of our budget comes from the federal government. So these guys can stand up and think they're going to take some credit for it, but it's not their credit to be taking.

An Honourable Member: Bill 38 will take care of that.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, Bill 38 will certainly take care of that, but I digress. I did want to clear the record there with some of the statements made by the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

We certainly believe that there is technology out there that can improve the housing and different technology that is available to heat houses, to provide electricity. We think this government should be playing a role, a very important role in terms of looking at renewable energy sources, and we look at just wind power for just one example. There's obviously an opportunity for economic development, an opportunity to put wind energy in the grid and generate electricity, again a non-renewable form of energy.

Now, Madam Acting Speaker, the one point here and it's the second WHEREAS here. It talks about reducing greenhouse gases and other emissions. Well, I'm not sure the government has really thought this one through because, if you look at the decision they took on Bipole III to route that hydro line to the west side of the province and then back to Winnipeg, well, we know for a fact we're going to be losing at least 40 megawatts of electricity. What that does is that reduces the amount of electricity that we can import into the U.S. market. We know, quite frankly, that any export into the U.S. market would dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions because the Americans are so reliant on coal energy.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, the government here says one thing and brings out this rosy resolution, but in reality, they're doing exactly the opposite. That's the frustrating part, I think, for Manitobans are these rosy resolutions, rosy announcements but the reality is much different than what they're saying.

I have another one, a clear example of the same thing. We reflect back here on Bill 15. Bill 15, The Climate Change and Emissions Reductions Act, was passed just a little while ago, a few months ago, and

specifically this bill talks about green buildings, and it talks about no later than six months after this section comes into force, the L-G-in-council must make regulations prescribing green building requirements for energy and environmental performance in relation to—and it goes on and talks about construction and different projects and whatnot.

Well, the fact of the matter is the government have left themselves a pretty substantial out here because very few parts of this particular legislation are actually proclaimed. So, Madam Acting Speaker, the government's making these rosy announcements and it has legislation in place about climate change and reducing emissions when, in fact, they left themselves a big wide open window here because a lot of the aspects of this particular bill have not been proclaimed, and we don't know when they're going to be proclaimed. So this resolution really is a little contradiction in terms of what the legislation is on the table.

The sections that haven't been proclaimed go on and talk about green operating and management standards for buildings, and, you know, obviously we're looking at some changes to the building standards. That particular section, those changes are supposed to be implemented by 2010. Well, Madam Acting Speaker, the clock is ticking on this and we're certainly curious to see where the government will go in that regard. You know, the government vehicles, all this is in here as well and those sections haven't been proclaimed as well.

* (11:20)

Section 23 in this particular bill talks about, oh yes, the geothermal, under The Municipal Act, where they're going to say that if you install a geothermal unit in your home, it's not going to be charged against your assessment of your building. That particular clause has not been proclaimed either, Madam Acting Speaker. That's pretty straight forward. That should be something that could be proclaimed almost exactly. *[interjection]* Well, that's right, and it's all about press release and politics, you know. Where's the action? That's exactly what we're asking this government. Where is the action? We're certainly familiar with the politics of the NDP, but we're a little lack on actual action.

You know, the other thing too, we talk about LEED and green buildings and all this kind of thing and everybody thinks it's a good idea, but if the

government, through Bill 15, is going to be forcing communities, public communities—

An Honourable Member: Public communities?

Mr. Cullen: Communities that operate public buildings—*[interjection]* You know, they're saying that. Ask them to do this or force them to do this, but where's the funding for this? You know, I've got a community in my constituency, Madam Acting Speaker, that would like to build a community hall, and they would like to incorporate some of the LEED requirements in there. What they're finding is the substantial cost increase to go that way, and as a result, they've had to tone down a little bit on their views on how they're going to deal with the LEED requirements. The other part of the program is the government isn't there to support them. They've had no financial assistance from the provincial government in developing that community hall. They're trying to do their best. We know that regulations are coming, but the government isn't there to stand with them to help support them and their ideas.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, I just wanted to say, you know, the resolution is warm and fuzzy, but at the end of the day, the government isn't there to carry out their needs. It's very hard for us to support a resolution that makes people feel warm and fuzzy. We're all about, on this side of the House, action and getting things done. Thank you very much.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): I'll pick up a little just where my colleague from Turtle Mountain left off about delivering. I'll remind the member that throughout the 1990s, not a single affordable housing unit was built in this province, Madam Acting Speaker, leaving Manitobans of modest and low income high and dry. In my home community, the greatest crisis that we've got in Brandon is recovering from the absence of engagement from the former Filmon government in our community. Although we've built a little over 750 units since coming to office—the largest building of affordable housing in the last 30 years in this province—we still have a long way to go to climb out of the hole left to us by members opposite when they were in office.

