

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
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LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
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RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, May 20, 2010**

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**House Business**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business?

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, on House business, Mr. Speaker, I'd seek leave to move directly to Bill 229.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to—for orders of the day, second reading, to move directly to Bill 229, The Elections Amendment Act? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

**SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 229—The Elections Amendment Act**

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, I'll call second reading, Bill 229, The Elections Amendment Act.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), that Bill 229, The Elections Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House. *[interjection]* I'm working on it.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** And I appreciate the support from my colleagues. I hope that that translates into support across this House for Bill 229.

And I—this is one of those bills, I think, that is—it's fundamental in terms of how we deal with the issues around elections, and I know that, for most

Manitobans, they will never participate in the way that members of this House have in an election. Most Manitobans will never seek a nomination. Most Manitobans will never run in an election race.

But despite that, all Manitobans are, in fact, impacted by what happens in an election, not simply the outcome of that election, though I'm sure that that is where most individuals would focus their attention to, but also the process of that election is important, and before that process can ever be determined, or before it can ever take hold, it relies upon a referee, the Chief Electoral Officer, and we all know how important that role is.

The referee role in an election is not unlike the role of a referee in a sporting event or other, different sorts of venues where the participants, whether it's teams or political parties, are relying upon the fairness and the impartiality of that referee—or our case, as politicians, as people who run for elected political office, a Chief Electoral Officer, and each of us have a vested interest, if you would. But there's a vested interest for the democratic system as a whole, not just as us as MLAs, us as individuals, but it starts here because we know that the CEO of Elections Manitoba is, in fact, the gatekeeper, is, in fact, that first line of defence for ensuring that elections are run properly, in a fair way and in an impartial way for all those who are participating in the election.

This bill ensures that the hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer, the beginning point of that process is one that gives the Chief Electoral Officer, himself or herself, a strong vote of confidence, a vote of confidence that they know that parties in the House support his or her hiring. It does not deal with the removal of a Chief Electoral Officer, it simply confines itself to the hiring. Currently, the process in the Manitoba Legislature is that a committee, a subcommittee of Legislative Affairs or another committee of the House, is established with a majority of government members and they then make a recommendation to a government committee of a whole, which then—also controlled by the government—determines whether or not to accept that particular recommendation.

This bill would add a further step. It would ensure that the recommendation from the Legislative Committee would come to this House by way of a

motion and the motion would have to be supported by more than two-thirds of those members voting in this House, and so, in essence, the Chief Electoral Officer—the nominee, the candidate that's being recommended, would have to have more than two-thirds of the voting members of this House support their nomination, which would give them tremendous, I think, moral authority going into their particular role.

This is not something that's not done anywhere else in Canada. In Parliament, I know that there's a motion that comes before the House. It's voted upon in terms of the hiring of a chief electoral officer. This bill probably closely or most closely resembles the Newfoundland experience where a resolution comes before a House and two-thirds in that Assembly have to approve the hiring of a chief electoral officer. In British Columbia, I know that it needs unanimous support, not of the Assembly but of the committee that the hiring process is referred to, and so there is a committee, a legislative committee or something similar to it in British Columbia, which is established and which has to unanimously agree to the hiring of a chief electoral officer.

This bill would, at the very least, provide that the—and should provide—that the two main political parties, the official opposition and the government, would support the hiring officer.

And I'm open to suggestions. I know my friend from Elmwood might have other suggestions about how this process could proceed. The British Columbia experience is one where there's a unanimous recommendation coming from a committee. That could be discussed, and so that every political party that's represented in the House by virtue of being represented on the committee would have to approve of the hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer. We could discuss that, a unanimous decision among all political parties at the committee level as they do in B.C., that's something that we could discuss.

\* (10:10)

So there are, I think, different variations that are used. But I think what is clear is that, unfortunately, what's happened in Manitoba is that there has been a cloud that has settled over the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. And now that that position is not filled on a permanent basis, it gives us an opportunity to review how the hiring process is—takes place.

Not that this bill, I think, is tied to what has happened in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, but it's certainly in the context and the backdrop of what we've seen over the last couple of years, in terms of the revelations from the 1999 election, where members of the New Democratic Party were receiving thousands of dollars in rebates they were not entitled to and then were able to avoid charges that many others would have faced. I think that in the context and the background, this bill might have more significance in terms of how we go forward, but even if that hadn't taken place—and we all wished that it wouldn't have taken place—the bill would still be important because I think that this legislation will give the confidence to the Chief Electoral Officer—to him or her—to really—while it is, certainly, something that impacts each of us, as legislators and people who run for political election, and others who might run outside of this Chamber—it really is about helping the Chief Electoral Officer as they start off on their career, to give them the knowledge that they have the confidence of the—of all the political parties.

And so if the member opposite has other suggestions about unanimous consent, as they do in British Columbia, we could have that discussion. But what is critical is that you need to have, at the very least, the individuals who are represented and represent the majority of members in the Legislature and government. And the official opposition you need, for sure, to have consent at that level because the current process, where government can simply choose their own electoral officer, doesn't serve anyone well. It doesn't serve us well. It doesn't serve the government well. I don't think it serves the Chief Electoral Officer well, either, and I suspect that those who might be looking for the position might hope for a different outcome, a different sort of process so that they can enter the position with the kind of confidence that they will need—they'll need—as they go forward dealing with all political parties.

And so if the member opposite, the Government House Leader, whom I—my expectation is that he'll speak to this particular piece of legislation—if he prefers the British Columbia model where there's a unanimous support of members representing the political parties and then he could state that and we could certainly have that debate. We could have that discussion. At least we would be having a discussion about how we can ensure that there is all-party support for the hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer.

With that in mind, I know that my time is short. I know members opposite will have words to say

about this particular bill, and I am—particular interest about what the government's position is, in terms of how we can restore confidence in the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, an office which is important to all of us. But, unfortunately, we just had a cloud that has hovered over it over the last number of months—hovered over it over the last number of months—as the result of things that have happened with the New Democratic Party in the 1999 election.

So I look forward to comments from my friend, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie).

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, and I do want to respond to what the honourable member has said and to the—about—to the substance and the context in which this particular private member's bill is introduced.

But, first of all, I have to, Mr. Speaker, say, of course, that I reject the honourable member's assertions about the past, particularly in regard to the election of 1999 and how the election of 1999 was conducted and reported and dealt with by Elections Manitoba.

Having said that, I think it's unfortunate that the member actually chose—although he, at the same time, pretended to make a distinction between those comments and the debate on this bill, but he nevertheless didn't interject that into the debate, and so I have to begin with that assertion.

And in—because in any other context, Mr. Speaker, it might have been possible to have a more objective and reflective debate about how chief electoral officers should be chosen, and what the ultimate level of approval should be and how that approval should be sought and registered in order that the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer can have the kind of impartiality and neutrality and—that the honourable member has rightly said is so important in any independent officer of the House, but particularly with respect to the Chief Electoral Officer.

But this does not just occur in the context of what the honourable member has said; it also occurs in the context of what he has not said. And that is that his party has chosen not to participate in the process that was set up, for instance, the same process that was set up to choose the Auditor General, which the honourable member's party had no particular concern about at the time.

And the fact of the matter is that when the honourable member's party walked out of a meeting

on January the 21st of this year, it was not on the basis that the process was faulty. It was on the basis that they weren't going to participate in the process until such time as a public inquiry was called into the election of 1999. That was their position then.

So in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, I think what we have to admit is that what we have here is in some ways a kind of a diversionary tactic dressed up as a substantive debate about how we choose the Chief Electoral Officer. Because it's one thing to debate what the final level of approval should be for a Chief Electoral Officer, but it's another thing to debate that in the context of having the very people who are moving the motion, putting forward the bill, refusing to participate in the process that would ultimately put a candidate before the House for a vote requiring 70— a two-thirds majority of the members.

So I say to the honourable member that his position, I think, would be stronger if his party was willing to participate in the process that had been laid out or for it to become—or to become involved in the process, with a view to arguing within that subcommittee and within the larger committee about what level of approval should be required within that context.

As for me, I just assumed, and no one on this side ever said anything to the contrary, that the subcommittee and, ultimately, the standing committee, having reviewed the names put forward by the independent panel of three non-political people, that we would require ourselves to agree. So one could argue that what the honourable member is doing here is substituting the possibility and, in fact, I would argue, the likelihood of a name going forward with 100 percent approval, that is to say unanimity on the committee, and with a process that would only require two-thirds majority of which it would have the possibility of one party perhaps disapproving of the choice of the House.

So in a way—and I hope the honourable member will take these arguments serious because I think I want to think—we want to think this through. This bill, arguably, sets up a process where the House would divide on a Chief Electoral Officer, because you could conceivably have a third of the House voting against the Chief Electoral Officer. And I have to ask the honourable member whether he thinks that's really a good idea.

