

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

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, August 1, 2013**

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Good morning, colleagues. Please be seated.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Are we ready to proceed with Bill 205?

**An Honourable Member:** We are.

**Mr. Speaker:** We are. Okay.

**SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll call Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act.

**Bill 205—The Election Financing Amendment Act**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I move, seconded by the député for the circonscription de Tuxedo, that Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Pallister:** Good morning, colleagues. I look forward to putting a few comments on the record in respect of the proposed vote tax the government has advanced to the people of Manitoba.

I'm reminded in my reflections on this bill of a little piece of Canadian prose that describes a couple—a prairie couple, farm couple—back in the 1930s, a difficult time for many farm couples. But they rose together—their children had long since left the farmhouse, and they rose quietly together and chored separately and then rejoined for breakfast and

cleared the table together quietly and then dressed for a walk. And they walked together five miles to the schoolhouse of their area to vote. And together they walked parallel, as individuals but together as a couple, to do that, to exercise this privileged franchise that we all value so much. And then they, having cast their ballots, turned and made the trip back together, side by side, having split their votes. They valued the franchise so much that they didn't mind. And they made that trip knowing full well what they were doing to each other's votes in the process, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is that voting a—is really an individual decision. It is not a collective one. As much as those who study political science and those of us engaged in politics may think that we can influence masses of people, the reality is that in the booth, people make an individual decision that they personally have decided upon. Too many people don't make the decision to go and vote; I think we could agree on that, certainly, but those who do, make that conscious decision as people that we should respect.

Voting is an individual activity, not a collective one. My grandfather, Harry Pallister, was given the honour of harnessing the horse of his dad on our farm in 1922 so that John Pallister, my great-grandfather, could show D.L. Campbell around the Edwin district in his first campaign. And I think it was partly because of that honour he was given as a young boy that he continued his support for D.L. through many years. And so he voted as a Liberal based on a personal experience that he had. He made that decision consciously on the basis of his own chosen priorities.

My dad counselled us not to look so much or listen so much to what politicians said as to look at what they'd done with their lives. He asked us to consider what their actions had been, not their words, but their deeds. And he didn't counsel us to support any particular political party, but as children influenced by our parents, as we all are, I think, he influenced us to make sure we did our research. And so it was that I fully expect my dad, my brother and I, together, have probably supported many different political parties over the years, in terms of where—who we gave our votes to.

My mother was a schoolteacher all her life. You couldn't pry out of her who her partisan favourites were. She always said, I have to teach everyone's children; everyone's children are important to me, and I will not make my politics known.

In fact, when I went to begin my teaching career in the 1970s—just a couple of years ago, Mr. Speaker, it was—it seemed, some days—I was counselled by my mother to set aside partisan politics, to leave it alone for that very reason that—and I, of course, didn't follow her advice. But in other things, I did.

Again, these decisions that my family made as individuals were to either keep secret their support, to be very partisan about their support or to decide on the basis of the individual person. These are three sharply divergent possibilities that Manitobans, perhaps even today, may use to determine who it is that they decide to support. This bill forces the support of all Manitobans in the direction of political parties, regardless of their individual choice. It supplants the choice of the individual and puts into supremacy the choice of the state. It makes less out of the freedoms that we should never take for granted, Mr. Speaker.

I would say this, that I would venture to say that I know that no groups are allowed in a voting booth; individuals are. And it is a good parallel, I think, to the concept of volunteering. Although we have groups that volunteer, they are formed, and they are formed by the collection of individuals, individuals who make decisions based on their own personal priorities, not without considering the well-being of the group itself, but at the same time, considering first and foremost, if that group, once formed, will serve their needs as an individual. Now, so it is with volunteering, I think, a good parallel.

I remember, again, as a boy on the farm, my dad was stricken with kidney stones. I know that the Finance Minister's recently suffered through that condition. It's not fun. It's a horrible thing. Our sympathies are with him. Certainly, with my father, was a hard-working farmer, but he was bedridden for quite a while. And it was spring, and he couldn't put the crop in. So our neighbours came, put the crop in for my dad, for our family. But they didn't do it as a group. They did it, each of them, together, as individuals. They made a conscious decision to supplant their best interests at that time and give something of themselves back to their neighbour.

\* (10:10)

So when we take away that right, we are lessening ourselves. When we say to individual people, individual associations, volunteer groups, charitable groups, sports groups, cultural groups, who all go out and generate their funds the old-fashioned way, by asking for it and by earning it, when we say we're above them, when we say we're better than them here, we're wrong. This bill is wrong. It's wrong for that reason. It's wrong for many reasons, but it's certainly wrong for that reason.

And when the government decides that it wants to make its priorities more superior to those of these groups and individuals, whether they be 4-H clubs or United Way or groups advocating for poverty alleviation or groups advocating for the promotion of the causes they sincerely believe in, when we say we're better than them, we're wrong, and I think this bill is wrong for that reason.

Experts certainly have commented on this issue. As we are aware, of course, there was much commentary because of the federal government's—back a few years ago—initiative to introduce a vote tax. And the thesis that many experts in this field advanced was that a vote tax will actually further diminish the role of grassroots membership in political parties. Many experts said that creating direct public subsidies makes political parties mere pawns of their leadership or the top of their organization rather than groups of like-minded citizens.

Dr. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, who some of the members here would have heard of, is a renowned—world-renowned expert on functioning democratic institutions. He's been used by—he's been—offered his services and has been employed by the United Nations on numerous occasions to assist in the development of good governance in Third World countries. He is a senior research fellow at Brunel University. He is a recognized world-wide authority on political finance as well.

And he says, and I quote: If we go further down the road of state funding of political parties, we risk exacerbating the long-run trend that is converting parties from popular democratic institutions into top-down bureaucracies. Those are his comments. End of quote.

Now, he also said, again, Mr. Speaker, once parties become dependent on state money, they become fundamentally altered and less able to carry out their democratic functions. Well, I don't think

any of us here should want that, but that would be the effect, according to this world-renowned expert, of this initiative, of this bill.

William Cross at Carleton University in Ottawa holds the chair in Canadian parliamentary democracy. He studied the federal vote tax, which the Liberals brought in, and he suggested, quote: Essentially, the new federal public allowance system makes political parties wards of the state and diminishes the incentive to communicate with partisans between elections and involve them in party affairs.

I would strongly urge the members of this House to support this bill because I believe very strongly that we are going in the wrong direction. Certainly, experts in this field say the same. I would encourage the members opposite to go to—get a sample of opinion, any—go to any mall, as an example. Go to Polo Park or Garden City or St. Vital mall, ask the first 10 people you come across what their top priorities are. Ask them: Would it be that you want us to spend money on health care or on infrastructure? Would you like us to lower taxes or have less of a deficit every year? Would you like us to spend on poverty alleviation or would you like us to spend on the vote tax for ourselves? And I think each member here in their own conscience would know that the lowest priority of those would be the latter. The vote tax is not a priority for Manitobans, especially in this circumstance where it is going to be paid by borrowed money taken from our future. It is not a logical endeavour.

Now, the NDP themselves struggled with this issue at their own general meetings. They've debated it, and it's not an easy issue; I submit to the House that it is not. But I know that—

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

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the Leader of the Opposition's mini-biography, and his very—and none of us heckled because it is a very important issue, and I want to compliment the leader for talking about his individualistic frontier approach to life in the Canadian prairies.

I did note that, in talking about his dad and the individualistic way that he looked at matters, that he forgot kind of—he forgot something about the prairie ethos was that when people helped, they came

together to build that barn, they came together to combine and to work to build a community. It wasn't done by the Horatio Alger theoryism that the member opposite raised.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. You can lead a Tory to compliance, but you can't make the comply.

You know, we brought in amendments to The Elections Act based on the worst political scandal in the history of Manitoba—the worst—the most—the awful degradation and the—of—cynical approach. In Zimbabwe, they do that, Mr. Speaker. And then that was part of a party and sat on a Cabinet that brought in the worst political scandal. And we bought in reforms through The Elections Act to deal with that, and many of those reforms required compliance. And the vote subsidy issue is related exclusively to compliance and allowing individuals and parties to comply with election regulations that are put in place so people don't cheat like they did in 1995, like Monnin found.

The member talks about individuals going to vote. It is important. Let me tell you my story, and let me tell you my story about—*[interjection]* Well, if the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) would shut his trap for a change.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I understand that from time to time members have strongly held views on certain topics, and I respect that and I appreciate that. That's what I would expect from our debate here in this Chamber.

But when we personalize comments as I just heard from the honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines, that goes beyond the bounds of what I consider to be fair ball inside this Assembly, so I'm asking for the honourable minister to withdraw those comments, please.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll withdraw those remarks.

I would hope that members would pay the same attention to the comments that we have paid respect. The member—the Leader of the Opposition always talks about respect. I would think that he'd talk to his caucus about respect when we talk—make our comments around here, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk about my voting experience—about the fellow who took his wife to vote at the pre-

election poll because she was dying and she wanted to put her vote in for a party that cared about health care, because they had—we had done so much in health care. She wanted to vote for us, because she believed that what the Conservatives did in cutting health care was so bad, Mr. Speaker. And that's my voting experience.

My father's experience was growing up in a country where he was—he could use—he was ambidextrous, and they would whip his hand—his left hand when he tried to write. That's in a country where you didn't have the right to vote. So we all come from the same background, that we value this democracy and we value our right to vote and we value the ability to participate in political parties and have free speech.

And part of that is ensuring that we don't get to a state—literally and figuratively—where money buys elections. And that's what's happened in many jurisdictions, and that's one of the—for as good as the United States' system is and for as great as that country is, one of the biggest faults is the amount of money that's allowed in the system. We have been able to avoid that, Mr. Speaker. We have been able to avoid that, and one of the reasons we've been able to avoid that is providing subsidies and subsidization to political parties to allow all political parties to have that opportunity.