Speaking to the resolution put forward by my honourable friend, the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), Madam Acting Speaker, I'm pleased to join with members on the governing side of the House to urge the Province, the government, to consider incorporating environmentally friendly building principles into the design of its building

initiatives including new or renovated Manitoba Housing residences.

In Brandon, this past July of '07, I was pleased to attend, in the presence of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), at an announcement which would provide low-income, energy efficient funding support for those who own low-income housing in the city of Brandon. This was a program built upon a successful initiative in the Centennial neighbourhood in Winnipeg whereby the Province would partner with Manitoba Hydro and the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation to develop an innovative low-income, energy and water efficiency program in the community which would also provide for training opportunities for people in Brandon and would call for the cutting of greenhouse gas emissions and the lowering of energy and water bills for low-income Manitobans, Madam Acting Speaker.

This partnership with the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and Manitoba Hydro has retrofitted a significant number of homes to date and is continuing to retrofit homes in Brandon as we speak, Madam Acting Speaker, both saving low-income Manitobans considerable monies in their energy bills, and is, importantly, reducing the carbon footprint and improving the energy efficiency of those individual low-income houses.

This is a tremendous community partnership, Madam Acting Speaker. A made-in-Manitoba hat trick of jobs, energy efficiency and reduced poverty that will have a very real and lasting benefit for the citizens who need it most. This government, I'm very proud to say, is an active and energetic government in promoting energy efficiency in Manitoba, building housing opportunities for low-income Manitobans and providing national leadership, as well as global leadership, as has been recognized by international agencies, international leadership on promoting energy efficiency, the reduction of greenhouse gases and supporting the objectives outlined in the Kyoto Protocol.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, this resolution proposed by my honourable friend from Wolseley continues to encourage the good work already undertaken by this government and encourages this government to build upon the good work that it has undertaken since coming to office. In contrast, Madam Acting Speaker, to members opposite who didn't build affordable housing in this province, who had plans afoot to sell off and privatize our public housing stock in this province, who were prevented

from doing that. Unfortunately, they weren't prevented from taking that radical, ideological, right-wing, Republican sort of agenda forward. It's unfortunate that they weren't arrested in that ideological kind of way of governing before they sold off the Manitoba Telephone System, but they were prevented from continuing to govern and selling off our public housing stocks, selling off Manitoba Hydro, presumably taking a run at other Crown corporations like Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, which does provide Manitobans with the lowest auto insurance rates in North America.

The records are very clear. Members opposite are opposed to any initiative that would seek to help low-income Manitobans. This government is very proactive in developing and creating initiatives and undertaking programs which benefit low-income Manitobans, and benefit, as I mentioned earlier, with the energy efficiency program in Brandon, the BEEP program in Brandon, B-E-E-P program in Brandon, to help both low-income Manitobans reduce their energy costs but also to help the province of Manitoba reduce its carbon footprint.

This government, Madam Acting Speaker, is committed to energy efficiencies in buildings already. As I've said, I've referenced the Brandon example, but our new Green Building Policy took effect in April 2007 whereby all new commercial and institutional building projects funded by the Province, including Crown corporations and provincial agencies, are now required to be certified silver LEED in accordance with the leadership in energy environmental design building standards. These standards are an internationally recognized green building rating system that helps define green building and provides independent third-party verification and certification of green building projects.