It might be unlikely, but does he really think that setting up a situation in which that's a possibility, is that really setting the stage for the kind

of non-partisan approval of a new Chief Electoral Officer that he says he'd desire. So I'm willing to—you know the honourable member—if unanimity or consensus, or however you want to describe it is what he wants in terms of the process, within the context of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, in order to choose—and I think he refers to that as the B.C. model, if I'm not mistaken—that's certainly something the government's willing to consider. But we're only willing to consider it when people come back to the table. We can't do that if we can't sit around the table with the honourable member.

So that's why I say this is, in some ways, the honourable member is trying to change the channel on a bad decision that they made that night on January the 21st, which was to walk out of a meeting and kind of leave the whole process hung up.

Now they might've thought that was very smart that evening, but the fact of the matter is that they are now responsible because they—I agree with them—they put the government in a difficult position because if we try to move now to do anything, to bring forward a new Chief Electoral Officer, they'll say, uh-huh, it's just the—you know, the NDP bringing forward a name. Okay, so we're not going to do that.

\* (10:20)

So the member is—you know, if they're happy that it's going to back the government into a corner here, but they've really backed the process into a corner. They haven't backed the government into a corner. And so what we need to do is to find a way out of that corner. I'm willing to help the honourable member out of that corner that they've backed themselves into, in fact, the whole process into.

But I think we need to realize what's going on here. And so bringing forward this bill is a way to try and change the debate a bit. And if we want to change the debate over to how we select the Chief Electoral Officer, I'm willing to have that debate with the member. But I would like to have it in the context of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs and indicate a genuine openness to a process whereby there would have to be some consensus, even unanimity. Because I would be the last person who would want to put the name before—a name before this House, a name of a candidate for Chief Electoral Officer of Manitoba, but didn't have the support of the official opposition and, presumably, that of the Liberal Party.

So I don't know where the honourable member's sort of paranoia on this is coming from. In fact, I think it's conjured. I don't think there is any real reason to believe that the government ever intended to use its majority, either on the subcommittee or on the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, to impose a candidate on the political process and on the electoral process in Manitoba without the kind of unanimity consensus that we know is absolutely critical to the proper perception and operation of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Manitoba.

So, in a way, the member's asking—the member's complaining about the absence of something that, in my judgment, was there. It might not have been there, technically, in the details, but there was no reason to believe, at any point, that the government was going to try and impose a candidate on the official opposition and bring forward a recommendation for Chief Electoral Officer that the members of the official opposition didn't support.

So, having said that, I think it would be better to sit down and work out a way that the committee could bring forward a name that would have a hundred percent support in the Legislature. Now, if we had a hundred percent support, we might not even need to bring it before the Legislature. But if the member thinks that's important, we can talk about that. But I still hold out the argument that bringing it before the House and creating the opportunity for division, when we have a process which, if properly adhered to by all sides of the House, can produce unanimity, that that's the preferable route. But we can't do that if the official opposition refuses to participate in the process. I mean, even if we were to pass this bill today, how would we get a candidate? How would we get a name to put before the House? Because we still don't have a process. We don't have a hiring process. We don't have a selection process.

So, the member's only solved one part of the problem. In fact, the only problem he's solved is that he's now got something else to talk about, instead of why they boycotted the process in the first place. But the fact of the matter is is that even if we were to agree to pass this bill—

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

The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). Oh, okay. I saw you standing so I just recognize people that are standing.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** It's, indeed, I believe, a pleasure for this MLA to stand in this House and talk about something as important as the way in which Manitobans and, in particular, my constituents get to exercise their vote.

I'm always concerned when I see elections happen and you see the participation of citizens down in an election, whether that's in our province or our country or whether it's countries outside of our jurisdiction. I think we need to take good honest looks at ways in which we can improve our electoral procedure so that more people can participate, so that more people have faith in the electoral process that we have here and elsewhere.

And I think over a period of years—and I say that in a non-partisan way—I think over a period of a long period of years, we've made some very good improvements to the electoral process. And I want that to continue. I want us to be able, in this Legislature, to be able to say, you know, down the road when we're all retired and talking to our grandkids, saying here's what we did to improve the electoral process, that there's nothing more fundamental in this province than our electrical—our electoral process, and we need to make sure that it's—it continues to improve.

I really strongly believe that one of the ways we make our electoral process better is to, to a certain degree, put our political—our partisan political hats to the side and sit down and talk about things that make some sense. And I really encourage members across the way to participate in that.

I was there in January when our friends in the opposition got up and left. I thought that was a mistake on their part. I thought it sent a very clear signal—*[interjection]* And, yeah, you know, they may do it again and that might be quite a signal coming from across the way just now.

But they can do it if they like. Go ahead. Be my guest. Don't participate. Don't participate in something as important and as fundamental to our constituents as making improvements to the electoral process.

And we have made those. I mean, if we were in a situation where this government made no changes to the electoral process to improve it over the last 10 years, then I would think that the opposition may have a point. They may have a reason to be mad and not wanting to participate.

Their problem on the other side of the House, of course, is that we have made positive changes that I think even they support, like, for example, turning over to Elections Manitoba the ability to hire returning officers. I think we can all agree that that's a good way to take, you know, the political tomfoolery that had been happening and give it to somebody—Elections Manitoba—who have a non-partisan nature in this.

So, of course, that puts the members of the opposition in a bad spot right off the bat. The other—you know, the other part that puts it in—puts them into a bad spot is that they're very clearly sending every message that they're being partisan, political, about this.

They still haven't got over the '99 election. You know, they lost it. The complaints that they had have been addressed by appropriate bodies. *[interjection]* Sure, when your reaction to the '99 election is that Manitobans made a mistake and they voted wrong, I guess you can—I guess you can understand the bitterness of folks on the other side of this House. But I think they got to get over that. I think they got to realize that the complaints that they had coming out of that election were properly dealt with by the proper authorities in a non-partisan way.

So let's not let the partisan agenda of members opposite knock us all off of the bigger picture here, the bigger picture of electoral reform which I think is something that we need to strive for.

You know, earlier, I mentioned that we have turned over to Elections Manitoba the ability to appoint returning officers, and I can tell you, this was quite a discussion in my constituency, the brand-new constituency of Dauphin-Roblin back in 1999, when, you know, we went into that election knowing we were going to be in a competitive race with the Tories. The Liberals didn't run a candidate.

*Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

The Green Party did. The Green Party ran a very decent guy from the Roblin area, represented his party very well. Larry Powell was his name. The Tories put forward the mayor of Roblin, Lorne Boguski, who, again, was a very credible, very good candidate.

We knew we had to take on the—you know, the candidates from other parties. But we didn't—what we didn't realize right away, Mr. Acting Speaker, was we also had to run against the returning officer in our

area. Every turn, we had to keep an eye on that guy who was appointed by Gary Filmon, who was there to represent Gary Filmon, not to represent the electoral process, not to be non-partisan, not to represent the best interests of the people who needed to vote. He was there and colluded with the government of the day—plain and simple—a former candidate for the Tory party.

He was one of the ones we had to run against; we had to keep an eye on that guy. And we prevailed. We came out of that election; we won that election. That's not even the point, Mr. Acting Speaker. I was quite proud of that, but that's not the point.

\* (10:30)

What the lesson we learned coming out of that, from Dauphin-Roblin—and I got to say to their credit, the local Tory executive and local Tory team understood this, too, and they didn't like what was going on in that election any more than we did. But the lesson we learned was that we couldn't let any government—I don't care who the premier is, I don't care who the party in power is, we can't let any government have that kind of ability to invoke tomfoolery for partisan political purposes in elections.

So we changed that, Mr. Acting Speaker. We said to Elections Manitoba: You put in place a hiring process, a non-partisan hiring process, take applications, evaluate them and then you decide who that returning officer's going to be, not Premier Doer at the time, not the current Premier (Mr. Selinger), not any future premiers, but the people who are charged with being non-partisan and putting forward an election that can be credible and defended. That's what we did, and I think across the way—I don't remember if they supported that publicly. I think, deep down, I think, they did understand that there was a good reason to deparisanize, at least that aspect of an election.

What we ended up with—I'll just speak for Dauphin-Roblin. We ended up with Moira Brown, an excellent, excellent returning officer. Moira and her team, in '03 and in '07 elections, did a great job. We had no complaints. From my understanding, the Conservatives had no complaints, the Liberals had no complaints, the Green Party had no complaints, because Moira and her team of people that Elections Manitoba put together and that she put together locally, were above reproach and they were fair, and they were non-partisan, and they left with people an

understanding that their vote mattered, their vote counted and that things would be fair, unlike the old days when Premier Filmon was appointing those people. It's a big improvement, along with some other improvements.