The Progressive Conservative Party bragged that they had received \$1.3 million in reimbursements from the 2011 election. The Leader of the Opposition bragged about \$16,000 reimbursement for his by-election. The PC's chief financial officer said their 2011 election reimbursement—quote: This amount was the highest reimbursement we've ever seen. It's no—compared to the NDP, we're receiving higher reimbursements. That's the CFO of the PC Party.

Where is the consistency, Mr. Speaker? They have taken over a million dollars in subsidies and yet they decry a compliance amount that's put into place to prevent them from doing the kind of things that they did in the past. It is to comply with The Elections Act.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talks about ethos, he talks about principles, he talks about respect, he talks about listening and they're not even listening. You know, if members opposite really wanted to debate the issue, they'd open up and go back to all of the changes that had put in place in The Elections Act. I've sat in this

Chamber for some time, and it's significantly better in our system now, in terms of providing fair access to the electoral process than it was in the past.

\* (10:20)

And one of the things that is very difficult to do now is to engage in the kind of antics that occurred in the '90s when we saw key figures—look, you want to talk about a stain on democracy? The party accountant for the Tory party broke the law. Several key members of the Filmon government had to quit. The Treasury Board secretary had to quit. Their adviser on the Manitoba—their adviser, their chief financial fundraiser who was on the Manitoba Hydro board had to quit. Mr. Speaker, there would have been criminal actions except for the judge said—except for what the judge said—except for the fact the judge said they'd already suffered enough and the statute of limitations had already passed.

But that's not the real point. The real point is, if you're a political party who's gone through what the Conservative Party has gone through and there are reforms put into The Elections Act, instead of acting like the politburo—which members opposite do. They, you know, they can take any issue, and it reminds me of those—all those old guys sitting up front of the politburo. No matter what you say, they can turn it into their own kind of illogic.

You know, anything—they'll go back, they'll attack us if one of our people—if one of our constituency associations goes beyond or is in violation of the—of elections act, we pay it back. You know why? We believe in it. We believe in government. We believe in the constraints that are put on. We believe in democracy. Members opposite, every time some New Democratic campaign overspends or there's a prob and we comply, they keep saying, oh, you're criminals. There's a big difference between criminals, Mr. Speaker. There's a big difference between criminals in 1995 and violations of The Elections Act now.

And I know exactly what they're going to get up and say, because they say the same thing all the time. They're going to say, oh, you know, the Chief Electoral Officer found something wrong with your campaign in '99; yes, it was investigated and was put to rest in 2003. The Chief Electoral Officer found something wrong with the Tory campaign in 1995 and the Monnin inquiry was put in place, and the Monnin inquiry said he'd never seen so many liars in his entire life. And Judge Monnin wasn't a young

man, Mr. Speaker, he'd seen everything. He said he'd never seen more liars in his life.

And that's—I'm sorry that I have to speak of that because—but the point is members opposite, as I said earlier, they don't get the compliance issue. It's important that we all play by the same rules electorally, and this vote—and this subset issue allows political parties and entities to have the capacity to comply with the rules. Not everyone's going to comply with rules. Not every breaking of the rule is a criminal act, as members opposite which have you believe.

But they do that, they go after every single breach of the act and make it like it's the—it's like a 12th degree aspect of murder or something, because they want to cover up the fact that they've never admitted that their activities in the '90s was in—it—just unexplainable, and they will not accept the fact that they take subsidization and they're trying to make the subsidy issue into a political issue. In other words, they're trying to be completely partisan—they're trying to be completely partisan.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, they might say the member—I—you know, I take the leader at his word. He—I—he is—I—he's an individualistic, very much idealistic, extreme conservative. I get that, and that's his right. That's his right to be an extreme, frontier kind of ideologue. That's fine. I accept that, and I welcome that.

But, Mr. Speaker, to think or to take that extreme, idealistic, individualistic view and put it on every single Manitoban and say, my way is the right way and it's the only way, is something I think the Leader of the Opposition has to learn. He has to learn that people's—other people's opinions matter too, not just his, not just his opinion. And the part of prairie ethos is that we work collectively together. We help each other.

And part of this electoral issue is two things: compliance and letting people comply, and secondly, providing everyone with equal access, not if you have a 12-car garage and you have whatever kind of wealth and you can buy an election, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that we level the playing field so we do not become like our cousin to the south.

And you know, I'm going to hear—get up and hear all those politburo-like responses, Mr. Speaker. But I'm asking members to just remember this: These rules were put in place as a result of the worst scandal in the history of the province, and

compliance is a lot better than what we saw and will make for a better and fairer democratic [inaudible].

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I want to thank you for this opportunity. I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) for bringing forward this private member's bill and I think it's an important private member's bill to do away with something that Manitobans don't believe is a priority, do away with something that Manitobans believe is a waste and that there are other things this money should be channeled into.

Now, I have to, of course, say a couple of comments about the tirade from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) who, of course, was the campaign chair of the 1999 election campaign that was forced to repay \$76,000, not voluntarily, but after they got caught.

Now, I do think it's important to remember that we actually once had a premier in this province who, when they saw something went wrong, had the nerve, had the backbone and had the integrity to call for an inquiry to ensure that things could be improved, unlike—unlike—the members opposite when they were forced to repay \$76,000 after an NDP insider came forward to reveal what had happened. An NDP chief electoral—or an officer on one of the campaigns came forward. They ran and hid and, in fact, it cost the job of our Chief Electoral Officer and, I mean, that is the integrity of this government. They should be ashamed of themselves that they don't have the integrity to do the right thing before the fact.

Now, I do want to say, in terms of this particular bill we have to look at priorities. It's always about priorities and we are still here now, on August 1st, into August debating about the tax increase, the PST tax increase from 7 to 8 per cent that was marshalled in by this government. Now, this government has used the justification that, well, they need the money. They needed the money and so they had to increase the tax on Manitobans again. They did it last year, but did it again this year from 7 to 8 per cent.

Now, you would think that if there was difficulties in a household, if a family was having a difficult time making ends meet, ordinary Manitobans—people go through difficult times at different times of their life for a variety of different reasons—they would do what? They would sit down, they would look at where they could try to save a

little bit of money, where they could cut a little bit of things that maybe weren't necessities. But what did this government do? Not that at all. In fact, at the same time that they said that they didn't have enough money for priorities, their No. 1 priority was bringing in this vote tax. They couldn't find a mechanism before to bring it in so they've tried to find a different mechanism to try to bring it in. That was their No. 1 priority.

They didn't look for savings first internally. They didn't look to try to find a way to cut a little bit here, to shave a little bit there in ways that wouldn't hurt Manitobans. No, their No. 1 priority was how do we get money into the pockets of the NDP party, and the reason they did that, when you look statistically, is because they were having a difficult time fundraising. They brought in the vote tax at the same time that other parties—our party in particular—started to out-fundraise them, and they realized they were falling behind on fundraising. And so instead of going to Manitobans and saying: these are our ideas; these are the things that we believe in; these are the reasons why you should give to us on a voluntary basis; they took the lazy way out. They took the NDP way out. They took the socialist way out. They decided to just take the money—they decided to just take the money—from hard-working Manitobans. And then they had the nerve, after going and taking this money from Manitobans—and I give credit to the leader of this party and the former leader who said we're not going to take it. It's not the right thing to do. We're not going to take that money. That was the right decision to make. That was the right thing to do, and I give credit to the current Leader of the Opposition and the former leader of this party.

\* (10:30)

But that's not what this government did. Only a couple of months after they came up with a new mechanism to take money out of the pockets of Manitobans and put it into the pockets of the NDP, they came into this House and they said, oh, we need more money. Oh, we're short of money. There's an economic crisis. There's a downturn. There's a disaster. There's a potential flood, which didn't happen, of course, Mr. Speaker. There's all sorts of things that we need the money for. And so I waited because I assumed then, after they made that declaration about how poor they were, about how little money they had—not that anybody believed them but they made the declaration—I knew that they would then come into this House and say, well, we're

not going to take the vote tax. We're not going to accept the vote tax, because if there was ever a luxury item, if there was ever a luxury item in this Legislature, it's the vote tax.

And I think if you went to Manitobans and asked them, is it important—would you rather have that money go into police officers or into our schools to support our teachers or into our health-care system, they would say, of course, that'd be far more important. But that's not what they did. They put the money right into their own pockets. They put the money right into their pockets, Mr. Speaker, and now they have to try to justify, on one hand, when they say that they're cash poor, that they've got to go back to Manitobans. You know, they—first of all, they had to tax insurance. Oh, you know, then they had to tax haircuts over a certain value. Now they came in and they said, well, we've got to tax everything. We've got to increase the PST because we're so poor.

But they didn't change the vote tax. No, they weren't so poor that they couldn't keep taking money out of the pockets of Manitobans and putting it into the pockets of their political party, and that is the litmus test. This is the litmus test, every one of those members is taking \$5,000 out of the pockets of their constituents and putting it into the pockets of their party, and so now we're going to find out. We're going to find out if this government actually believes what it says. Manitobans don't believe what this government is saying, but we'll find out whether or not these individual members, these 36 members, actually believe what they are saying in terms of how they deal with this particular bill.

Are they going to stick to their story that Manitoba needs the money to build the different sorts of things, to support different sorts of things, or are they going to stick to the story that their party needs the money? Which is it? And you're going to have the opportunity, each individual member is going to have the opportunity, to decide what is it that is important to them. Is it the things that Manitobans view as important, those front-line services, health care and education which we would stand up for, and not waste money on the things like on the vote tax? Is it supporting those individual organizations who are doing great work out in the community and trying to make a better life in our individual hometowns or is it supporting your political party? Because if you believed, if you really believed that you could go out there and sell some of this, you would try, but you're not trying. They're not trying because they know—they know—this isn't a

priority for Manitobans, and each of us are elected here to stand up for the priorities of Manitobans.