* (11:30)

The policy requires better energy efficiency in compliance with Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart design standards for commercial buildings. Initially, the policy will focus on new construction and major renovation projects. The Consumers Council of Canada noted Manitoba is one of only five provinces to include energy efficiency provisions in our provincial codes. According to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Madam Acting Speaker, and I quote: Manitoba is scoring big points with some of Canada's leading advocates for more energy efficient

housing. That quotation appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on my birthday last year, April 10, 2007.

On August 12 this past summer in 2008, Manitoba received an A-plus for energy efficiency from the Canadian Alliance for Energy Efficiency, which was tied with B.C. for the best in Canada, and up from a C grading which it received in 1999 upon the conclusion of the members opposite's term in office. Ken Elsey, the president and chief financial officer of Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance said, and I quote: "What makes Manitoba so successful in the area of energy efficiency is the political will to promote and support energy efficiency."

Madam Acting Speaker, the political will of this government is very, very strong in promoting energy efficiency. It is very, very strong in reducing greenhouse gases, and it is very, very strong in undertaking a leadership role internationally in promoting energy efficiency and a green economic development strategy.

I'll just refer to a couple of programs that have been put in place since we came into office, programs that didn't exist previous to this government coming to office. The first and foremost, Madam Acting Speaker, it's in my neck of the woods, in southwestern Manitoba. I think it is a great tourist attraction as well as a great boon to clean energy is the St. Leon wind farm, and other wind farm proposals are now being developed throughout the province.

There wasn't a single watt of energy generated by wind power when we came into office. Now we've successfully concluded one wind farm and there are proposals for a number of other wind farms to be brought on stream in the years to come. I'm very, very proud of that initiative. It's a first in the province of Manitoba, and I know that members opposite do enjoy touring that facility. I expect they have a great deal—the former MLA for Carman, Mr. Denis Rocan, who was a very strong supporter, contrary to his colleagues and the members in the Tory Party. Unfortunately, the member of the Tory Party—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Brick): Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): It is a pleasure for me to rise this morning and participate in debate of the resolution as presented by the honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) in regard to green buildings.

While the resolution speaks very specifically to the title, the honourable member spoke at length on more politically based context than the actual context of the resolution before us this morning. So he has opened up a great latitude of debate here, and we were wondering at that time whether or not you, Madam Acting Speaker, would bring the honourable member back to relevancy to the resolution. However, seeing not then we have been allowed to participate in a greater latitude regarding government policy.

The honourable Member for Wolseley, I would like to thank him for that because, indeed, it does give us a chance to recognize what the government has done and has not done. I will say that the headlines recently as far as building of new homes here in the city of Winnipeg—I did have the chance to participate in the Parade of Homes that started on September 6 and ran to the end of September, which showcased the new technologies in the building trades. I will say that I had the chance to admire the advances made in new home construction.

Many, many people in attendance that day expressed their disappointment with the current government and its enforcement of the laws in the province of Manitoba. I speak very specifically about the vandalism and thefts that are occurring on construction sites not only in Winnipeg, but throughout the province. This government in its lackadaisical type of initiative toward law enforcement in this province has construction companies and sub-trades very, very frustrated.

At the end of the Parade of Homes on September 28, the follow-up news article was in the *Winnipeg Sun*, dated September 29, expressing some of the concerns about the building trades in the province and the current status of the escalating amount of thefts occurring on construction sites.

I will say that one of the notable thefts of over \$30,000 worth of copper came from a construction site of a new police station for the Winnipeg Police Service. If we can't even find this government allowing for resources that can actually police an area that is under construction to enhance police services, one is left scratching one's head as to the actual state of what is our province when it comes to enforcement of our laws.

The article goes on to say that virtually all construction sites have experienced theft of building materials, some just a small value of \$200 to \$400, but other sites have experienced large-scale thefts—

\$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 worth of materials. This is very, very disappointing for the building construction industry here in Manitoba.

This government has to recognize that this is a major, major concern to construction here in the province of Manitoba and needs to be addressed with further resources and also, when persons are caught by the police services here in the province of Manitoba, that court time is allocated on a timely basis, convictions are followed through with and those persons that indeed do the crime are responsible for the time. That is the basis of building homes here in the province of Manitoba.