I've got to say, as a rural representative, and I think other rural representatives, irrespective of what side of the House they're on, would agree that we have to make it easier for people to have access to polls in rural ridings and northern ridings that are disparate. They're far-flung. We want to make it as easy as we can for people to get to vote, so we did put forward a number of improvements to polling so that people can actually have a fair shot at casting their ballot.

We do these things in a non-partisan way. That's a tradition in this House. We do these things in a non-partisan way, and that makes improvements. And I think that improves the credibility of our electoral process.

My worry, right now, is that the opposition party is dug into a partisan position, and they can't get over the 1999 election. It's a long time ago. It's over. It's done with. The complaints have been handled through proper non-partisan authorities. We have a job to do now that requires a non-partisan approach. And some of us in this Legislature, I think, are up to that. Some of us in this Legislature, for the good of our electrical—our electoral process, and for the good of our constituents across this province—the 1.2 million Manitobans who depend on us, I think some of us can do that. I encourage others to do it as well.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** It's rather interesting when a member of the official opposition introduces a bill and then his members don't even come in to speak to it. And so I'm here. I have another speaker lined up. Everything is under control on this side. But it's very interesting that you have a bill, and you aren't putting up speakers.

So, well, the honourable member is talking about government orders of the day, but we're now in private members' hour. And so the member from the opposition has a suggestion about how to change the process for choosing a Chief Electoral Officer, and we will consider it. I think our House leader suggested that we will consider it. However, I would point out that the existing process has been, in the

past, working quite well, at least until the official opposition walked out of a meeting to discuss choosing a new Chief Electoral Officer. But I have been on some of these all-party committees in the past. In fact, I think I mentioned this recently in private members' hour that I was on the all-party committee that interviewed and eventually hired a new children's advocate a number of years ago and that process worked, in that we got a new Children's Advocate. It wasn't the person that my caucus wanted and so I wrote a minority report.

However, we did agree to and follow the process, and that is that a standing committee of the Legislature appoints a subcommittee and the subcommittee meets. At that time, it was with the head of personnel in payroll, and agreed to a process in terms of awarding points for the answers to questions that we all agreed to in advance and there was a national advertising campaign for the position. In fact, I think I've been on two of these committees in the past where we chose a new person. I think I was on the committee that chose the Clerk, who is also an independent officer of the Legislature, and I remember we interviewed—we solicited applications from across Canada and we interviewed people from out of province and ended up hiring the assistant deputy clerk of Manitoba, and I think it's been a very good hiring decision. And so these processes are very important because we want to get the best person.

That's why we advertise nationally, not just in the *Free Press* but in *The Globe and Mail*, and we solicit applications from across the country. And when the subcommittee has chosen what they feel is the best applicant, then that recommendation goes to the standing committee, whichever the relevant one is at the time, and puts forward one name and that person, when they are approved by the standing committee, they are then hired by the Legislative Assembly and they become an independent officer. And I think that, of course, it's desirable if all three parties support that person because then they have credibility, then I think that enhances their role, just like the role of Speaker.

At one time we had an appointed Speaker, and that person was appointed by the premier of the day and there was a tradition of having the premier move the motion and having the official opposition leader second the motion. But I think there was one time, I believe, in the 1980s, where the leader of the official opposition wouldn't second the motion, and I think the leader of the third party seconded the motion. I'm

just going by memory here, but I think that's what happened at one time.

And now, as people know, we have an elected Speaker, elected by secret ballot, and I think that gives the Speaker more credibility and more independence, so that that individual knows that they have the support of the whole House and I think that's a greatly improved process, and I believe that every province in Canada and the federal government has elected speakers in all our chambers.

I think once the Chief Electoral Officer—or whoever it is, whether it's the Ombudsman or whether it's the Auditor General or the Children's Advocate are in that office, then I think we need to treat that office and that officeholder with respect, and when they write reports and when they do investigations that we accept the results of those recommendations. And we may disagree with them; we may be critical of them; but I don't think that we then criticize that officeholder, particularly not in public or on committees of this Legislature. Because I think that undermines their credibility in their role and the fact that they are independent officers of this Legislature, and we are trying to find a way to choose a new Chief Electoral Officer. It's a very important position, and we've also introduced a lot of changes to make our election process more transparent and more independent, less partisan, and one of the ways that we've done that is by no longer appointing the chief returning officer in each constituency.

\* (10:40)

At one time, that was a patronage appointment of the political party in power, in government, and they chose a person that they wanted to fulfil that office and that, of course, leads to interesting situations because, at one time, I believe it was in Wolseley, there was a tie in the election and, under the act, who broke the tie? The returning officer, and I think that was what actually happened to Jim Maloway in a provincial election and he cast the deciding vote in that provincial constituency and I'm not sure what the election act says currently about what happens with a tie, but I think it is an improvement to have non-partisan people chosen for their abilities and their skills to be returning officers in constituencies.

And certainly, in Burrows, we've never had any problems. We've had minor problems but we've never had any significant problems. In fact, if there is a problem in Burrows and other constituencies, it

would be the low voter turnout, so that currently we are only achieving about a 50 percent voter turnout in Burrows constituency, and we, as a government, have made changes to increase the voter turnout by having polling places in malls, by having more days for advance polls, and many other provisions to encourage people to get out and vote, and I think those are a good thing because, really, our democracy is only as strong as our election act and the number of people who get out and vote.

And it's really a sad state of affairs when we have governments, particularly federal governments, because of the number of parties, that might get elected with 35, 37 percent of the vote, of the people that cast a ballot, and I guess if you figured it out according to the number of—or the—not just the percentage in the House of Commons of a party, but the number of voters who actually voted, it might even be lower.

Now, in Burrows, that doesn't hold true because I've been elected by more than 50 percent of the voters in every election and there are alternatives to that. There's ongoing discussions about proportional representation and I think there are advantages and disadvantages of that, but another system would be—is it called AV? I can't remember, but there's another system whereby people get a second, third, fourth choice on the ballot so that those are added to the number that people vote for you directly, so that you have to have 50 percent plus one votes in order to get elected, and I think that system has merit, so that people can say, well, I represent 50 percent or more of the people that voted in this election, and I think that gives individuals credibility as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, my time is running out, but I look forward to hearing the views of some of my colleagues and also people in the opposition, since this is an opposition private member's bill. I think it behooves them to speak on that, and now the opposition members want to talk about government bills, and, of course, we learned how to speak, or not speak, on government bills from being in opposition and watched the Conservative Party in government almost never put other speakers on government bills, so I think they're comparing apples and oranges, but I look forward to the debate. Thank you.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** It's a great pleasure to speak to this bill and what I find quite interesting, of course, is, once again, you see total lack of support from opposition members to their own

legislation, to their own resolutions that they've brought in in the past.

You know, they had brought forward a resolution the other day here on the Bipole III and the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) brought it forward and he had absolutely no support at all from his colleagues, and it was pointed out in this House by myself that only one of his colleagues stood up to support him on this issue.

And you read their information, and one of their colleagues, they've talked about what their plans are in the next election campaign, and they said that one of the things they're going to be campaigning on is, you know, the decision of the government to proceed with Bipole III down the west side. Yet, when it came to the House here the other day, not one of their colleagues bothered to stand up to support the member for Brandon West, you know, individual who likes to feel that he's going to be their new leader after the next election campaign. So he clearly has no support from his caucus colleagues on that issue, and the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has no support from his colleagues on this issue. And yet, you know, he's a fellow—oh, I know why. I know why. I know why.

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

#### Point of Order

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Saran):** Point of order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** *Beauchesne* is clear about information put on the record. The member opposite is suggesting that there isn't support for the bill, which would mean, of course, since his members aren't speaking to the BITSA bill, that the government has lost confidence in the House, because that is a confidence motion. It's a government bill, a money bill, and if he's indicating that his members won't support a money bill, that would mean that they've lost confidence in the House.

Could he indicate whether or not that that's the case?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Saran):** The honourable member does not have a point of order. A matter of debate is not a point of order.

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**Mr. Dewar:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for your very wise ruling there. Clearly, the member is

just trying to interrupt the debate rather than to listen to the good points that we try to put forward on our side of our caucus.

And, as I said, there's no support for this. There was no support for the Bipole III, and I think I know why: because there's a split in their caucus. There's a split in their caucus when it comes to the Bipole III line, for example.