Now, I know, I know that there are some NDP MLAs on that side in the backbench—I've heard from them—who are uncomfortable with this. They're uncomfortable with this, I know that, and now they have the opportunity—and now they have the opportunity—to actually stand up for their constituents, because you actually have to come to this Legislature and represent the views of your constituents. It's not enough to scurry around the hallways and say, oh, I don't think this is the right thing to do. You know, we're taking money from Manitobans and giving it to our party, but, on the same hand, we're taxing Manitobans at a record rate. You know, you can go and make all those assertions in the dark, in the hallways, in the corners and say how you're really concerned about this, but, ultimately, you were elected here to stand up for your constituents in this House and to do the things that they sent you here to do. And they didn't send you here to take money out of their pockets and put it into your party and then plead poverty and increase taxes at a record rate.

So we're going to find out. We're going to find whether the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) and whether the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and whether the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux)—and I have a lot of opportunity to talk to the people in Dawson Trail, and not one of them—not one of them—has come to me and said, a priority for me is to have a vote tax in this House. Not one of them has come to me and said, it's a priority to have you take money from me and put it into your political party.

So we'll see what the member for Dawson Trail does on this particular bill. I would hope that he will stand up and support his constituents and he will stand up and do the right thing, and to say that we are not going to take this money. We're going to do the principled thing. We're going to do what the Conservative Party has done and stand up on a principled position and say, we will get the money the old-fashioned way—we'll do it the old-fashioned way. We're actually going to earn it. We're actually going to go out there—earn it. We're going to talk to people. We're going to tell them what our ideas are. We're going to look for support the old-fashioned way.

We're not just going to reach in their pockets and take it, because that's not the old-fashioned way;

that's the socialist way, that's the NDP way and it's time for you to change your ways.

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure to get up today and speak to some of the hypocrisy that they've put on the record here.

It's very interesting, you know, he says that, are we going to get out the backbenchers on the NDP side? Well, I'm standing up now, and I'm standing up for our constituency, because when I went out, unlike what they suggest in the election, when I went out and canvassed, I said to my constituents I was going to get them more daycare spaces. I got them 188 more—new daycare. I said I was going to go out and build them a new school. Guess what? There's a new school coming. I said I was going to repair a bridge in the area. Guess what? That bridge is under construction right now.

So, you know what? My constituents, which I go to their doorstep, and I've been around the whole riding once already, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going again. And I talk to them on a daily basis, and I talk to them on their doorstep. Once a year I'm going to be on their doorstep and I talk to them, and I hear their concerns.

You know what they're concerned about, and what I'm not going to do? I'm not going to do vote-rigging scandals like they did. That's what my constituents want from us. They want us to be open and honest.

And you know what? If it wasn't for the Conservatives—if it wasn't for the Leader of the Opposition in 1995, when he was sitting around the Cabinet table, creating this vote-rigging scandal, we wouldn't have these rules right now, and we wouldn't need the money to be doing all this stuff—all of these things. It's all because of—the reason we have this, is because they created a situation where they lied, where they went out and they said to people, oh, we're going to create this fake party, and we're going to split the votes, and we're going to do that. And then, well, you know what? They got caught. And the Monnin inquiry said they'd never seen such a group of liars in his life. Well, you know, that included the Leader of the Opposition. So the hypocrisy in this House is just absolutely unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they wanted—the member for Steinbach's (Mr. Goertzen) saying he wants to emulate—us to emulate the Conservatives. I'm so glad

that I do not emulate what he thinks. I believe in Bill 18; he doesn't, Mr. Speaker.

You know, in 1999, the person that the member for Steinbach is going to be replacing, quite soon, possibly, he actually broke the law, exceeding the election expenses by \$7,500. That was the member that this member in our House is looking to maybe go and replace, right. So he wants us to say that we should emulate people. Well, is that who he wants us to emulate? He wants us to break the law like his federal counterparts?

How about his federal party's robocalling? Does that—is that what he wants us to emulate? Okay, we'll, you know, be the party of robocalls? How about the in-and-out scandals, Mr. Speaker?

You know, they talk a big game about transparency and all of—and then how we should have all these rules, but then, you know, they don't want to give back the million dollars that they got, right. They got a million dollars from the last election. We don't see them giving that back.

You know, I see—it's interesting that the Liberals here would actually benefit from this, and I'm looking forward to hearing from the Leader of the Liberal Party, because you know what? It's the smaller parties that would—that benefit from this, too, because it allows every party to come out and have a party, not just the ones where the leader has a seven-car garage, 12 sprinklers and a \$2.5-million mansion. Like, you know, Mr. Speaker, is that how we want it? Only the rich can run? Only the rich people can run in this province. Is that what it is?

Oh, I guess, you know, when you draw an MP's salary, the Leader of the Opposition's salary and an MLA's pension, you know, when you're drawing three government salaries, it's easy to say don't have any funding, because he's got three salaries. I'm imagining it's over \$250,000 on the taxpayers' dime. But, no, no, we wouldn't want to have any transparency, Mr. Speaker. You know, we talk about this. It's really rich—it's really rich.

And, you know, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) over there talks about us being socialists. You know, we all know he's a closet socialist. He wants to come out and hug us. He wants to come over to our side. We all know it—we all know it. You know, I was actually surprised that he refused to go over to the minister for Energy and Mines' office and make the phone call. That was his opportunity to cross the floor, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they talk a big game but, given their track record, how can we trust what they're saying? They did the exact opposite of what they're saying. They created this problem, and now they want us to change the system again. How can we trust what they're saying?

You know, the reason why we have—we're in the situation we're in, and why we have public subsidy for people, is because of what they did. They created a situation so bad that we had to have judge, and people went to jail over it.

\* (10:40)

So we're supposed to trust them and believe that this is the right way to go, that they're not going to do any more vote rigging? I think that that is completely opposite of what we've seen, Mr. Speaker. I mean, you know, they got back more than \$1.3 million in public subsidy in the last election. We have \$1.3 million, and they haven't paid that back. Oh, no, that's different. That's a different pot of money, so to speak. Well, you know what? I think it's really sad, and I think it's just—the hypocrisy that goes on here on the other side is really ridiculous.

And yesterday, you know, we saw the Leader of the Opposition in the newspaper talking about how we're wilting on this side. I would argue that that's completely false, once again. So, you know, we can't trust a thing that comes out of his mouth because, definitely, I'm not wilting. We were all out last night having a great time celebrating one of our co-worker's birthdays. We had a fantastic time. We are not wilting.

And I will stand up every day in this House and defend the right for democracy and not to have vote-rigging scandals, Mr. Speaker. That's what I will stand up for every day, all day long, and I will stand here and speak to it and I will definitely not be wilting. Thank you.

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** I appreciate the opportunity this morning to rise and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 205.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting to follow the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) because he reminds me of that novel, *Around the World in 80 Days*. He's completely all over the map and he's kind of like a howitzer gun; he's very noisy and obnoxious and aims at everything, but doesn't actually hit anything. So I couldn't under—really understand exactly where he

was going with his points, but he was straying very far, I thought, from the focus of the debate this morning.

So I appreciate the opportunity to bring this House back to what's actually being debated this morning and I do appreciate the time to debate it. I noticed that, you know, earlier, we had a member across the way from Kildonan who spent 10 minutes and really didn't put anything of substance on the record, had all kinds of accusations to make about politics in yesteryear. But I can tell him a little bit about my experience, because he was quick to make the claim that somehow this is an ethical issue and that what was needed in here was a vote tax for ethical reasons.

Well, I can tell you that in my very short time in the Legislature here, I still recall the election of 2011 and I can recall that right during that time, all the sudden, we had a day when members of the government party were busy at a public event, a media event. And that media event was one attended by the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) and the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan). And it was an event that involved the use of government resources. It involved the use of departmental resources. It involved the use of ministerial resources. And I can remember, as a person who is not an incumbent, as a first-time candidate watching this unfold and saying to myself, surely, this is not correct.

I knew the rules. We all knew the rules. We had read the rule book. It's incumbent upon a candidate to read the rule book. So I understood instinctively this would not wash. And to see those ministers go into that forum and to use that context to try to wiggle around, clearly, what were the rules that prohibit exactly the use of those kind of resources because it would give them unfair advantage, I thought it was reprehensible. And it turned out I wasn't the only one. And when it came down and the decision was issued it was found that those members had actually broken election law. That was certainly no surprise to anyone on our side of the House. And yet, what did these ministers then do? What did that member for Seine River, what did that member for St. Vital do? They didn't say, yes, you know what, we should have known better. What they said is, we didn't know. We weren't aware.

And it is very hard, Mr. Speaker, to accept that kind of explanation from government ministers, from incumbent candidates. And even as a brand new candidate without the resources that those ones had, I

knew instinctively, and my colleagues knew as well, that that would not wash and it was not appropriate. So for that member from Kildonan to get up and lecture about things that happened in yesteryear, I would remind him what happened far more recently than that. I would remind him about the things that his own members and his own colleagues have done right now and still won't take responsibility for.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly why we need this kind of a bill. This bill does something very clear, and what it does is it simply cancels a vote tax. It cancels that kind of unfair subsidy that that government would want to give itself. And I found it interesting, as well, because this government and these members were trying to argue in the basis of principle, and saying, oh, this is all in the basis of principle. We need to safeguard the principles of democracy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I did a little digging this morning, went back and looked at some numbers and compared them and discussed them with my colleagues. It turns out that when you go back, the NDP actually led the PC Party when it came to fundraising and contributions to campaigns. And for a number of years they led our party when it came to fundraising—or contributions. But, then, all of a sudden that changed. When you get back to 2006, all of the sudden, lo and behold, the PC Party worked very hard, went to Manitobans, knocked on those doors, asked for the support and they got it. And isn't it interesting that exactly at that juncture that party would bring in its first attempt at a vote tax. And I was proud when this party stood against that vote tax, refused to accept it to a one—to a member refused to accept that and finally and ultimately shamed that side of the House into not taking that vote tax.

So after that time, of course, what we see is that, yes, once again the NDP leads the PC Party in fundraising until recently when, once again, by virtue of the fact that this party will take the opportunity and undertake the work to go to Manitobans, to appeal to them, to tell them about their policies—and it's hard work and it takes time and it takes efforts and it takes volunteers. But we did the work, and so what happened is we actually exceeded that party when it came to fundraising.