I know the honourable member has talked about building green but, when the honourable member talks about hydro—and I want to thank the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) for bringing the issue of the Bipole III, where this government has chosen a route that is not in the best interests of Manitobans, especially when it comes to the environment, where more trees are going to be cut in this proposed right of way rather than going down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, and also the continued line loss and the environment to which that is detrimental too.

So we wonder about the government saying one thing and doing another, because this government is notorious for making press releases and then not following through with the words that have been spoken. It really is something that is dismaying to myself, as this is something that we want to definitely see promoted.

* (11:40)

I personally have changed our boiler system in our heritage home to an ultra-high-efficiency gas boiler. I will say that, perhaps, it could have been a wiser choice to go to electricity; however, at that particular time, it was the promotion to go to gas by our Crown corporation, so I followed what was prescribed at that time. This government was in power at that time.

You know, we want to also see the improvements to the new home construction here in the province. We also would like to make absolutely certain that, whatever takes place within the home, then the outflow of waste water is dealt with in an environmentally friendly manner so that we don't see the effects in our large lakes here in the province of Manitoba. Yet this government is doing very, very little to the current state of affairs that we see with

the effluent raw sewage, if you will, flowing right into the rivers when we see more than about, I believe it is 20 centimetres of rainfall—[interjection] No? I'm corrected, 20 millimetres of rainfall. Twenty centimetres would be a little bit much, that would really definitely put forward there.

But we also want to recognize that the changes in technology are definitely there for people to make their homes a lot more environmentally friendly, and also, too, I take note that persons are definitely reusing the types of materials that are taken from homes that have been demolished. But I will say that wasn't the case with the demolition that's taken place here in the province with the elevators that are now being declared surplus and no longer necessary for grain handling in the province. The materials from those facilities are going directly to landfills to be disposed of and there is no opportunity for reclamation on site.

Now, we also want to say that, as far as greenhouse gases go, the honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) spoke about greenhouse gas emissions and some of the various programs that the government has been engaged with. But one has to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Brick): Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Prior to recognizing the next honourable member, I'd just like to remind all members that we are speaking to the resolution put forward by the honourable Member for Wolseley on Green Buildings.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines): Madam Acting Speaker, I hope that I will keep very relevant to the resolution and to what the government has been doing.

I know that previously the members of the opposition said where's the action. I wanted to start talking to the members opposite about where the action was, where our leadership was and where we hope to continue to move forward.

One example is, the member opposite kept on saying, well, these buildings will cost a little bit more. And yes, the buildings would cost a tiny bit more if we build energy efficiency good buildings. So, if we put in proper windows, proper insulation, proper energy and heating and cooling equipment, they will cost a small bit more. We're averaging about 5 percent more. So, 5 percent more.

And what is the return on investment? I'm surprised the members from the Conservative Party didn't understand that you invest a tiny bit up-front and you save not only right away for the heating and cooling and water, but you save for years.

So, I'd like to commend the Member for Wolseley for bringing this out because what it is, it's not only a greenhouse-gas-saving resolution. It also saves energy, a non-renewable energy source like oil and gas, et cetera, and, Madam Acting Speaker, it also saves money. It saves money for multiple years. So I'd like to commend the Member for Wolseley for (a) representing our government in Toronto on the energy efficiency meetings where we were noted as being a leader not only in Canada, but in North America. So I'd like to say thank you to that.

But, Madam Acting Speaker, what this is involving is you put a little bit more money up front; you have good insulation, good energy efficiency; you have less greenhouse gases and the return on investment is measured in months, not years. So I think that's very, very important.

Now I know that the Conservatives are confused about investing up front and making long-term benefits of this, but that's what we believe in. I've been told by the LEED experts—the building experts, the architects and the engineers—that the cost of building LEED buildings is approximately 4 to 6 percent more than a regular building if it's incorporated into the design, et cetera. The payback, they say, can be six months and then savings from then on.

Now that's not me saying that. That's the engineers and architects. Now I know that some members opposite may believe that they know more than the LEED experts, but I believe in this. An example is high-efficiency toilets. I look at that as being an investment. They have a return on investment of 12 to 16 months, so you're saving water; you're saving money.