Well, you know, you've got some members, you've got the members who represent the western part of the province, and they support the east-side line. Then you've got the members who represent the western side of the—excuse me, the eastern side of the province, like the member, the good member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) here and the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) for another one, then perhaps the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who actually secretly favour the west side because they don't want to have to deal with that. They'd be more than happy—they're more than happy to let the MLAs and the west side carry the ball—carry the ball.

And, you know, you just have to turn to the orders of the day. I believe it was in yesterday—oh, it was in yesterday's, but I think it was the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) who had a number of questions—he had a number of questions—written questions in here asking about, you know, the effects that this line would have on cattle, on the GPS equipment in tractors. Well, what about the cattle who live in Lac du Bonnet or the cattle who live in Springfield or the cattle who live in Beausejour? Don't they care about the cattle that live in Beausejour or the tractors that run in, you know, down through Steinbach? Clearly, they don't care.

But as I said, there's a—there was a split in their caucus on that. And I would suggest that it could be very well a split in their caucus on this issue as well, because you don't have any of them standing up to support this bill brought forward by the member.

And, as members have say, it's, you know, it's a serious issue, obviously, the—as we pick our next Chief Electoral Officer, very obviously an important issue. Yet, I was at the meeting, Legislative Affairs, I believe, and—in January. I was there that day where the issue came before the committee, and what did the opposition members do? They walked out. They got up and they ran out. They took—I think they took the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) with them. Although, the member for Inkster, I don't know what his position is. The Liberals are silent on this as well.

So we'll see. I'm sure that—but, you know, I was involved with the selection of the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate. The member for Steinbach was on that committee. He was there and he was very—a very active member of that and gave a great—a lot of good advice to all committee members as to which the—which of the individuals we should pick for the Ombudsman, the Children's Advocate. And as we know, that process worked. The member for—*[interjection]* Well, I believe you were on both the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate, and—but he was very much in favour of the choice that we made. He supported the process and he supported the choice, and I think we all can be proud of the choice that that—a subcommittee made and was—I want to say it was under the chairpersonship of the member—very able chairpersonship of the member from Transcona. And I know the member for Inkster was on it as well. And—so I wasn't there for the selection of the Auditor General, but I think everyone can agree that that was a good process.

\*(10:50)

And, as I said, you know, the position of the Conservatives would be stronger if they actually participated in our current process. And I know that the House leader—our House leader has already stated that it was not the position of the government to select a new officer without opposition involvement and opposition support.

We're not going to do that. We need them. We want all the parties in this Chamber to agree, and I think that's the way we should proceed with this. And I think, as we've done, we've shown this in the past, many examples of how we've picked these independent officers. We've done so in a non-partisan way, and I think we can be proud of that. And we should be proud of our next choice. And I think all the members have to do is get together, come back to the table and get on with the job, because they—when they walked out then, it was a stunt, obviously—a risky stunt, as someone said—but it was a bad decision.

You know, okay, you made a bad decision. We all make bad decisions in our lives. It was a short-sighted kind of a reaction to the issue, and maybe it was something and—maybe they did it for—you know, I think they did it for the cameras. It was, you know, it was not something you just automatically on the spur of the moment just decide, well, I'm just going to get up and run out. It was obviously planned in advance. But, you know, it was

a bad decision then. But I think, you know, you can right that wrong by coming back to the table now and being part of this process.

**An Honourable Member:** Not under the current process.

**Mr. Dewar:** Well, the member says he doesn't want to be part of the current process. And, you know, it's a process that's proven itself in the past to be quite successful. They said we picked the Ombudsman, we picked the Children's Advocate, we picked the Auditor General—all under this way. And I think it works and it should work again. I'm expecting—we're hoping that all members will come back, you know, and come back to the table and join with us and so we can make sure that, you know, Manitobans have confidence in our new Chief Electoral Officer. All we're asking for is the Conservative members to—and the Liberal members—to participate in a process that's proven so successful in the past.

So basically my message is to come back to the table, and let's get the job done. Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Okay, it's my pleasure to rise to speak to The Elections Amendment Act this morning. And I guess I would like to just begin my remarks on commenting on members opposite and their treatment, for want of a better use, of the acting chief electoral officer. It seems to be their strategy to cast aspersions on this noteworthy individual, which I find passing strange in the sense that it was they themselves who appointed this individual as the Chief Electoral Officer more than a decade ago.

So it just defies reason why they would go down this path and try and disparage the good reputation of this man who has worked for many, many years on behalf of the people of Manitoba. And I believe members of the opposition have gone so far as to call him a rat—a rat. Now, that is truly deplorable that a member of this Legislature would stoop so low as to use that type of language to disparage an officer of this Chamber. That is unacceptable, and he should have taken the opportunity this morning to stand on his feet and apologize for those deplorable remarks. But, of course, that has failed to happen.

Now we're, of course, looking for a new Chief Electoral Officer, and the members opposite are choosing to stymie this. They are trying to bring the actions of the Legislature to the—to a halt, and that's not a healthy process. That's not governing or participating in the process of governing responsibly.

That's a waste of time and a waste of taxpayers' money. But that is the will of members opposite, and our hands are, in essence, tied in that regard.

Now, when I think to The Elections Act, of course I have to think back to the bad old days—1999, of course—when I was first elected. And I imagine members opposite are probably getting a little tired of me continuing—*[interjection]* Well, members opposite are. I know that because that was absolutely the lowest point, I think, in political history in this province. Well, not necessarily. I recall the Conservative scandal back when this building was first erected under a Conservative government, and so that was a pretty low point in history.

And then the next low point would have to be, of course, in 1995, when they sought to use and abuse our First Nations people to subvert elections, not only in my constituency, the Interlake, but in other rural areas as well, Swan River and the constituency of Dauphin-Roblin. So that was a pretty low point in our political history as well.

So I guess what happened to me personally in 1999—the smear campaign orchestrated by members opposite, and orchestrated right at the highest level—right at the highest level—came right out of Conservative party central. And this was proven. That was a low point. That was pretty low, but whether it compares to the other two episodes, I don't know. I guess the jury's out on that.

But I think it is noteworthy that these three scandals, these three subversions of democracy, all were orchestrated by the Conservative Party opposite. So when I see them bringing any amendments to The Elections Act forward—any actions on their part related to The Elections Act, I have to take it with a big, big grain of salt because their record speaks volumes.

Well, I know the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) would like to curtail debate on this. He would like to—you know, they always criticize us for getting up and speaking to legislation, saying that we're muzzled on the government side, and so forth, and yet when one of us does get up and speaks, now they're calling for me to sit down. And I can understand that because the truth hurts, and the truth of their behaviour right up unto recent history is pretty sad. So I can understand their attempts to have me sit down and not repeat this and not put it back on the record once again.

But I can't just assume that people are going to be reading my speeches back three or four years, so I think it bears repeating. I think it bears repeating and it should be repeated time and time and time again in this Legislature so that people never forget, because unless we have a good grasp of our history then we will be prone to make those same—I shouldn't say we, I should say members opposite, because they have been the ones, to date, to have gone down this road, most unfortunately.

And, you know, today, obviously, choosing a Chief Electoral Officer is an important thing and we do have a process for that. And it's a long-standing process that has worked pretty good over the years and I think we should respect that. And, you know, just because they're sitting on the opposition bench now, you know, they want to twig the system. They want to suddenly put in place a new system that would give them the power of decision, basically. And, you know, if they want that power then they should campaign for it.

They should, you know, put forth policies and conduct themselves in an honourable manner such that the people of Manitoba make the choice to choose them as the government. And when they achieve government sometime again, off in the far distant future—as, you know, obviously no doubt they will, that's the nature of democracy—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Saran):** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) will have three minutes remaining.

\* (11:00)

The time is now 11 a.m. As previously agreed to by the House on Tuesday, the bills that will now be considered are Bill 223, 225 and 228.

### House Business

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on New Levy on Exchange/Transfer of the Value of Quotas Should be Dropped, sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Saran):** In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is a resolution on New Levy on Exchange/Transfer of the Value of Quotas Should be

Dropped, sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson.

### Bill 223—The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Saran):** I will now call for second reading Bill 223, The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 223, The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** It's my honour to rise today to speak to this bill which is seconded by the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson). Indeed, if it were not for the fact that he is limited as a minister to only introduce public bills related to his department, our roles would be reversed today and I would be seconding his motion, as he is the true genesis of this initiative.

My ethnic origin is not Icelandic, as is his, but I'm blessed with a sizable ethnic Icelandic population in the Interlake, and I feel I can say that I've grown personally as an individual and as a MLA because of their influence.

I treasure my ethnic roots and I've learned over the years that the cultural mosaic that is Canada is what makes us truly unique as a nation. We're a multinational country and the fact that we celebrate our diversity rather than subsuming it into a melting pot, as do our neighbours to the south, it's truly what give us the standing that we have on an international front.