And so now guess what? Here we are again. We're back where we started. Every time the PC Party fundraising outstrips theirs, all of a sudden they come up with this idea that, oh, for very principled

reasons—for very principled reasons—we need to level the playing field.

And you know what's actually more shocking than that, is when I look through the numbers, when I comb through the numbers. And that member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is quick to say oh, this is the party of big business. This is the party of corporate entities. And yet, it's dollar for dollar down the line when it comes to donations over \$250. That would tell me this is the party of big industry and this is the party of rich donors because it's dollar for dollar down the line. The NDP party takes as many dollars, donations over \$250 as our party.

So where's the difference? Where is the difference in the fundraising? If it's not with the above-\$250 threshold, it has to be somewhere. Oh, it is, yes. It is the small donations. It is donations \$25 to \$50, it's donations \$25 to \$250. That's the kind of small donation that I believe that government fears because it sends a strong message about a party's willingness to reach out, a party's determination to present its message to new audiences. It also sends a very strong message about how that communication is being received by Manitobans.

And so, yes, I can understand the victory and all that the member for Kildonan puts on the record because he's running scared. And, indeed, the member for—across the way, all these members who have spoken for Seine River, St. Norbert—because they're running scared they don't like—if they actually do read the data and most days they don't. They don't like what these numbers suggest about the future for them. So, of course, they want to do something to level the playing field.

The fact of the matter is, though, what they haven't put on the record this morning is that we do have a great province when it comes to regulating elections. We have important safeguards in place. We have some of the best safeguards in place in the whole country. As a matter of fact, we lead the country when it comes to regulating political party funding. We restrict donations to Manitoba residents. Corporations and unions can't fund political parties and, on top of that, I believe that the top donation that can be made is \$3,000.

These protections are all in place and yet this government now is saying, yes, but, you know, in addition to that, all those things, we really think this is going too far. We really need some more cash in our pocket. These rules aren't really working out for

us because the numbers don't look good. The fundamentals do not suggest that we can continue to stay healthy as a party, so we'll give lip service to the idea that we will reach out to Manitobans, but we need a vote tax. And that's the message they're sending to Manitobans.

\* (10:50)

And, Mr. Speaker, as the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) said earlier today, they do so at the peril of all those other Manitoba groups who work and go their groups and fundraise. One such group is the South Central Cancer Resource. I had an opportunity to visit a number of weeks ago. They raise their own funds for things like supplying wigs for women who are going through cancer treatment. They provide rides for people going to and from Winnipeg for cancer appointments. This group grew up in the community. It takes not a dollar of government money and never has, and operates because they send their message and they cultivate an understanding in the community about their ideas and what they do.

That's what our party wants to do. They don't want to do the work; they want the vote tax. We say pass Bill 205.

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put my comments on this bill, and it's—even its title is debatable. And the opposition says it's a vote tax, and I say—I will say it's a democracy advancement fund.

We can talk about the Monnin inquiry and we can talk about Duffy's situation that we are just talking about within Canada. But let us compare democracy over here as compared to the other democracies. And the majority of people are very comfortable in their economic situation back in their countries. Why they leave those countries? Because of the political corruption. Why political corruption is there? Because there is not such financing. What happens over there? A party who is in the power—and they have to raise money for the next election—how they will order? They will order the civil servants to get bribery. That bribery go—will go up to the top, up to the chief minister—you can say premier. So that's the way corruption starts in those countries.

India is the biggest democracy—just to say democracy, but it's not democracy. We are democracy. We immigrants come over here because of our democratic system. And I know where there are deep pockets—those people who represent those

people with the deep pockets, they want to kidnap democracy. That's what their intention is. That's what their—brought this act in.

Normally, ordinary people—they cannot pay donations in that big amount. But ordinary people need to—people to represent them. To represent them, ordinary people don't have that much money, and ordinary people won't be able to collect that much money in donations to give a chance to ordinary people to represent ordinary people, which are in the majority. And that's why we need this kind of financing.

So, again and again saying, this is a vote tax, this is a vote tax—no. This is a democracy advancement fund. So keep in your mind. Tell each and every Manitoban—and they also understand that's a necessity to keep democracy intact. And they don't want this democracy to be kidnapped by the rich people by the few.

So that's why I think it's important to compare this democracy as compared to the other countries' democracies. Then you will put it in a real perspective and you won't talk about a vote tax; you will talk about the democracy advancement fund.

Thank you.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I love the Tories. They get up, they bang on their desk, you know, they wave their arms around. They—they're—you know, they're—everything possible this morning. Now, we're not even into an hour and they don't have people that want to speak on this bill. It's just incredible.

But you know what? If I was a Tory, I wouldn't want to talk about elections, elections finance. I wouldn't want to talk about ethics. I mean, this is a party that only a few years ago, you know, they learned the art of cloning because in the vote-rigging scandal of the 1990s they were in the Interlake constituency with two parties and two candidates. So they know about financing parties, especially illegal ones.

But, you know, what I'm amazed with, by the way, is, you know, I visit my constituents on a regular basis and I'm really proud of that. I can tell you one thing, nobody's ever actually ever raised this with me, everybody knows—that follows politics—that all candidates of parties do receive funding from the provincial government, and is there a single member

opposite in the last election that didn't receive a rebate from the government?

**An Honourable Member:** Not one.

**Mr. Ashton:** Not one. There may be a few Tories in the province that didn't make the 10 per cent, but you know what? They all get money from the Province for their elections. So how do you spell hypocrite? It's called PC.

And I love the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) because, you know what? He may have a chance to be a double—double—hypocrite on this issue. Because if he does run federally, if he follows the lead of his—

**Mr. Speaker:** I 'washen'—I want to caution the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. He's coming very close to the line with respect to unparliamentary language, and I want to offer this at a caution right at the start of his comments to make sure that we don't stray over the line there because he knows the rules, I'm sure, and with respect to using unparliamentary language in reference to another member of the Assembly.

So I'm asking the honourable member to pick and choose his words very carefully.

**Mr. Ashton:** Let me restate that. If the member for Steinbach follows the lead of his leader—and, of course, I know there's no major flood for him to quit in the middle of. But if he does run federally, I wonder if the member for Steinbach, if he becomes a candidate, will accept the rebate from the federal government because they have funding as well.

You know what? I realize members opposite are stuck in the past. They opposed eliminating union and corporate financing. We still don't know what their position is on that. We know that they miss the good old days where they could go around to various of the well-connected wealthy people in this province and collect money. It was a lot easier for them.

We know that it was this government, an NDP government that required that the only contributions you can have in this province are from individuals, that's called democratic reform. So as I look at members opposite, you know, I say to them, like, seriously, they—there's got to be something more that they have in the way of issues to put forward. Because, you know—and I realize they're still sore about elections. I'm convinced they're still fighting the 1999 election. They're still fighting the

2003 election. They're still fighting the 2007 election. They're still fighting the 2011 election. Well, bring it on because we fought those elections and we beat them and we're going to do the same in the next election. We didn't win just because of the public finance, because they benefitted, too, all parties did. We won because we are a party of all Manitobans; we connect throughout the province.

And to the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), when he said that the member of St. Boniface—or, pardon me, from St. Norbert—was all over the map, we are all over the map. Look at our caucus. We represent the entire province. You know, in fact, we even have those new maps. Well, we've had them for 10 years, that has all of the provinces including my area, northern Manitoba, on the map.

I want to put on the record, yes, in every election since we've had public finance, I have received public finance. Why? Because I've put my name forward as a democratically nominated candidate. I was democratically elected, and each and every candidate that met the requirements received that funding. That ensures that we go out and we compete in terms of our ideas, our vision for the province, who's best going to represent the area. And I'm proud to have won nine elections and in each and every one of them I've received public support. I received it in terms of votes and, yes, in terms of the publicly funded rebate. So I want to say to members opposite, knowing a little bit about elections, the way this works is you put your name forward, you compete on the basis of—

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution we have us—before us this morning is sponsored by the honourable member for Lakeside, entitled "Approach to Crime."

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 29—Approach to Crime

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I can put my hearing aids back in now.

I move, seconded by the member from Brandon West,

WHEREAS safety is one of the fundamental elements needed for communities to be vibrant and welcoming places to live, work and raise a family; and

WHEREAS the official opposition believes it is a primary responsibility of government to foster safe communities; and

WHEREAS the official opposition believes in early intervention support to reduce the probability of high risk individuals participating in criminal activities during their lifetime; and

WHEREAS the official opposition believe that individuals who commit crimes against persons or against property should be subject to meaningful but measured consequences for their criminal activities; and

WHEREAS the official opposition believes that justice system needs to ensure the consequences of crime are borne by the criminals and not the victims.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the provincial government has not made it a priority to foster safe communities and further not—has supported measured but meaningful consequences for those who engage in criminal behaviour; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge the provincial government has not done enough to ensure that the impact of crime is mitigated for victims of crime.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for Lakeside, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer),

WHEREAS safety is one of the fundamental elements needed—dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

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

WHEREAS safety is one of the fundamental elements needed for communities to be vibrant and welcoming places to live, work and raise a family; and

*WHEREAS the Official Opposition believes that it is a primary responsibility of government to foster safe communities; and*

*WHEREAS the Official Opposition believes in early intervention support to reduce the probability of high risk individuals participating in criminal activities during their lifetime; and*

*WHEREAS the Official Opposition believe that individuals who commit crimes against persons or against property should be subject to meaningful but measured consequences for their criminal activities; and*

*WHEREAS the Official Opposition believes that the justice system needs to ensure the consequences of crime are borne by the criminals and not the victims.*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the Provincial Government has not made it a priority to foster safe communities and further has not supported measured but meaningful consequences for those who engage in criminal behaviour; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the Provincial Government has not done enough to ensure that the impact of crime is mitigated for victims of crime.*

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve to live in their homes in a safe environment and, of course, the communities. Unfortunately, that is not too often the case under this NDP watch. Almost daily there are reported instances of violence, theft and other crime-criminal acts and no-showing no sign of slowing down.