I'll give an example that's been highlighted by others in the world. What it is is Centennial neighbourhood. This is one of the poorest areas in Winnipeg. It's one of the areas that had the least-efficient houses; it had people paying the highest energy bills, and it was silly. So we worked with non-profit groups, foundations, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba government and agencies within the community. They trained local people to do the renovations, and we renovated 125 houses in one year.

What we ended up doing was teaching the skills for the young people. We ended up putting in better insulation, efficient toilets, efficient shower heads and we saved on average between \$450 and \$600 per year. This is where a \$2,000 to \$2,500 investment had an income or a savings of about \$650 a year. That's a return of investment of 25 percent. That meant the poorest families didn't pay the highest energy bills. They got better houses, better use of the houses, more energy efficiency, saved money and decreased greenhouse gases.

That Centennial neighbourhood was a triple win. Actually, it was a quadruple win, and I'm proud of that being a model of how Manitoba can move forward in energy efficiency and has been shown as an energy-efficient leader.

Now I'm also excited about the fact that we went from ninth under the Conservative government—ninth out of 10—to best A-plus rating by the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance. What's nice about that is they talked about how Power Smart has improved. They talked about how geothermal heat pumps—I have a geothermal heat pump in my house. I knew it was a little bit expensive when I put it in but rather than put in an air conditioner and a furnace, I put in a geothermal heat pump. Yes, it did cost about \$20,000 rather than the \$10,000 for the traditional air conditioner and furnace, but what's nice about it is I save about \$1,000 to \$1,200 a year on energy and I have less greenhouse gases. So I made an investment and now, eight years later, I'm reaping the rewards.

I'm pleased to see that we have incentives to get geothermal heat pumps into buildings. They have better return on investment for public buildings, for community clubs, for hockey rinks, for curling rinks, schools. So it's nice to see that we've gone from a couple hundred installations now to 6,000 installations, and now there are more commercial ones. There are more government buildings that are putting in geothermal.

When the member opposite's talking about a vision, we now have two manufacturing plants of geothermal heat pumps in Manitoba. Where are we exporting? We're exporting manufactured goods to China. We're exporting manufactured goods to Asia, the Middle East and around the world from Manitoba companies, and that's where we can save money and make a big difference, not just in Manitoba but around the world.

* (11:50)

So when we look at the green building law, what we're doing now is we're using Community Places. When we put money into institutions from around the province, we're holding it as a condition to make sure that they're energy efficient. Why, Madam Acting Speaker? We're doing that so that we make people make a good one-time investment and save for years and decades. That's intelligent government, and I think I'm very proud of how our government has moved forward.

So a good quote is Ken Elsey, president and CFO of the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance. He said: "What makes Manitoba so successful in the area of energy efficiency is the political will to promote and support energy efficiency."

I think that's a wonderful quote because that's exactly what it is. I would add it's leadership. It's commitment. It's follow-through on real programs. Whether it's the geothermal incentive, whether it's putting in to fact that if you're getting money for government for building or construction of any government-funded building, you're at least LEED silver, and what that means is buildings are being built more and more energy efficiently.

The member opposite mentioned that he didn't understand the actual actions so I'd like to invite him. We can go for a walk and see the new Hydro headquarters, which is the most energy-efficient headquarters in the world. We can go there and see it. It's not only energy efficient, but it's also saving money for years.

An Honourable Member: What's the cost?

Mr. Rondeau: I know the members opposite are chirping from their chairs that it's costing a few dollars more, but what it is, is investing. Over a period of years, it'll save way more. Over a period of decades, it'll save more.

The old adage, penny wise, pound foolish equals the Conservative Party. They save a few dollars by getting the cheapest price, doing the cheapest construction, and they pay for energy year after year after year. What we are doing is we're adding a little bit more to the cost, and we're having a return on investment where we're making the money back in a matter of months. Then we're saving not for years, but for decades.

I would like to challenge the members opposite to look at the new Killarney multi-purpose facility and see where it's going to save for many years. Gladstone District Community Centre, another one

that's moving forward. The Winnipeg Humane Society, which opened in October 2007 is another building that's very good. The Hydro headquarters. Dare I say, a number of MLAs in this party have adopted geothermal energy. They've adopted energy efficiency things.