Today we honour the Icelandic people by recognizing Jon Sigurdsson who is acclaimed as the modern leader of this nation of people. For centuries, the people of Iceland languished as a protectorate of the country of Denmark, and Jon Sigurdsson made it his life's mission to break from this mold. In particular, he is to be credited for this endeavour in that he sought freedom in the style of Mahatma Gandhi, through passive resistance based on culture, intellect and the rule of law. Through his tireless efforts, independence was achieved without a shot fired in anger and without a single life lost. In a world where war is still the most common form of expression, his example, established more than a century ago, is a lesson to us all.

At this point, a brief history of the road to independence is warranted, and I quote from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as follows:

Danish rule had in the centuries following the Reformation gradually brought Iceland to the brink of economic ruin. The ancient parliament of the island, which had degenerated to a mere shadow, had been abolished in 1800. All the revenue of Iceland went into the Danish treasury and only very small sums were spent for the good of the island. Worst of all was the notorious monopoly which gave away the whole trade of Iceland to a single Danish trading company. This monopoly had been abolished in 1787, and the trade had been declared free to all Danish subjects but, practically, the old arrangement was continued under disguised forms.

Jon Sigurdsson began a hard struggle against the Danish government to obtain a reform. In 1854, the trade of Iceland was declared free to all nations. In 1840, the Althing was re-established as an advisory, not a legislative, body, but when Denmark got a preconstitution in 1848, the island felt justified in demanding full home rule. To this, the Danish government was vehemently opposed. It convoked an Icelandic National Assembly in 1851, and brought before that body a bill granting small local liberties, but practically incorporating Iceland into Denmark. This bill was indignantly rejected and, instigated by Jon Sigurdsson, another was demanded, of far more liberal tendencies. The Danish Governor General then dissolved the Assembly, but Jon Sigurdsson protested to the King against these unlawful proceedings. The struggle continued with great bitterness on both sides, but gradually the Danish government was forced to grant many important reforms. In 1871, the Danish Parliament passed a law defining the political position of Iceland in the Danish monarchy. Though never recognized as valid by the Icelanders, it became the de facto base of political relations between Iceland and Denmark. At last, in 1874, when King Christian the 9th visited Iceland, at the festival commemorating the millenary of the colonization of Iceland from Norway, he gave the country a constitution with full home rule in internal matters. Jon Sigurdsson passed away a few years later, in 1879.

In 1918, the act of union joined Denmark and Iceland, but allowed for a revision of the relationship in 1940, to be followed by a period of three years, after which the union could be dissolved. Such was the case, and Iceland achieved independence on June 17th of 1944, the day of Jon Sigurdsson's birth.

On this day in 1921, the first statue on our legislative grounds, that of Jon Sigurdsson, was unveiled and I would like to close my remarks by quoting Dr. B.J. Branson, who said that day: No matter how many monuments of enduring stone or everlasting bronze may be reared to Jon Sigurdsson's memory, his fairest and most enduring memorial will always be that reared by himself in the hearts of an admiring and grateful people.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** It is my pleasure to rise today and put some words on the record about this bill, which pays tribute to Manitoba's Icelandic heritage by recognizing June 17th as Jon Sigurdsson Day. And I want to indicate to the House that it is a bill that we support.

And I'm sure, had Eric Stefanson been here still in this Legislature, it would be a bill that he would heartily support. As a man of Icelandic heritage, he certainly was somebody that was very, very proud of that, and I know he has made some trips to Iceland in efforts to create stronger connections between Manitoba and Iceland.

Jon Sigurdsson was an Icelandic scholar who played an instrumental role in the Icelandic independence movement. Born in Iceland in 1811, he developed a strong interest in Icelandic history from a young age. In 1833, he journeyed to Copenhagen, and became fully immersed in studies of Iceland and its traditions. He studied manuscripts, and was considered the premier expert on Icelandic history. However, he never finished his university degree because his passion for Icelandic politics and the movement for self-government consumed him.

\* (11:10)

Jon Sigurdsson was a lively person and enjoyed taking part in festivals, but his sense of duty to his homeland never left him. Unlike the resistance leaders in most colonial histories, Jon Sigurdsson was well respected and liked by most members of the Danish government. They enjoyed working with him and provided him employment when possible. While it was clear that he was in opposition to them, his knowledge and dedication meant that he was always well-received.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Jon Sigurdsson was instrumental in the Danish government's decision to give Iceland autonomy over its affairs in 1874. In fact, he was considered so

important to the Icelandic independence movement that in 1944, when Iceland won complete independence, his birthday, June 17th, was chosen as their national holiday.

The Icelandic people and traditions have always been very important in Manitoba's history. They are one of the oldest groups to have migrated to Manitoba and they have made many significant contributions to our culture and economy over the years. Manitoba has one of the largest populations of Icelandic people living outside of Iceland and the University of Manitoba has a special department devoted to Icelandic studies.

Because the Icelandic people have been such an important part of Manitoba's past, it is only fitting that we recognize one great part of their history. By 'rec'ing' Jon Sigurdsson Day, we are celebrating the accomplishments of the Icelandic community in Manitoba. His monument on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature is a lasting testament to his place in history and to his importance to Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a privilege today, indeed, to rise in the House to speak to Bill 223, The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act, and I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), for moving this bill and bringing it to the Chamber floor today. He and I represent an area that was once known as Nýja Island, New Iceland, and in our neighbouring constituencies. And it has been an honour for me to represent the constituency of Gimli for the past seven years and an honour to represent the Province of Manitoba at a number of events with the Icelandic community.

I have had the pleasure of representing the Province at the annual recognition of Iceland's independence and the Jon Sigurdsson chapter of the IODE ceremony every June 17th here on the grounds of the Legislature. I've often joked about being the minister of all things Icelandic, having received many politicians and dignitaries, tour groups, choirs and many other delegations from Iceland in my tenure here at the Legislature.

And I think it's probably safe to say that I'm the only member of our caucus who consistently pronounces *Islendingadagurinn* accurately and correctly, and as of late I've been called upon to talk about that volcano, *Eyjafjallajökull*, which I think is

very easy to pronounce. My apologies to *Hansard*, who'll be looking that up. It is pronounced exactly as it is spelled.

But it is an honour today to have seconded this bill as a fourth-generation Icelandic Canadian. My ancestral roots are in *Marteinstunnga* on my father's side and *Skagafjordur* on my mother's side and my great great grandfather, *Lang-lang avi*, was the first Icelandic child born on *Hecla Island* here in Manitoba.

I'd also like to acknowledge the members of the various Icelandic organizations in the gallery today who are here to be part of this process. In particular, Icelandic's consul, *Atli Ausmundsson*, and his wife, *Thurdur Helgadóttir*, are here. They've done tremendous work here in Manitoba on behalf of the people of Iceland and on behalf of Canadians of Icelandic descent. And I would also like to congratulate my good friend on yet another very successful *Núna* (now) celebration of the Icelandic artists that is going as we speak.

I'd like to thank *Atli* for his work on my visit to Iceland almost two years ago, where, as someone who had never been there before and carries a Canadian passport, the experience was very much a homecoming and an experience my wife *Joanne* and I will never forget.

I think it was summed up best when I was sitting at a restaurant at the *Blue Lagoon*, and somebody looked at me having heard me speaking English, and said, do you speak Icelandic? And I said, no, I'm sorry, I don't. And he said, you look like you should.

Indeed, I felt as if I were home.

Today, we debate a bill to recognize a statesman, a scholar, an author and a publisher and an orator who inspired a nation to peacefully achieve independence. Jon Sigurdsson's legacy as a statesman and advocate for independence is an example for all on the role of democracy and the power of the written and the spoken word. He played an important role in convincing the Danish king to reinstate the *Althing*, as my colleague mentioned, in 1843. He campaigned tirelessly for the next 31 years for Denmark to expand the role of the *Althing* from an advisory body for Iceland to gain more control of its finances and legislative power.

Though Jon Sigurdsson would not live to see Iceland achieve full independence, his passion and his strength of conviction had established the foundation for Icelandic independence movement,

which would see Jon Sigurdsson's dream become a reality 65 years after his passing.

Mr. Acting Speaker, next year will mark two anniversaries: 2011 will be the 200th anniversary of Jon Sigurdsson's birth and 80 years since the statue of Jon Sigurdsson was erected on the Legislature's grounds as a gift from Iceland and Canadians of Icelandic descent.

His statue represents two very important issues. First, as a western Icelander, it represents the unique relationship Manitoba has with Iceland. The government of Iceland, in addition to the Jon Sigurdsson statue, has supported the University of Manitoba Icelandic Department, and I believe it's been since 1938 that every copy—a copy of every book published in Iceland has been gifted to the Icelandic collection at the university. Now, to put that in context, when you consider the fact that one in 10 Icelanders will publish a book in his or her lifetime, this is a very sizable collection.