Individuals incarcerated once are out again or commit the same or worse crimes as before. Early intervention is essential to stop would-be criminals from falling into a life of crime. In fact, we just saw very clearly today in today's Free Press whereby we had an individual that was 'incarceration' and got out. He was charged with a sexual offence and, unfortunately, he was welcomed back by his previous partner who had a child and, unfortunately, he took advantage of that situation. And it's a horrible situation where we don't want to see that ever happen again.

And we know how important it is that criminals be followed, be made sure that they don't reoffend. And we can't stress enough the importance,

whenever we see such crimes, that we make sure the checks and balances are in place.

We know that homicides are up in Winnipeg as well, along with robberies and youth criminal justice offences. In fact, youth just-criminal just-offences are up more than 92 per cent. In fact, 2012, compared to the five-year average, youth remand numbers were the highest in the country, yet again almost five times over the national average. Manitoba's major assault rate was near the highest in Canada.

It is important to consider these numbers when the minister and members opposite stand up and tout the government's record on crime prevention and the NDP's approach, in fact, to justice. All the minister has done is to hide his failure into 'rehabilitate' criminals. The NDP has stopped-stooped to a new low to try and fool Manitobans into believing the very serious problem is getting better. It's deceitful, 'deceptful' and other-further us to believe our NDP government is more concerned about public perception than they are about public safety. In fact, the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) and the Cabinet colleagues have had no real way of keeping people from reoffending, so they have just changed the definition. They have given up on the problem of criminals leaving jail and reoffending are simply tried to make the problem look less alarming by changing how things are actually communicated to the public.

The minister should be embarrassed by his failure, and rather than do anything about it, he orders the bureaucrats to redefine failure as success. Under the definition introduced last year, criminals will only be considered to have reoffended if they are convicted of a crime within two years of their previous conviction rather than being charged with another offence within two years.

In fact, I know prior to my life being involved in politics, I ran a business and we weren't too far from Stony Mountain. And I had some inmates come and work for me to try and better themselves and talk about-when they were in my business-about their lives, and I got to know a couple of them pretty good. And one of them said that the penitentiary had become their home. And he was getting ready to be released into society, in fact, he was looking forward to that day. And as it got closer and closer, he become more and more nervous. And he just said, I don't know if I'm going to be able to make it in the real world. And he went out to a halfway house, and

the first day he was there he made his mind up that he was going to go back to Stony Mountain. So he broke the law. He was back in Stony Mountain very shortly after. And I had just popped in to see him and ask him why he reoffended, and he said it just wasn't the right time for me to be out in the public so I reoffended to get myself back in here.

And sometimes when we look at criminal activities we don't really understand how their mind works, how their mind actually plays on victims through no fault of their own. Here we had an individual that decided to break the law, take law into his own hands so he could be back with his so-called friends, the people that would protect him, that would make him feel safe in that environment. And that is not the right way. We need to ensure that we have checks and balances in place to deal with those problems that are so important to deal with.

And I know that we certainly have had the opportunity to talk about different things. In fact, we are so concerned about Winnipeg actually being the murder of capital of Canada, in fact, in 2011 Winnipeg had a higher murder rate, higher than it's ever been in over a decade. It is known as the murder capital of Canada. In fact, I've had friends call me that want to come and visit, and they always ask, is it as bad as it appears—is it as bad as it appears?

And, certainly, whenever we see the numbers the way they are, it gives one the impression that we are a city, a province that is out of control. We need to make sure that we do ring—bring those numbers down. We want to make sure of the fact that crime is going to be put to the hold and certainly see the fact that whenever Manitoba is known, we want it to be known for the things that it's supposed to be known for and, certainly, crime is not one that we want to be part of.

In fact, Manitoba has the highest robbery rate in Canada as well. Manitoba has the highest youth violent crime rate—right—rate, despite seeing a 16 per cent drop since 2009. Manitoba had the second highest break and enter rate—entry rate, in the country. Manitoba had the second highest firearms offence rate behind Saskatchewan. In fact, the source, the Canadian—StatsCan crime severity index for 2011 was recently available and this is where we got those numbers from.

Manitoba had the highest increase in sexual violation against children—28 per cent from 2010 to 2011. This government has failed to protect our youngest citizens.

Prisons and courts—Manitoba's prisons are overcrowded and ready to burst, yet the government has neglected to add enough space for correction officers to safely control them. People on remand awaiting trial makeup 60 per cent of the prison population. These backlogs are totally unacceptable.

Manitoba only has one forensic psychiatrist available, slowing down the presentencing reports and further backlogging the court system. The government doesn't seem to view this as a crisis.

\* (11:10)

In fact, I know yesterday the member from Brandon West asked questions in the House. There had been a number of media reports on it and certainly something that needs to be dealt with very soon, and sooner than later, of course.

And, in fact, despite hiring 18 new prosecutors in the past year, backlogs still remain. The Legal Aid budget was increased by \$1.125 million, an increase being in salary. More funding needs to be given to Legal Aid and thresholds changed to ensure that justice can be served quickly and efficiently and cases are not thrown out on the basis of lack of counsel or delay.

Circuit courts have been consolidated to reduce the number of locations in rural Manitoba court, where it's held. In some cases, it means greater distances for corrections staff to bring prisoners, and longer distances for people to drive to get to court. Rural Manitobans will have to go farther to get access to justice. And, in fact, I know in my region we've seen a turnaround in regards to lack of court hearing dates. In fact, I had a constituent that had a home invasion, and they were trying to get the justice system to move a little quicker on it so they would be able to feel safe in their community once again.

Whenever we have harm in our community, be it through a criminal activity or one method or another, we certainly want to see the fact that justice is served and served quickly. We call on the government to make safe communities a priority by helping victims to be a priority. We don't need empty promises from the government or ribbon cuttings. In fact, we feel this government has failed Manitoba families.

When the government stands up and talks about their record on justice, they ignore a very important fact: that's the types of criminal crime that leads Manitoba in this nation. Winnipeg remains one of the

most dangerous cities in Canada to live. Manitoba's score on violent crime severity index reflects not only types of crimes but the relative severity is the highest in Canada.

Let's make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, youth crime is on the rise. We're very concerned about that and, of course, we know very clearly that whenever we're talking about crime in youth, we need to make sure that we have opportunities for them to grow and get out of that crime scene through no fault of their own.

We look forward to the debate on this very important resolution. We know that more needs to be done. We look forward to making sure that we have that opportunity to make sure we do curb crime for future generations to come.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** It's a pleasure to get up and talk about building safer communities in Manitoba, because, frankly, I don't get that many chances in the Legislature to do that. These days the opposition doesn't really have much interest in public safety. They don't put much effort into it.

And I'm going to say I'm a little disappointed the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), reading a speech someone else wrote for him, I didn't hear a single solution that the member wants to put forward—criticizes, but no solutions. And I like to think, on private members' hours, we do have the opportunity to put forward some different ideas, and I was listening carefully to everything the member for Lakeside said, but, sadly, it's just the same old rhetoric coming forward from the other side.

You know, there used to be more interest—I used to have the noisiest Justice critic in Canada. He's now become the quietest Education critic in Canada. Things are a little bit different.

But let me say once again that I like the member for Lakeside, and, frankly, I respect the member for Lakeside. I think he should have put away the Tory caucus speaking notes and spoken a little bit from the heart. Because I know his community well. He probably has more police officers, both City of Winnipeg police officers and RCMP officers, living in the town of Stonewall, probably more per capita officers than anywhere else in Manitoba. And, frankly, the member for Lakeside represents very, very safe communities. The crime rate is actually very low in the communities that he represents, and I think that's great.

So when I read his resolution and listened to him, I think it's pretty clear that the member didn't put down the Tory speaking notes that the politburo put together—as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) said—and he isn't aware of what's actually going on in Manitoba to continue to build safer and stronger communities, so this is a chance to put some comments on the record.

And I know many of my other colleagues, we're very anxious to speak to this resolution because there is so many of my colleagues that are doing so much in their communities, in their neighbourhoods, on their streets to make their communities safer but also work together. And we know that taking on crime is not a one-dimensional narrow approach. It means preventing crime from happening in the first place. I know the member opposite really didn't mention victims at all. I'll tell you what: The best way to support victims is to prevent the crime from happening in the first place so there isn't a victim of crime. You prevent the loss, you prevent the damage.

And I'm a little disappointed that I didn't hear a single word from the member opposite about restorative justice. If the member opposite is serious about finding more ways to give victims more support, to give victims more closure, I would have hoped we could have had a little bit of debate about that. So I'll talk about it, and we'll see if anybody on the other side wants to talk about some of those good ideas.

Restorative justice, of course, allows willing victims to participate in a different way of dealing with offenders. And, of course, it used to be—youth justice committees had sprung up across the province. Unfortunately, the Youth Criminal Justice Act was—came in and really caused those youth justice committees to fall away. But those committees still continue in a number of places across Manitoba.

And, of course, the most fascinating part is that restorative justice, which some people think is a really new way of dealing with offenders, is actually a very old way. And the Aboriginal people in Manitoba have been using a form of restorative justice not just for decades, but for centuries. And so there are some tremendous committees comprised of elders that work alongside Provincial Court hearings in many communities across Manitoba. And in many cases individuals who are charged with crimes sit with the elders and, where the victim is willing, sit with the victim.

And I know the members opposite, I expect, they'll stand up and say, oh, that's soft on crime. You know, that'll be the same old thing. But you know, I think there's nothing more difficult for an offender than to have to look the victim in the eye, to apologize for the loss or damage they've caused, and to work with that victim and the community to come up with a solution that makes the community whole. And that's the way that you can change people from the kinds of activities they may be involved in.

