

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

Vol. LXVII No. 51A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, June 23, 2015

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	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	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Thomas, Hon.	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 23, 2015

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, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Looking for leave of the House to move directly to Bill 213, The Seniors' Rights and Elder Abuse Protection Act, sponsored by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 213? [*Agreed*]

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 213—The Seniors' Rights and
Elder Abuse Protection Act**

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll proceed, then, to—under debate on second readings of public bills, proceed to call Bill 213, The Seniors' Rights and Elder Abuse Protection Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), who has six minutes remaining.

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Is there further debate?

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand this morning and to put some words on the record with respect to this bill that has been brought by the member for Emerson,

this Seniors' Rights and Elder Abuse Protection Act that was just introduced earlier this month.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. It's an important opportunity for this Legislature to recognize challenges that seniors face and to take action to guard against the mistreatment and neglect of seniors, and I would note that this bill is effective in doing that in a number of different ways. I know that this bill includes provisions that would guard against the abuse of elders and seniors, but it starts with a seniors' bill of rights, and that's an important facet of this bill in that it actually spells out what provisions must be in place, what ideals must be held up and what values we as a society must guard when it comes to seniors.

I also believe it's important that the part 2 of this bill includes a provision for an elder abuse team, a dedicated advocacy body that would, I believe, hear complaints and consider evidence and make recommendations and, even though I do not know all of the powers that would be contained in this committee, I do appreciate that the member for Emerson has been thoughtful about this and has understood there needs to be some kind of an expert team, some kind of a group tasked with this function.

And then, of course, there's also a provision for a whistle-blower protection measure to make sure that people on the front lines could bring charges—or I should say could bring concerns forward—that there would be a pipeline, there would be a mechanism, there would be an avenue through which people who work with seniors in various capacities, they could be people in the health-care sector, they could be people in community, they could be people who might fear reprisal in some workplace situation, and this would give them an avenue to, with discretion, bring concerns that some elder might be experiencing abuse.

Mr. Speaker, in the short time that is afforded to me in these discussions this morning, I would like to focus my remarks specifically on what we have developing in this province, and you've heard me say it before, which is an increasing inability for seniors who are moving into personal-care homes to have that care afforded to them in the community in which they live.

I know that right now in the Legislature, day after day, we are bringing petitions that talk about the failure of this government to address the growing need for personal-care-home capacity in this province. Indeed, we've made reference many times to a Manitoba Centre for Health Policy report that was released a few years ago that makes clear that by the year 2036 I believe that this province is going to require somewhere in the neighbourhood of 50 per cent greater capacity in personal-care-home beds than what we have right now in the province. That's just additional new capacity. That does not even go to the fact that we have personal-care homes in this province that will need replacement, that will need significant upgrades. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have a huge need for capacity building.

Of course, one of the reasons for that is because people are living longer now than they did 20, 40, 60 years ago. And another reason for that is we have exactly that whole cohort of baby boomers, some of whom are in my own PC caucus who are all now leaning towards retirement and, of course, later on beyond that retirement age, you know, some of them will go into—perhaps sell the home and move into an apartment, perhaps move into assisted-living facility.

I'm not suggesting that the Speaker is one of those. I think he's got many, many years yet living on his own. Neither is the bill sponsor, one of the ones that I'm specifically thinking of, but somewhere down that line on that continuum there will come a time when seniors, and indeed right now, seniors across the province and their parents and their children are realizing now is the time where mom or dad or this uncle or auntie or grandma and grandpa could live on their own before and thrive, now is the time where they need for that provision of health care to be there for them.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would remark that just yesterday I was speaking with someone in the cafeteria downstairs and they were speaking about the fact that just on the weekend they had bumped into a couple on a garden tour in the south of Winnipeg in the Charleswood area and they were on this garden tour and bumped into a couple that was still living in their own home and maintaining their own garden and they had just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. And I asked for a clarification. I said, are you sure it's their 70th anniversary? Yes, it was, they were both in their 90s, living on their own. And absolutely that is the ideal. That is what we want. We want people

living as long as they want—as long as they can, thriving on their own, independently. But when that time comes for someone to—where it is determined by medical experts that the best and most appropriate place for them is in a personal-care home, that provision needs to be made.

* (10:10)

Now in—if you do the simple math on this and say, if we have 5,000 personal-care-home beds now, we know we need 50 per cent more capacity by 2036. We can do some quick estimating and say that right now this NDP government should be adding 500 beds per year just to keep up with the coming demand. And what this government's record is that in the 16 years they have governed, they haven't added 500 beds a year; they haven't added 100 beds a year; they've barely added 20—I don't think they've even added 25 beds a year. I believe the total complement of personal-care-home beds over 16 years that they have added to this province is under 300. That, Mr. Speaker, is abysmal failure.

What does it mean, though, for the front line? What does it mean for seniors who are actually waiting for those beds?

I want to tell you about just one new issue that came to my attention. This spring, a gentleman by the name of Brian Derksen contacted my office about his father, Jake. Now, his father is just one of those—he's 92; he has Parkinson's disease. He was admitted to our Boundary Trails Health Centre, wonderful health facility in Morden-Winkler area. He was panelled by that medical team, and he was placed at the age of 92 not in his home community of Winkler. He was placed down the lane in Swan Lake at Lorne Memorial Hospital, 75 kilometres away from Winkler.