The government of Iceland has supported a number of initiatives in the Icelandic community including Islandingadagurinn, the Gimli Film Festival, and the aforementioned Núna (now) celebration. As Manitoba is home to the second-largest Icelandic population outside of Iceland, it is, indeed, a very unique relationship.

Secondly, the symbolism of Jon Sigurdsson as a leader is a model that the world should aspire to. He serves as a reminder that we are very fortunate to live in a democratic society, and he serves as a reminder that we can peacefully resolve our conflicts and achieve what we desire to achieve through the power of the written and the spoken word. His contribution is especially profound when you consider the violence that we see in the world today where political differences attempt to be resolved through war and other means.

For these reasons, Mr. Acting Speaker, and had time permitted me, there would be many more reasons that could be added to the debate. I believe it's appropriate that we proceed to recognize Jon Sigurdsson's contribution to Iceland and, thereby, recognize the contribution of Icelandic Canadians to Manitoba and Canadian society.

Before I conclude, I would also like to recognize that in the gallery today, we have a member of the Order of Manitoba, and we also have recipients of Women of Distinction award, and we also have

representatives of the IODE who were recently recognized in April at the mayor's volunteer awards.

And I would like to ask leave of my colleagues in the Legislature to have the names of all those who are in the gallery today attending today's proceedings to be included in *Hansard* upon conclusion of my remarks. So I would ask leave.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Altemeyer):** Leave has been requested. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Bjornson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe it is appropriate that we proceed to recognize Jon Sigurdsson Day, as I mentioned, and I hope all members will support this bill. I was very glad to hear the member from Charleswood say that they intend to do so.

And I already said what I had written down here, so with those comments, Mr. Acting Speaker, thank you very much, and I look forward to this going to committee and Jon Sigurdsson Day being appropriately recognized here. Thank you.

*Shelley Narfason, Sandra Sigurdson, Dr. Richard Sigurdson, Dr. Birna Bjarnadottir, Elva Jonasson, Dorothy Christopherson Tytgat, Ingrid Slobodian, Garry Oddliefson, Bryan Bjerring, Susan Bjerring, Atli Ausmundsson, Thurdur Helgadóttir, Gunnur Isfeld, Ingthor Isfeld, Johanna Wilson, Vi Hilton, David Gislason, Krista Porteous, Cindy Alexander*

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise to support the passage of this bill, The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act.

Certainly Jon Sigurdsson is a major and noted figure in the history of Iceland and very important to the development of the independence of Iceland which was finally achieved in 1944.

From the history books, there are some interesting parallels in the work that Jon Sigurdsson was doing in the mid-1800s to some of the things that were happening in Canada in terms of the development of more responsible government and more local government. And there are many other aspects, of course, which—the commonality which we share in Canada and Iceland and, in particular, Manitoba and Iceland.

And I think that the history of Manitoba, the history of New Iceland, the tremendous number of people who came from Iceland to make contributions here in Manitoba, initially primarily around the shores of Lake Winnipeg but spreading out from there all over Manitoba and contributing in many,

many different ways, including, I think, the first Icelandic Lieutenant-Governor in John Harvard some years ago.

\* (11:20)

There have been many noted Icelanders, and I think that people like Neil Bardal, who passed away not long ago would be very pleased with this bill coming forward and the recognition of June the 17th as Jon Sigurdsson Day. We have built, over the years, very strong relationships between Manitoba and Iceland with many cultural, diplomatic and business groups going back and forth between Manitoba and Iceland and I think that this bill, in making Jon Sigurdsson Day an annual day here in Manitoba on June the 17th, is very fitting. It will not exactly occur at the same time as Islendingadagurinn but, nevertheless, it will occur on the right day for Iceland and I think the right days for Iceland is also the right day for us here and for Jon Sigurdsson. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Altemeyer):** Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Altemeyer):** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 223.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

The next item to be considered is second reading of Bill 225, The Public Health Amendment Act (Regulating Use of Tanning—*[interjection]* Oh, sorry, recognizing now the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker, let the record show that support was unanimous for the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Altemeyer):** Duly noted. Or—is it agreed that it was a unanimous vote for Jon Sigurdsson Day, Bill 223? *[Agreed]*

Duly noted, thank you for that.

**Bill 225—The Public Health Amendment Act  
(Regulating Use of Tanning Equipment)**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Altemeyer):** As someone recently said, the next item for consideration is second reading of Bill 225, The Public Health

Amendment Act (Regulating the Use of Tanning Equipment).

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand here and to speak about this very important bill and—*[interjection]* Oh, I'm sorry.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), that Bill 225, The Public Health Amendment Act (Regulating Use of Tanning Equipment); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique (réglementation de l'utilisation des appareils de bronzage), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

**Ms. Brick:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to see you back in the House.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Bill 225, which I had the pleasure of introducing, is a very important bill. At the heart of the bill is our interest in protecting the health of young people. We want to provide appropriate tools so that parents have the opportunity to make the appropriate health choices for their children.

I read with interest, Mr. Speaker, a report that is cited today in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and it was released on Wednesday, May 19th by the Canadian Cancer Society. In that it says that—it estimates that 173,800 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer of some form. This number has risen by 2,800 from 2009. The report predicts that 76,200 people are expected to die from this disease, and this number has also risen. So anything we can do to help parents to protect their children is especially important to us.

We know that science is telling us that the use of tanning beds can increase the risk of cancer, and parents and their children need to be aware of these risks before using them, and we know, Mr. Speaker, that this has been recognized by the World Health Organization. A few years ago, the World Health Organization moved tanning beds and other UV-emitting devices from the probable carcinogen list to a known carcinogen list. This means that we now know that tanning beds cause cancer, not that we just think that they might. The World Health Organization noted that using tanning beds before the age of 35 is associated with a 75 percent increase in melanoma.

So, Mr. Speaker, anything that we can do to help protect children and to help parents make appropriate choices in terms of the choices their children are going to make and encourage their children to make appropriate choices is very important. This bill seeks to ensure that parents or guardians will give consent in writing before a child uses tanning equipment in a commercial tanning operation. The parent or guardian must also comply with any regulations that will be established, and it is in our intention to work with the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer to develop a consent form that includes appropriate health risks so that people do understand the risks that they are undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes to require, also, that tanning operators will post signs to make other individuals aware of what the risks are and that those signs would be posted within their establishment.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that our government has been moving forward in this area. We've taken steps forward in terms of our Budget 2010, which announced that tanning services will no longer be exempt from PST starting July 1st.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the information that is out there, I feel very passionately that this is a bill that we need to support throughout the House, and I'm hoping that all members will support this bill.

I have siblings who have had the experience of suffering through skin cancer. My brother has had skin cancer and my father have both had skin cancer. And watching the types of treatment, and particularly that my father had to undergo, have been very emotionally draining on our family, so this is a bill that I'm quite passionate about.

Anything that we can do to prevent cancer—we look at the numbers that are rising, anything that we can do to prevent people from participating in activities that will lead them to have a higher risk of cancer—we know things like exercise, getting the appropriate amount of exercise, eating well, we also know sustaining from alcohol and from tobacco, and now, we're seeing that, you know, paying appropriate attention to the sun and paying appropriate attention to devices that emit UV rays is particularly important.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I just want to encourage all members in this House to vote in favour of this legislation. Thank you.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** This bill requires a parent or guardian to consent in writing

before a child uses tanning equipment. It also requires the operator of a tanning operation to post warning signs about the health risks associated with tanning.

And I would note at this time that James Bezan, a Manitoba MP, has moved forward with a private member's bill himself a number of months ago to actually ask for something very similar as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can appreciate the intent of the bill. Certainly, it is important to ensure that the public is fully educated and informed about the risk that tanning presents, because that does make people capable of making informed decisions.

We know that in Canada, melanoma is the sixth most common cause of cancer. And I would note that a very close relative of ours actually died of melanoma and it is a disease that can have profound, you know, effects on a person and on a family. Thankfully, melanoma has the lowest mortality rate of all cancers because it is often caught early, but that does not change the fact that it is still a form of cancer that can be devastating, especially since it is more common in young people.

The Canadian cancer statistics for 2010 were released yesterday. Last year, approximately 155 Manitobans were diagnosed with skin cancer—and those numbers, I think, are fairly significant—and 30 people did die. Certainly, these statistics are very troubling, especially since melanoma is so often preventable.