I had the chance just a couple of weeks ago to visit Nelson House Cree Nation. I won't try to pronounce the name of that community in Cree. I was there with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) as well as the MLA for Flin Flon as well as the chief judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba and the associate chief judge. And we were able to talk about the successes in various First Nations communities. And the community at nor—at Nelson House, very strong, vibrant, exciting community, said they want to move ahead with restorative justice initiatives. And the Premier and I were very pleased to tell them that we support that one hundred per cent because there are better ways for us to deal with situations and give victims more of a voice in what results can happen.

And, of course, well, who wouldn't support First Nations communities and others having these kinds of measures? Of course, the judges support it. The Crown attorneys support it. Defence lawyers support it. The community supports it. The accused who have a chance to make the community whole support it. Unfortunately, the only ones who don't seem to support it are the federal government, who not only refuse to add funding, have actually been cutting funding for First Nations communities to run these kinds of programs. And that's a missed opportunity. But I'm sure some members opposite will get up and they will say that they're with us, and that they certainly will join us in calling on the federal government to restore that funding and increase that funding so we can find better ways to build safety in a number of communities across the province.

And we know, of course, that a big piece of being successful is having a balance. And I just want to correct the record because I—again, I'm a little disappointed in the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), who I like very much, in putting very, very incorrect information on the record. And I know he didn't have a chance to look through the most recent crime statistics, but, of course, crime in Manitoba continues to drop. It's dropping within the city of Winnipeg. It's dropping elsewhere in the province by

substantial amounts. And, in fact, if you look at 2012, virtually every, all but one, registered crime in Manitoba dropped in 2012, which continues an ongoing pattern. And he wants to talk about youth crime rates. Well, the violent youth crime severity index was down 17 per cent just last year, the overall youth crime severity index down by 9 per cent just last year, youth break and enters down by 5 per cent, youth serious assaults down by 5 per cent, and so on down the line. Within Winnipeg, the story's even more positive.

And, of course, I'm not sure if the member was aware—if he'd been aware, he probably wouldn't have brought on the resolution today unless he was walked out on the plank by his party. But the Winnipeg Police Service, of course, has their CrimeStat program. And they're not afraid to put that information up on the web—and I'm not sure if the member for Lakeside would like some help. I can teach him how to get the crime stats. They show that in addition to the tremendous decreases in 2012, so far in 2013 crime continues to drop within the city of Winnipeg. In fact, year over year, from January 1st to June 30th: homicides in Winnipeg down 28 per cent; sexual assaults down 17 per cent; commercial robbery down 26 per cent; non-commercial robberies down 36 per cent; commercial break and enter down 46 per cent; residential break and enter down 16 per cent; other break and enters down 8 per cent; attempted motor vehicle theft down 8 per cent; actual motor vehicle theft down 3 per cent—in the first six months of this year.

\* (11:20)

Year over year, the Winnipeg Police Service is telling us there's been a 20 per cent drop in crime in the city of Winnipeg. That's meaningful, that's important and it certainly shows that having a balanced approach to safer communities is what works. And I know there's many others who are going to talk about our government's vision, because you don't just—you don't have a narrow—narrow—approach to taking on crime, you've got a broad approach to taking on crime. And I know the difficulty for the member opposite bringing forward is, is I know he's being sabotaged by his own colleagues.

Just a few weeks ago, my colleague from Concordia asked about a program, the Winding River Therapeutic Community at the Headingley Correctional Centre, a unit for those with addictions

issues, just been set up in the past year. It's been very successful. Inmates in that program repaired and rehabilitated bicycles which have been given out to groups who can distribute them to children that may not have parents that can afford to get them a bicycle, and that's been great. The inmates have been busy. They've been doing something productive. They're giving back, and, of course, at the end of that question, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) looked over at me and called out, waste of time.

Well, sadly, sadly, that's where the opposition is. Things to keep inmates busy, get them to understand, that actually wind up paying a dividend back to our society, are sadly seen by so many members of the Progressive Conservative caucus as being nothing more than a waste of time.

And, you know, just two days ago, my colleague the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) asked a question of the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) about investments in two parks in the West End. And the member from Midland stood up after that, and what did he say? Well, he dismissed those investments as ribbon cutting—safe places for young people and adults as well, Jacob Penner Park across from the Health Sciences Centre and the Chief Grizzly Bear garden. Well, I know the opposition may think that building safe places for our young people, providing places for people to go and things for them to do, is a waste of time or nothing more than cutting a ribbon. We feel very different about that on this side of the House.

And, again, I'm disappointed that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) didn't recognize that in his resolution, didn't recognize that in his 10-minute speech. I'm hoping maybe we'll have something else coming over from the other side, but, frankly, Mr. Speaker, I doubt it. We know that we're on the right track. The statistics tell us we're on the right track, but, more importantly, the citizens of Manitoba know that they have a government that is working with them to build stronger communities all across this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** It is again a pleasure to speak this morning on, I think, an important resolution. I want to commend the member for Lakeside for bringing it forward. He's a strong voice within our caucus on issues of community safety. He often speaks about his own communities

and how we can make his communities safe and safer. It's already been noted by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) that his communities are safe, and a big part of that is because the MLA has an active interest in it, and whether it's talking about Citizens on Patrol or how he can work within his own community, he has a big part of that, and I want to commend him for taking an interest.

And I would only wish that the interest that the member for Lakeside takes in community safety within his community would transfer over to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), who doesn't have the same interest, who in this House, you know, he'll—he tries to grandstand, he tries to be funny, Mr. Speaker. Well, there's nothing funny about the violent crime rate that we have in the province of Manitoba. There's absolutely nothing comical about the fact that there are many people who are worried and concerned about going on the street at different times of the night, who don't necessarily feel safe in their community or in certain parts of Manitoba. That shouldn't be, because we're all Manitobans. We're all Manitobans, and we should all feel proud, and we should all be able to feel safe within our communities.

But when we see the violent crime index and the violent crime rate that we have in Manitoba, that isn't the case, and the Minister of Justice, while he might feel proud about himself in this House, if he would actually go and speak to Manitobans, if he would, you know, walk over to Portage Place and talk to some Manitobans, he'd get a very different view. But it's hard to get him out of the ivory tower. It's hard to get him out of the office, you know, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't want to venture out now.

He gets to the odd Bomber game, and that's fine. You know, I see him there, and every once in a while we see the police helicopter circle over the stadium, and I'm glad that the mayor was able to shame the government into supporting the police helicopter. We know that Mayor Sam Katz had to come out and demand that the government support the police helicopter, because the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), he wanted nothing to do with it. So I hope that when the Attorney General is sitting in his seats at the Bomber game, and, if we're not doing well, which sometimes is the case, you know, he'll look up and he'll see the helicopter circling the Bomber stadium and he'll be ashamed. He'll be ashamed that the mayor of Winnipeg had to come and shame the Attorney General of Manitoba into supporting a good initiative.

But I was glad—

**An Honourable Member:** He was too busy handing out Slurpees.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, and it was a good point by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), because when you look at what is a priority for the Attorney General, it's quite different.

You've got the mayor of Winnipeg fighting for good things, like the helicopter, and then on the other side, you've got the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) deleting warrants—going to his computer at night and pulling up all the warrants and deleting them. And I want to give credit to the Winnipeg Police Service who called out the Attorney General. I don't know in the history of our province or in Canada where a police service had to come out and call out the Attorney General for deleting warrants. You know, I've checked. I've talked to some of my colleagues in other provinces and I said, have you ever had a police force who had—who come out and shamed the Attorney General for deleting warrants?

I mean, the police want to go out and they want to have the information on people who have outstanding warrants. They want to go and they want to catch these guys. They want to bring them in, you know, and not the Attorney General. His solution to reducing warrants was just to hit the delete button. Let's just delete 10,000 and then—poof—we're going to be safer.

Well, that's not the case. The police knew that and, thankfully, the police—the Winnipeg Police Service, led by their president, came out and said it's not acceptable; we're going to stand up for the safety of Winnipeggers and Manitobans.

And I want to commend Mike Sutherland for doing that—for coming out and taking this Attorney General to task. He did the right thing, because he's trying to make Winnipeg a safer place, and I commend him for doing that.

So, on the one hand, we had Mayor Sam Katz who had to shame this government into supporting a police helicopter—which we supported long before that, Mr. Speaker, as an aside, you know—and, you know, we ensured—I don't know why the government voted against that police helicopter, but we went out and we stood with the mayor, we stood with Mayor Katz and said, yes, it's a good tool. And it's proven to be a good tool. It's proven to be a good tool.

So we had Sam Katz—you know, he came and he had us shame the government to doing something to help reduce crime. And then we had the Winnipeg Police Service with Mike Sutherland, who had to come out and shame the government into doing something important, Mr. Speaker. And so, I commend—I commend those individuals who are truly out there trying to make a difference to reduce crime.

And now, of course, we also heard that the Attorney General—his solution to trying to stop high risk car thieves was to give them Slurpees and baseball tickets. That was his idea, and so, you know, we had to hear this again from members of the police force who came to me and said they were stunned, you know. And I remember the conversation—it was of an officer who was involved with the unit and he said, you know, I'm out there every day trying to—and it was, you know a hard-core group of car thieves—and I'm out there trying to stop these kids from stealing these cars, from rocketing down the street—Portage Avenue at a 150 kilometres an hour—and people getting in the way, taxicabs getting hit, individuals getting hurt. I'm out there trying to stop them, and you know what the Attorney General does? I say, well, I don't know; what does he do? He buys them Slurpees, he told me. I was stunned. I said, you must be wrong. There must be a mistake. He said, no, they have a special fund. The Attorney General set up a special fund to buy these high-risk car thieves Slurpees and baseball tickets. That's what the police officer said.

So I said, you know, there must be a mistake—must be. I couldn't believe it because I've heard a lot of, you know, wild things about this government and their approach to justice, but even I didn't believe that. I figured there must be some sort of an error. So I said I'm—you know what? I'm going to ask him in committee. I'm going to ask him in committee. I didn't even want to bring it to the House, because I thought it must be wrong. And I thought I'd be—surely the Attorney General would stand up and say, you're completely wrong. So, I said, all right, I'll bring it to committee, so I don't highlight the fact.