I'll have you know, Madam Acting Speaker, I think the average Manitoban knows the importance of investing a small amount and getting long-term returns. That's why 70,000 Manitobans have taken advantage of the energy efficient activities of this province. That's why greenhouse gases will go down, energy efficiency will continue to improve, and that's why we're now at A-plus versus a failing grade.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Brick): Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I just want to speak to the resolution brought forward from the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) today. I think it's another one of these resolutions that we see from this government. It has got a lot of nice words on the page and when you read through it, it sounds very rosy and nice. The problem, of course, is that they don't follow through with the words that they put on paper, Madam Acting Speaker.

I'm sitting here listening to the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) raving about the energy-efficient new Hydro building downtown and saying it cost maybe a tiny bit more to produce a building that is energy efficient, but let's talk about that price.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

The estimated cost of building that building was \$75 million, and a tiny bit more. It's over \$300 million now, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what math this government uses, but that's not a tiny bit more. Then he says, we'll make that up in six months; we'll make that up. I suggest that he's wrong in that, that they'll never be able to recover the extra taxpayers' dollars gone to building this building where they could have actually reduced the rates to Manitoba Hydro consumers, everybody in this province.

I also want to talk about the Manitoba Home Builders' Association and what good work that they have in the private sector. The building and construction in this province with new homes has been incredible. They do a lot of innovative things. They recognize that to bring forward new homes in an energy-efficient manner with energy-efficient

products is the way to go, and they have done this. I want to commend them for the good work that they do in this province. They have a huge organization, and I just have to say I attended their awards banquet the other night. It was quite well done with a lot of home-builders in this province receiving a number of awards.

But I'd like to also talk about geothermal, and talk about the failure of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and this government when it comes to the promises and the ideology and the great things promised by the building in Waverley West, how it was going to be the first geothermal community, and how the Premier was going to use this as his greener Manitoba approach. And what happened? Well, he didn't do much homework there because when it finally was discovered that it wasn't possible to do this because of the water table and because of the salt water underneath that area of the city, Mr. Speaker, the Premier just went out and made another rosy announcement, made some rosy promises based on him wanting to be the green Premier. It just doesn't work. The people see through this government and the things that they write down in their press releases and the things they do in their rosy resolutions. But the things that they don't do, when it comes to actually putting into practice some of things they say.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Member for Carman also wants to have a few minutes to speak, so I'll allow him to speak now. Thank you.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): I would certainly, in the few minutes remaining, like to get a few words on this resolution about green buildings. I'm absolutely amazed the Minister of Science, Technology and Energy (Mr. Rondeau) says a tiny increase in the Hydro building from 75 million to 300 million, absolutely. Nobody denies that green technology is there. I've got green technology in our own house. We have geothermal, we have the ice forms for our basement, and it is very energy efficient.

Private people, private businesses go to great lengths to be energy efficient. This government goes to great lengths to do press releases, warm fuzzy announcements, and then doesn't follow through. How can you ever begin to justify Bipole III going on the west side of Manitoba as being green and efficient? It's only this government, through their press releases and spin, so that they can do that.

Waverley West. They said they were going to do geothermal. All of a sudden now geothermal is out of

the picture on Waverley West. The Brady Road Landfill continues to be the largest emitter of greenhouse gas in Manitoba under the watch of this government. They like to watch things go by and not do anything other than putting out the press releases. They mention St. Leon wind farm. It's a tremendous economic boost to that community. What happens in St. Joseph to the new proposal? It's being scuttled as we speak. It's not happening. The wind farm proponents all around the province are frustrated. They're moving to other jurisdictions such as North Dakota where they seem to pop up like mushrooms, and yet this government can't get anything more going on there.

I also noticed, Mr. Speaker, that, as I was flipping through today's paper, maybe it explains a lot of it on this green buildings. The Premier (Mr. Doer) and Jack Layton, the federal NDP, now seem to have a new alliance on cancelling corporate tax cuts, so maybe this is where this government is going to go. They have no idea on how they'll actually promote green buildings—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have seven minutes remaining.

The time being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

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