\* (11:30)

However, there are some outstanding questions about the due diligence that may or may not have been done with regard to this bill. One of the issues that is being brought forward to us now was whether or not stakeholders were adequately consulted, and we don't have a sense yet if that is the case. Manitobans, with some of the stakeholders that are coming forward right now, are very concerned about the type of regulations that the NDP will bring in, and they know that this government has in the past been very intrusive and heavy-handed when bringing in regulations and they have failed to consult with stakeholders. So this is one of the outstanding questions that we have right now, is whether or not there was adequate consultation with all stakeholders involved in this. And sometimes even when this government does consult with stakeholders, they forge ahead with half-baked plans that don't accomplish their objectives.

The parental consent provisions of this bill are a little bit ironic at this time, given the NDP's traditional refusal to consult parents when making decisions about the education and health of children.

That being said, we are very prepared to have this bill move along to committee for further discussion. We do hope that there will be stakeholders that need to raise their concerns come forward to committee. We're very prepared to see what happens there, very aware of the preventative aspects that are needed around this, and as I said, the intent of the legislation, the genesis of it, there's no argument about that part of it. But there is some question about due process here and we look forward to having that discussed further and our questions answered in committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this Public Health Amendment Act which regulates the use of tanning equipments.

I think we're all certainly in agreement that the concern about melanoma is a valid one. We are concerned about the use of tanning equipment because of the evidence that using tanning equipment can be one of the factors which can lead and increase the likelihood of melanoma. We also—I think we're all aware of the evidence which shows that it's the exposure to the sun, particularly early on in life, which can be particularly important in terms of whether one—a child develops later on a melanoma or not and whether there is exposure to the extent of burning the skin and so on, so that this is a significant issue. It is a significant issue here. It is a significant issue globally with the increase in melanoma in the last number of years and, of course, the greater awareness of concerns over melanoma with increased exposure to UV radiation, the increased levels because of holes in the ozone layer and so on. So that the—bringing this bill forward today is certainly timely and appropriate, and we are ready to support the bill in general form.

We have a number of concerns with the bill as it's written, and, you know, first of all, in the section which talks about children using tanning equipment, their requirement for consent in writing unless the child's parents or guardian—well, a child's parents or guardian must consent in writing and complying with what other prescribed regulations. But I think it would be important to include in here a requirement to be sure that the child and the parents receive information on the risks of tanning, and I don't think

that that's a—it's adequate to just require the posting of warning signs. We all know how easy it is for a warning sign to be mixed in with a lot of other material which is on a wall and not seen very quickly by people who are rushing into tanning salons and are primarily concerned about getting in there to get their rays and so on.

So I think it's—it should be explicit here that the child and the parents receive education about the risk of tanning in relationship to skin cancer and melanoma. I also think that it's pretty important that even though the parents and the guardians are the ones who give official consent, that children, probably by the age of five, six or seven are, you know—know enough to be able to be told and to understand in simple terms what is cancer, what is, you know, the effect of tanning and to be explained and informed and that there is, I think, an issue here in terms of the right of the child to know as well as the right of the parents and the guardian to know.

And even though legally it may not require the child's consent, that I believe that many children when it comes to health and environmental matters are often ahead of their parents and that it would be particularly important to make sure that there are clauses in the bill which recognize the rights of the child and recognize the right of the child to be informed in language that the child—is appropriate to their age in terms of what is happening and why this is an important issue.

And I suspect that we may well find that if we start doing a better job of educating children around issues like this, that the children may take a lead and say, no, I'm not going to have the tanning, even though my parents are in favour of it. And I wouldn't be surprised that the children may have an influence on the parents. It certainly has happened in many, many other instances.

So I think that there—even though the MLA for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) is legally appropriate in terms of requiring the parents' and the guardians' signature, that I think that there's an important recognition of the rights of the child and the important of the child knowing in terms that are appropriate to the age of the child as part of this effort.

I also believe that it should be clearer in the written consent form that the consent form itself that has to be signed has some statement about the risks of melanoma and that we encourage or require

language which is easily understood but which is also accurate scientifically in terms of assessing risk.

I think that there are, like in a lot of other things in this world, there are negative sides to tanning which we're aware of, but there are some positive sides to exposure to the sun which can also be quite important, and maybe that—you know, this should also be something which at least is on the record today. There is increasingly evidence that exposure to the sun and the production of vitamin D as a result of exposure to the sun can be very important as a positive health measure, and, increasingly, indeed, physicians are recommending supplementation for vitamin D or exposure to the sun's rays as a positive thing.

\* (11:40)

So, whereas—while we do have to be very cognizant of the problem of melanoma, we also need to make sure that things are communicated in a context, that there are some positive benefits. We have known for quite some time that there is a condition called S-A-D, SAD, seasonally affected disorder, in which people get depressed due to a lack of sunlight. And this condition, you know, affects quite a number of people, particularly in Manitoba where we have less access to sunlight in the winter.

And that—we need to make sure that when we talk about activities like tanning that it's presented in the sort of balanced way, that we are presenting the risks and that we are having—we agree—consent forms and so on, but that we also make people aware of the positive health benefits, which are real. And this effect on mood is probably a relatively general effect, not just to those who are affected by SAD, but exposure to sunlight and tanning probably has a beneficial effect on mood. And that, of course, is good and something that we should recognize can be quite positive.

So I would urge the MLA to have a look at this bill and to see how it can be amended and improved, because I think that we want to make sure that this bill is as good as it possibly can be. And while we support this bill, we are looking forward to the member coming forward with some improvements which recognize the comments that I've put on the record. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was going to move adjournment of the debate, but I understand the member from Portage la Prairie wanted to speak. So as long as I don't—what I

just said doesn't count as my speech; I just want to move adjournment.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will hear first from the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, then? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I do appreciate the opportunity to rise and participate in the debate of Bill 225, the health amendment act regarding use of tanning equipment as brought forward by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) and seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady).

Two points of note: I would like to emphasize that the intent of the bill is one that I certainly can support, as being an individual that has been adversely affected by exposure to sunlight. It is, though, with a great concern that individuals as well as corporations that have businesses of tanning, the first that they heard of this was through the media. And I would like to see that the—a nod from the member for St. Norbert that every effort will be made to contact all stakeholders as it pertains to this bill, and then they have the opportunity to come to committee and express their thoughts on this particular bill, because I believe it's ultimately important that stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, are consulted when we as members of the Legislative Assembly pass legislation that concerns them.

The other point that I would like to draw the House's attention to it is the protection from liability clause, 59.3(2) No action or other proceeding may be brought against a person for providing information in good faith under this Division.

I look to the House leader on the government side of the House, and that is precisely the clause that I brought forward in the previous session regarding the public interest disclosure whistle-blower protection act, and the government did not see fit to proceed with that clause as an amendment to The Public Interest Disclosure Act. And so, with the passage of this bill, I look for one hundred percent support from the government side of the House for an amendment to that particular act incorporating this very same clause to which the government has brought forward here today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that debate be adjourned.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Bill 228—The Consumer Rights Day Act**

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, I will now call Bill 228, The Consumer Rights Day Act.

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), that Bill 228, The Consumer Rights Day Act; Loi sur la journée des Droits du consommateur, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

***Motion presented.***

**Ms. Selby:** This bill would mean that every March 15th of each year would be recognized as Consumer Rights Day in Manitoba, which is something that I think is not only important, but also really exciting.

And I'll tell you a little bit about that why—why I believe that. I've been the legislative assistant to the Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Mackintosh) since November, but my passion—my passion for consumer issues actually began in the year 2002. And that's when I was appointed the first consumer reporter for CTV news in Winnipeg.

When I first became a consumer reporter, I was open to the idea and looking forward to the challenge, but wondering what was that going to be like as a beat. There are certainly other beats that reporters cover that are pretty exciting and interesting, and I wondered, since it was new to Winnipeg, what consumer would be like. But it didn't take long before I developed a real passion for consumer issues, and realized that we're all consumers. It's what we all share right across the world. It's the one thing we have in common, and the one thing that is pretty hard to avoid knocking heads with day after day as different things, in terms of being a consumer.

And the consumer stories that I covered for four years at CTV are some of the stories I'm most proud of. Not only did I get to do some interesting work and meet a lot of interesting people who advocate for consumer issues, but because I became somebody that people associated with consumer issues, I also, off-camera, did a lot of—became sort of an information source for people that would phone me, not wanting to go on TV and not wanting to talk about any particular issue, but just wanting my advice and wanting some information.

And, luckily, I had some really good people to turn to to find out what other people's rights are and different issues. And that was the folks at the

Consumers' Bureau, which, of course, is a branch of the Minister of Consumer Affairs' portfolio. The nice thing is that I now get to work some of those folks again. Many of the same folks that I used to call for advice, it seems I'm still calling for advice. And, as always, they are incredibly knowledgeable about their area.