I bring it to committee and I say to the Attorney General—you can probably read the Hansard, Mr. Speaker. I kind of sheepishly said, I think that, you know, this might be a mistake, and—but I got some information that, you know, you might have a fund for, like, Slurpees and baseball tickets for high-risk car thieves. I must be wrong. Tell—I'm just—I'm putting it out there, because I've got to, like, report

back to this police officer. And all the bureaucrats, you know—they rush around the Attorney General, and they're talking. They're—you know, they're trying to figure it out, and finally he comes back and says, well, yes, we do. We give out Slurpees and baseball tickets to high-risk car thieves. You know, I was stunned. I absolutely couldn't believe it.

But I give credit to that police officer. I give credit to that police officer for coming forward and saying that.

\* (11:30)

And then I had another incident. I had somebody in the corrections—in one of the jails that came to me and he said, you know what? We have a problem. I said, well, what's the problem? There's lots of problems in our jails. He says, well, our prisoners are getting accidentally released. I hadn't heard the term before. I said, what do you mean they're getting accidentally released? He said, well, we just let them out. I said, well, yes, when their sentence is done. No, he said, well, even before their sentence is done; the door pops open and out they go before their sentence is done. I said, you must be kidding me—this must be a mistake.

And so, again, I couldn't believe it was true so I didn't want to bring it into the House in question period because I said, well, that can't be. We can't just be accidentally relea—you know, it's hard enough to get the prisoners in. We can't actually be releasing them accidentally.

So I brought it to committee and I, again, I was sheepish. I was bashful like I often am, Mr. Speaker, and I said, you know is, I heard this rumour and I—and it must be—it must not be true that we are accidentally releasing prisoners. And, you know, the bureaucrats they rushed around again—the Attorney General (Mr. Swan)—and they're talking and suddenly he comes back and he says, yes, we do. We do accidentally release prisoners. And I said, well, like—I said, like one or two? Oh, no, dozens, dozens he says. And I said, well how does that happen? Ah, paperwork and stuff. And I said, what do you mean paperwork? Like the door just pops open and out they go? Yes, that's what happens. The door pops open and out goes the prisoner.

You know, so now we have the Attorney General stand in this House and try to, you know, belittle the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) who is doing something within his own community with the authority that he has. But when his—within his

own office—within his own office—the Attorney General has got the powers and the authority of that ministry—and we've had some good ministers of Justice—and I don't, you know, it's like Vic Toews, for example, who did a good job.

And, you know, you know—but the legacy of this Attorney General isn't going to be about getting tough on crime. It isn't going to be about making communities safer. You know, it's going to be about fighting with the City to try to oppose a police helicopter that could have supported Manitobans and has proven to be a good tool. It's going to be about deleting warrants and having to be shamed by the Winnipeg Police Service into not doing that anymore. It's going to be about going to 7-Eleven, getting the Slurpee cups and handing them out to high-risk car thieves who were causing dangerous positions and conditions on our roads and on our streets in Winnipeg. And it's going to be about letting prisoners out of prison. Instead of putting them in prison he was letting them out of prison. That'll be the legacy of this Attorney General and he should be ashamed of himself, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** It's a pleasure to be up speaking to this bill.

I was really interested to read that the official opposition believes in early intervention support. So that was a new piece of information and I'm thrilled. I can't tell you how excited I was to hear that because I believe they voted against every initiative on that front. I could be wrong, I don't know. I take it back if I am wrong.

But I was really blessed to hear that because we are doing a lot of work in that area, and I'm out quite frequently at my doors whenever I get the chance. And one of the things that—I've never had anyone disagree with me when I have started to explain about early intervention with kids and what is the best way to go. Would we rather prevent crime if we could? Would that not be the best way? It costs a fortune to have people locked up in prisons for years.

In fact, when the federal government changed their laws back in 2011 the Texas conservatives rejected what they had to say. They said something like been there, done that, didn't work. They had spent billions and billions of dollars removed from early prevention and treatment, and then they realized, hey, that is not the way to go. So certainly want, we want a balanced approach and I think that other members will speak to all of the areas that we're working in.

But I wanted to speak a little bit about the early childhood prevention initiatives. The Starting Early, Starting Strong, for example, that was recently announced by our government, which is going to get people together discussing how we can better work to help our youngest children reach their potential. And brain development in the early years—we know, Mr. Speaker, from all the research is absolutely a key factor. I mean, I guess this seems obvious, but that's where we want to be really focusing on prevention because that's where the best dollar is, that's where you get back the most money for your dollar in prevention.

So we really have—want to begin doing a—well, we've been doing a lot of that work and we want to do a lot more, and some of the things that we've been doing are—for example, we have many parenting programs that help people who didn't get a chance. Some of us grew up in families where we learned how to parent, and some of us did not. Some people we heard—actually, some of our members speaking about the residential schools and the children, decade after decade after decade, who never had a chance to grow up in a family and how that later affected their ability to parent, never having seen it their entire lives.

So we really want to be helping families learn how to parent. I don't know. I wish I'd had a better manual when I had my daughter on how to do that. I guess, if I'd just done what my mother did exactly, I would have been okay, because she was amazing, but, yes, in any case, we could all use help in that area, and we are giving that help.

We have Manitoba Parent Zone. We have Children's disABILITY. We have all kinds of programs that work towards that—Families First, Healthy Baby program. And I hope that the member from Point Douglas will be here, perhaps—no, will speak to that, Mr. Speaker, a little bit more. I know different—many times in the House he has spoken, and I wish that everyone on both sides would stand up and really be fighting for this and working for this in every community that we have in Manitoba, reaching out on early childhood prevention and helping those children early on to change their lives. I can't think of anything better that we could do on either side. So hence my excitement at seeing that the other side was even the slightest bit interested in early intervention support, was quite a thrill.

When it comes to some of the other things connected to this that we've done, one of the things I

really find exceptional is the criminal forfeitures act, and I love that we are able to take back from those who have been involved in crime and are making money on crime, and taking that money back from it and investing it into our police and into our victim services. I just can't imagine a better way of doing it. Manitoba—as we continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, we will absolutely see that in Manitoba crime does not pay. It pays us.

So I just really—I love that the people that I speak to about that—I don't why we've had such difficulty getting out the word on some of these fabulous programs and things that we're doing on that, because I just think that's really exceptional. And I know there's a number of things that the police have chosen to be able to purchase with that that have helped—that have helped us, right.

In my own community, I think another key factor is what we do with our youth in early prevention, and doing some of that work with our youth. And we have a lot of programs in my area, in Burrows, doing exactly that. And I've kind of been looking into them over the summer whenever I get the opportunity and going to see the kids and finding out what they're doing. A couple of them are youth co-ops. So Gilbert Park and Elwick both have youth co-ops going, where the kids get together and they have somebody help them with it and they put out, you know, flyers and let everyone in the neighbourhood know what they're able to do. They'll babysit for you. They'll cut the lawn. They'll do all sorts of, you know, tasks in the area. They make money. The money's pooled in the co-op, and then that money goes to the kids at the end of—at the end of the summer. They all get together and they have meetings on what they're going to do. They have a meeting every day. They vote on everything. Everybody has an equal vote, so it's teaching just so many things. And that kind of prevention program, Mr. Speaker, in providing jobs, in working with our youth, in giving them opportunities, both in school and in jobs, in volunteering—there's all kinds of volunteer opportunities.

\* (11:40)

I also have, in my area, a group called Wayfinders that works with about 270 students from a low-income area in my constituency, and they do all sorts of things. I don't know, you might have noticed a beautiful mural that we have now on the corner of Mountain and McPhillips, and if you haven't seen it, you should, because it's absolutely—

it's gorgeous, and that was done by the kids at Wayfinders who came and painted that, much better use of their time than what they could be involved in. And they're all involved in projects like that. They're volunteering in the community, they're working, they're studying, they're learning, Mr. Speaker, and to me, that's where you really, again, get a great value for your dollar. And as we put money into that kind of programing, that's where you see change.

Another program that's always been a favourite of mine is the BUILD program which works with folks who have gotten out of prison and rather than, you know, reinvolving themselves in crime, and the member from Lakeside was mentioning a gentleman who had ended up in that—he reoffended and went back to prison—I wish he'd known about BUILD, because BUILD only hires people with a record and they then go out and they learn. They learn how to do work in construction, building things—that's why it's called BUILD, hence the name—and it is changing lives, Mr. Speaker, because the one thing that seems to truly work when it comes to recidivism is a job.

So as they're able to get a job and support their families and gain self-esteem and realize that, no, I have the ability to do this—I, too, can be a giving part of society, that's what we're seeing. We're seeing lives being changed that way.

So, I know there's many, many initiatives in many areas. We're very balanced. There's areas in my constituency where people want things to be a little tougher and we're working on those as well, where that is what is the answer. And in every other area, we want to be working to actually prevent those crimes. So I would like to thank the member from Lakeside for giving me the opportunity to speak about that and that need because I'm really thinking that is something we can all work on, on both sides, is that desire to prevent crime before it ever begins. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I'm pleased to rise to speak to this resolution brought by the MLA for Lakeside and, indeed, is a fine resolution and it does bring forward, I think, many of the things that are failures of this government. They are fond of taking credit for other people's actions but they do not take responsibility for their own actions. Indeed, the previous speaker talked about the Healthy Child program, was started under Premier Filmon, by the MLA for River East. And it was a fine program, ran for several years, created the Children and Youth Secretariat, was an interdepartmental program in

co-operation that created a lot of early intervention programs and some of those programs were carried on by this governor—government and others were forgotten and—as many of the victims and children have been forgotten by this government, Mr. Speaker.

And, you know, it's very sad when we look at this government talking about taking a balanced approach. Well, let's look at their balanced approach. There's a catch-and-release program, there's the cancelled warrants, people talking about the dollars not about the victims, and when it really comes down to, Mr. Speaker, is how can we protect people better in Manitoba. There is a large amount of money, obviously, spent on the corrections facilities. There's a large amount spent with the police and enforcement and the minister takes credit for what he calls drastically falling crime rates and when we look at the statistics, in fact, there is a very, very small reduction. Winnipeg and Manitoba are still the violent crime capitals of Canada and the reduction has mostly to do with aging population, that as people age, they age out of that area where they tend to be involved in crime and that is really the major reduction that we've seen there.

And they ignore the other areas, the—being the violent crime capital and we look at areas such as Thompson and a lot of recent publicity about what was happening in Thompson and individuals up there put the blame solely on the provincial government. And not once in the article did I see the MLA for Thompson mentioned and he talks about his area quite a bit, but he doesn't seem to talk about these areas that have this type of problems. And a lot of the problems, obviously, come from addictions. And this government has cut funding to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. They have cut the availability of those programs. They have cut the intake. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, when people have an addiction, it takes a lot of time, and it's a great change for them. It's a very big challenge for them to actually admit that they have that addiction. And when they make that step, when they make that huge step to admit that they may have a problem, they have, in my experience, about a week that they can get into some kind of program to help them try to deal with that addiction. And then, when they go to AFM and they're told, you know what, we're not taking in any new clients for three months. Well, what does that say to that individual? It says to them that this government doesn't care for them. Does—it says to them, this—they don't matter to this

government. It says to them that this government doesn't care about their addiction problem and doesn't want to help. And it's a very sad statement. There's an opportunity there, and as I said, a very, very small window where they have admitted that they have a problem. They are looking for help. They're actively seeking help and the help is not there. Because there is no availability. They're told, go away, we can't help you. It's not available for you today, come back in three months. Well, three months is too late. Over a week is often too late.

And what happens at the end of that week? They have to feed that addiction. How they feed it often is a result of the crime. The crime—and that we see the violence in northern Manitoba, the violence we see in Thompson, the violence we see in Winnipeg and in other parts of the province, a lot of that comes back to those addictions, Mr. Speaker, and how those individuals have to feed that addiction. And this government is not there to help them. It's a very, very sad statement.

And then we talked about—there was some talk about the victims. Well, what about the victims? When we have people sitting in remand in the system, some of them for a couple years or less, sometimes less, sometimes up to two years sitting there awaiting trial. What happens to the victim? The victim's sitting there waiting for the trial to take place. Maybe there's a pretrial, Mr. Speaker, so the victim has to come by—come along and testify in the pretrial, go through—relive their devastating experience, be cross-examined and be put on the spot so—and have to defend themselves.

And then, if it does get to a trial, maybe another while down the road, another year down the road, here we go again. The victim has to come up there and—could be years after the fact. They have to testify to their recollection. They have to be—sometimes it looks as if the victim's the one that is put on trial in our system, not the accused. And isn't that a sad statement. What does that say to the victim of crime in Manitoba? It says, this government doesn't care. It says that this government has no ability to defend people in Manitoba.

It's very sad when we watch this minister, you know, as I said, take credit for others' actions, take credit for an aging population as an impact on the crime rate. And yet, there is no responsibility for this government's inaction on crime and this government's—it must be time for another gang intervention strategy, Mr. Speaker. It's coming up—

one a year. It must be something—the last one didn't work, so it's time for a new one. Time to roll something else out that, you know, well, that one didn't work. Let's get—at least they're trying something. That's good, at least they're trying something. But they have a history of failure in the justice system.

And we have very hard-working people in the front lines, we have very hard-working people in the correction systems, but they're dealing with severe overcrowding. And what is this government's solution? Well, we'll cancel some warrants. Then we won't have to deal with those people. Well, isn't that a sad statement to the victims of those crimes.

\* (11:50)

So we have this severe overcrowding and the government announces another ribbon cutting. We're going to build a new jail in Dauphin, and there's no doubt that the jail in Dauphin is aged and it needs to be replaced. So questioning the minister and his deputy minister and his staff, well, how big is this facility going to be? Well, we don't know. Okay, what is going—which population is it going to serve? Well, we don't know. We know where it's going to be because we have the land chosen. How much does the land cost? We don't know.

Hmm, don't know a lot about anything, do they, Mr. Speaker? And it's pretty obvious that they can't—they'll go out and make the announcements. When is this going to be built? Hmm, don't know. What's the size going to be? Hmm, minister doesn't know.

Just—let's make the announcement to—just because, Mr. Speaker, and we'll go out and reannounce it again and reannounce it again, and when it is finally built, like the women's jail, which is—was built at a substantial cost to the citizens of Manitoba—it's already overfull. It's already, just, you know, bursting at the seams. The challenge to corrections staff to deal with overcrowding is very troubling. It is—they are constantly at risk. They are worried about the ramifications of this overcrowding. It is a powder keg. They are trying to deal with it every day, and this minister makes announcements that, this is how we're going to deal with it; we'll build something somewhere, somehow, don't know how, don't know when, don't know how big, don't know what it's going to be like. It's just this thing out there. And that's going to solve our problem.

Well, no, it's not. There are several things that need to be done in this justice system, but they're

constantly ignored by this minister, and it often comes down to, as I said, the addictions problems, child poverty that this government has failed to deal with time and again, and it's mental health as well, is another area that this government just seems to ignore.

We have—I have dealt with many people in the Brandon community, Mr.—‘speake,’ that I—Speaker—that have mental-health issues, that are in the community, they're living, they feel at risk. They don't have the supports that are necessary and they're not available to them. And this government continues to ignore it, some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and we have this impact, this crime situation in Manitoba that the government, again, continues to ignore.

So I'm sure there's others, Mr. Speaker, that wish to speak to that. Thank you for the time today.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the honourable Minister for Healthy Living, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this morning Lily Schreyer, who is joined by her son-in-law's mother, Marjorie Kingon, who is visiting from Yorkshire, England.

On behalf of honourable members, we would like to welcome you here this morning.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs):** Well, first, I'd like to say thank you to the member from Brandon West and Steinbach for very entertaining speeches. Now, I'd like to provide a speech with accuracy and information that's based on real things rather than just entertainment value.

The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) talks about addiction, and I would like to put it on the record that the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba did have a cut. The cut was in 1997 to '98 to '98-99, it went from 10,000—four—\$10,402,000 to \$9,660,000. And, by the way, that's when Gary Filmon was in charge and the leader of the current—Leader of the Opposition, today's Leader of the

Opposition, voted for and supported those cuts to addictions and support, wiping out some of the support for the most vulnerable. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the only cut that has happened to AFM in the last 14 years.

Now, let's put some more accurate information to the Brandon—I wish the member from Brandon West would pay attention to some accurate information, rather than do that. Addiction—let's talk about centralized intake—he talked about a three-month waiting list. No, Mr. Speaker, during '97-98, there was a six-month waiting list. In fact, it was even longer for women's addiction services. I was pleased to have a ribbon cutting, yes, a ribbon cutting, where we opened women's addiction services.

Oh, and I was proud to have another ribbon cutting, to have centralized intakes so that people could come to any door and get information and be able to get in with a matter of hours, if necessary, whether it was detox or other things. I was pleased to be there at another ribbon cutting, opening up the new addictions facility in Thompson, with 24 beds. And, by the way, that's now getting six beds of detox.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put it on the record that every single Conservative member voted against increasing funding for addiction, increasing detox, increasing support for women's addictions and, oh, now pregnant women can get into service in a matter of hours. And I'm proud to be the government that provided this service and I would be embarrassed if I was a Conservative who voted against that.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about prevention, and I would like to say thank you for the member from Lakeside, because that's the first time I've ever heard the word prevention from the Conservatives—the regressive Conservative Party. The regressive Conservative Party says, let's talk about prevention. Their idea of prevention is locking people up. Our idea of prevention is to have a balance where you provide support for the young individuals.

So I'd like to mention in addictions, Resource Assistance for Youth. We provide support for RaY—yes, we do—started in the year 2007. It did not provide under the Conservatives.

Oh, let's talk about addictions recovery on—program that we built in addiction. Another one,

Macdonald Youth Services—oh, they opened up a new youth detox and addiction treatment centre. Hallelujah, and I was pleased to be at that ribbon cutting where we said, yes, we're going to provide these services. And the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) voted against it. The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) voted against it because they do not believe in supporting youth.

They do not believe in the extension of supports to schools. And you know what? I'm pleased that we have 39,000 young people getting prevention services from Addictions Foundation of Manitoba every year—39,000 people getting prevention services.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about records. In 1997-98, when the present leader of the Conservative Party was at the Cabinet table, they spent \$11.8 million on all the addictions services they provided. And, by the way, there was a couple of organizations that got the money. I am pleased that as of this year we're spending \$28.4 million, plus another commitment of 2 per cent of lottery and liquor sales so we are enhancing the services. And part of that is services to all across the province.

So in spite of what the member for Brandon West says, his actions are an oxymoron. His words do not bely what his actions actually are. And so, I'm pleased to do that.

Also, let's talk about actions. The members of the Conservative Party had the prevention department, Children and Youth Opportunities, in Estimates for less than 15 minutes and, you know, that shows where their care is. They don't even know what the word prevention means.

And so I look at them and say, okay we have a new mentoring program. Yes, we have a new mentoring program, and I'm proud to be there and help work with that. When I initiated it, the member—the current minister has doubled and tripled the size. He's got more people involved. He's exciting, because then, when kids have a mentor, they have support and they have a future.

I'm pleased to have extended The Green Team from just cutting grass in private golf courses under the Conservatives to actually having a program where we've employed 10,000 kids over the last two years, and those kids are working with younger children to provide sports activities, to provide community service opportunities, et cetera, so that last year we kept between 25 and 30,000 kids busy.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, busy kids are good kids, and people understand that—almost everyone, except the Conservatives, who voted against The Green Team. Year after year, they don't believe in having kids grow up, support their communities, support other kids and be true prevention models.

Mr. Speaker, even if you sit there and say that—like the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen)—prevention is a helicopter. What you want to do is you want to say that you want to have programs like Turnabout. Turnabout is a fabulous program. First-time offenders, young kids, get to face their accusers—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Healthy Living will have two minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, August 1, 2013**

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