I think it's really important that we learn more about consumer rights and, as a person who was working as a consumer reporter, I notice that there was definitely a need for more awareness of some very basic things that people just weren't always familiar with. The modern consumer rights movement actually dates back to just after World War II, during the consumer boom, when the first consumer association of Canada was actually formed in 1947. The first international conference of consumer rights groups was actually put together in 1960, and led to the formation of the International Organization of Consumer Unions, or IOCU, which is still a very vibrant organization today.

President John Kennedy, actually, is credited with the consumer movement because of a speech that he made to Congress in 1962, where he laid out four basic consumer rights. And, at the time, he declared them to be: the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, and the right to be heard. Those are still recognized around the world, internationally, as consumer rights but, since that time, and over the years, four more rights have actually been added to those four basic rights, and we now have eight internationally recognized basic consumer rights which are: the right to satisfaction of basic needs, the right to redress, the right to education, and the right to a healthy environment.

Now, some of our local national groups have also added their own rights to that. The Consumers' Association of Canada has also added the right to participate in marketplace decision-making, and the Consumers Council of Canada has added the right to privacy.

Now, this bill, as I said, would mark March 15th as Consumer Rights Day in Manitoba. And the reason why we've chosen that date is because World Consumer Rights Day was first marked on March 15th in 1983, which was the anniversary of President Kennedy's original speech that sort of started people thinking about those four rights that are now up to eight rights.

\* (11:50)

In 1990, the IOCU changed its name to the consumers—to Consumers International or CI and it is a vibrant organization around the world.

Each year, CI chooses a theme for Consumer Rights Day. In 2009, the theme was "Marketing Unhealthy Food to Children" and not only did they act as advocates but also provided a lot of information and, sort of, got a lot of people talking about the fact that some very unhealthy food is marketed directly to our youngest and most vulnerable audience. Other themes that they've looked at over the years are "Unethical Drug Promotion" and "Access to Sustainable Energy." For 2010, the IC's theme is "Our Money, Our Rights" which I think we can agree is probably a timely issue to be talking about such things.

Now, should this bill pass, Manitoba will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to recognize Consumer Rights Day, although it is recognized in about a hundred countries around the world.

So why do we need a Consumer Rights Day? I've given you a little bit of history but still haven't really talked about why we need it and why I'm so passionate about the need for consumer awareness. Consumers spend more money in a marketplace that they can trust. When you feel that you're getting value for your money, that you know that the business will give you a fair exchange for the money that you spend, you can spend more and you can spend more with confidence. So business owners benefit not only from the fact that consumers are willing to spend more but, also, it levels out the playing ground. Well-informed consumers make better choices. They, themselves, can start to weed out some of the bad apples.

We know that most people in the business world, whether it's retail or other marketing areas, are doing the right thing and following the law and trying to do their best to grow their business and be respectful and provide good service to consumers. But, of course, it's not fair when, sometimes, those few bad apples that I talked about make it so that people end up losing their money or getting ripped off, sometimes because they just weren't aware of their rights and didn't know which questions to ask and didn't know that they didn't have to sign something or that they could take more time to look at a lease or an agreement, that sort of thing. It's also not fair, though, for legitimate business when that happens,

because their prices get undercut by someone who is cutting corners or not actually delivering the service. It undermines the entire marketplace.

The Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Mackintosh) introduced Manitoba's new consumer strategy, Let's Make a Better Deal, last week, and it includes proposed legislation to further strengthen the consumer protection laws in Manitoba.

We are all consumers and we are all affected by consumer law. The marketplace is only made stronger if everybody is aware of those rights. And so, for these reasons, I hope that this bill will pass and that we will see Consumer Rights Day become a regular thing in Manitoba. March 15th can be a time that we can not only better inform people but just recognize what's been done in the past and where we're going in the future, and I hope to see it pass unanimously in the House.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I do appreciate the opportunity to rise and participate in debate of Bill 228, The Consumer Rights Day Act. And I would like to compliment the honourable member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) in her initiative to bring forward a bill that I whole-heartedly support.

It's extraordinarily disappointing, though, that—and I'm sure for the honourable member for Southdale—that her government is going in a totally different direction, as far as it is concerned with Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs was recognized by the Conservative administration as a very important department. What, then, does the NDP government do once they come to power? They essentially say, it's really not a department worthy of a minister, and so they bury it with another minister's portfolio. And this government here is staying by its own actions. So we hear words of support for consumers but we see by action of the government that it's not one of their priorities.

And I'm sure that the honourable member had—if she's returning after the next election to her previous employs, that she will stand up for consumers and make note that the New Democratic Party, in fact, put to the back burner as far as departmental priorities, saddling a minister that is extraordinarily

busy with Family Services concerns and has the other responsibility of consumers as well. *[interjection]*

And the honourable member I hear say that it's insulting, and I agree. I agree 100 percent that it is insulting to consumers to have to share a minister's time on such a very, very important issue.

And the consumers' rights in this province, again, are just paid lip-service in a number of different sectors of retaining goods and services. And I hope with the passage of this bill that the government will, indeed, begin to act on what they made statements on in this House. Because there're a number of private member's legislation I have brought forward over the past few years that this government has snubbed their noses at, and even though they were vitally important issues to consumers, whether it be the persons that want to have the dignity of burial of their pet, for instance, an issue that was widely reported in the media, and yet this government saw—says that it's not relevant or important.

And, yet, again, after 10 years in government, finally this government comes forward and says they now have a five-year plan. Well, after 11 years in office you would begin to wonder why they took so long to say that Consumer and Corporate Affairs issues are, indeed, important. They're now saying, well, elect us one more time, and we'll finally get around to it. Fifteen years to talk about consumer rights in this—by this government?—*[interjection]* And the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) says, well, what am I doing about it? Well, I have a number of pieces of legislation before this House and I look for his support when they come forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I, too, wanted to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 228.

And I do think it is important, after all, you know, our—as it's been pointed out, consumers—we are all consumers and we all contribute in many different ways. The most important way is through consumption. And, of course, we don't have a choice, we all have to consume.

And having said that, it's interesting to recognize that the member bringing forward the legislation in

terms of—in her speech, she made reference that we're the first in Canada to have legislation of this nature. And, you know, it's always nice to be the first in Canada in achieving ideas, and this is something in which, no doubt, does have some merit.

You know, over the last number of weeks, I should tell the member from Southdale, that I've had individuals that have stopped by to talk to me about consumer-related issues. And I think that we need to do a lot more in terms of protecting those consumers—*[interjection]* Well, coincidence would have it, they were at McDonald's. Go figure.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues was in regards to the purchase of a vehicle, and, you know, if you take a look at consumer—many, many consumer contracts, they're very detailed. I would suggest to you that they're not what I would classify as consumer friendly. There's so much that can be said in a—in such a small font, both on the front side of a contract, but, even worse, in a faded small font on the back of a contract. *[interjection]* And yes, it can be good business for lawyers, and there's no doubt about that. But now, I don't want to sound like Jim Maloway from the past.

But, you know, there is some merit in terms of recognizing the value of standing up for the consumers of our province. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is a need and a stronger role for government to play in terms of protecting the consumer.

You know, I was amazed in terms of some of the conditions that you will see, and when an individual often will—and we'll just use the automobile industry as an example—people are fairly excited about the prospect of acquiring a new vehicle or a second-hand vehicle, Mr. Speaker. And when they sit down with the salesperson, you'll often find, through that excitement, that there's papers that are handed over, and they have to initial and they have to sign, and that's just to put in an offer. And there's so much based on good faith—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), will have seven minutes remaining.

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

**CORRIGENDUM**

On Tuesday, May 18, 2010, page 2272, second column, third paragraph, should have read:

**Ms. Marcelino:** Universities or bodies other than government offices are not controlled by the

government. They have their own boards and then they will—they have their own FIPPA chairperson, and those will have to be addressed by those people concerned, and our government cannot interfere in telling them to charge or not to charge. Those are independent bodies.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, May 20, 2010**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		Bill 225—The Public Health Amendment Act (Regulating Use of Tanning Equipment)	
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS</b>			
<b>Second Readings—Public Bills</b>		Brick	2343
Bill 229—The Elections Amendment Act		Driedger	2344
Goertzen	2329	Gerrard	2345
Blaikie	2331	Faurschou	2346
Struthers	2333		
Martindale	2334		
Dewar	2336		
Nevakshonoff	2338		
Bill 223—The Jon Sigurdsson Day Act		Bill 228—The Consumer Rights Day Act	
Nevakshonoff	2339	Selby	2347
Driedger	2340	Faurschou	2348
Bjornson	2341	Lamoureux	2349
Gerrard	2342		

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