Now, what does that mean for Mr. Derksen, whose wife of almost 70 years old has to drive an hour to see her husband? What happens in this instance time after time after time is that that geographical barrier that has been created artificially by this system because of the inability of the NDP to add beds has isolated him from his family, from his children, from his wife, and, as is the case in so many cases, Mr. Derksen has become distraught about the move. He is no longer surrounded by loved ones. He is deteriorating quickly in those unfamiliar surroundings.

I know that even as of the end of April, beginning of May—I believe it might have been on

the same day that this Legislature went back into session—now Brian's father was transferred, but not back to his home community, now transferred to Manitou. So here is an elder in our province now on their second move and so still not near family, not near his wife, not in the community where he worked and lived and grew up and went to school and raised his family and paid his bills and volunteered for community enterprises and went to church, all of those things. Now, in the moment he needs the system, the system fails him.

I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is an example of elder abuse. This is an example exactly that meets the definition of abuse that this bill brings forward whereby elder abuse is defined as mistreatment or neglect of a senior, and this can be an active exercise or a passive one. I would suggest that the practice of this using other capacity outside of the area where the person is located amounts to active elder abuse. Something needs to be done. This NDP government has not acted, and all across this province seniors are subjected to these conditions where they cannot get the health care they need where they live.

That's why I support this bill and the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put on the record about this very serious issue, the seniors' rights and abuse—elder abuse protection act, of course, we've all had family that have gone through that, and I'm sure that we will go through it ourselves. I know the member from Morden-Winkler happened to say the baby boomers, and I am one of them, and it's kind of a utopia situation that the member was talking about where every senior could be kept in their home town and looked after. And I would like to see that, believe me, but we have to look also at the cost.

I know in my constituency, and I'll use that as an example, in Flin Flon, Snow Lake, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, the main communities in my constituency, many of the seniors would love to stay there, but (1) the homes aren't built or there's just not enough, so it would obviously take some investment by the government, by both parties getting together and putting together a package where seniors could stay at home at these places, but not only stay at home but have seniors housing.

The other thing you have to look at is, then, if it's home care, then you have to have the people that

could work and look after the seniors, and in some of these smaller communities, you don't have that.

And you have to be realistic. I mean, in Morden-Winkler there are growing communities, and the communities around them, like Carman—which is, what, 25 minutes away—having to move some seniors that are 25 minutes away from a seniors home might not be the best move, but it is realistic that we can expect people to do that. It's just like the hospital, one of the best hospitals in the Morden-Winkler—or in Manitoba, is at the boundary hills hospital, and yet when you look around there's hospitals all around within 25 minutes. I just have to say that in the North, for us to go for a CT scan in The Pas, it's an hour and a half.

So I'm just saying I like their bill and I'd like to say that I could support this, but I think there has to be some tweaking here. We have to be realistic that every senior in Manitoba can't—or it's impossible to be realistic and have a seniors home in every small community, because we don't have the people that can look after health care and we don't have the people or the money to build these seniors homes.

But I also wanted to state, I know the member from Morden-Winkler was saying that we haven't—

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pettersen: Yes. Hear, hear. We haven't done enough. Well, I have to say we've gone from 69 supportive housing units in the whole province in 1999 to over 700 today.

An Honourable Member: Steve built those?

Mr. Pettersen: That's more than tenfold increase. And, yes, Steve probably was involved in building those. But the point I'm trying to make is that we as a party over here have taken upon ourselves to realize this important situation. And we're building, but we're not keeping up. I mean, the seniors—*[interjection]* Well, exactly. You know, zero under their terms to 700 today I think is a pretty good jump.

But, you know, when you look at that, there's other things that we've done, and one is Pharmacare. I know that we—in our over the last six years, approximately, 4,000 drugs, including those that treat influenza, reduce the risk of heart attack, treat severe 'enzema' and for the treatment HIV have been added to Manitoba's world-class Pharmacare program.

Manitobans, especially our seniors and those on fixed incomes, look to Pharmacare to keep the costs

of the prescription medication manageable. I know even if you go to the province next door, because I live on the border, there's many seniors in Saskatchewan that move to Manitoba because the health care is that better. Many seniors in Creighton, Saskatchewan, moved to—is anybody listening in here, Mr. Speaker? Many people in Saskatchewan—seniors—are moving from Saskatchewan to Manitoba because the senior care is better and because the health care is better; they're looked after.

I have to go over myself, Mr. Speaker, and I want a hallelujah—I want a hallelujah—because on Friday I went to my doctor and found out that I was cancer-free.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pettersen: Thank you, thank you, thank you and that's a thank you on both sides. That is a very important step because—thank you, Mr. Speaker. A thumbs-up from you means a lot to me, and we will go fishing at Reed Lake.

Let me go on. I don't want to be rambling here.

But what I do have to say—what I do have to say is that going through the CancerCare program in Manitoba really opens your eyes at the care, at the people that work in that program, and I'm very proud to say that when I was looked after by CancerCare Manitoba I think it was second to none. Thank God we don't live across the border in United States because I was treated very well. The doctors were great, and you're important. It doesn't matter if you're at the low-scale income or the high-scale income, you're all treated the same, and I appreciate our health-care system, and for seniors I think that's important.

We all know my grandpa—my grandpa in the '70s had Alzheimer's, and this was before they even knew what Alzheimer's was, and it was sad because going to see my grandpa, and then eventually he doesn't even know your name, it was a sad situation.

* (10:20)

Right now, they're testing drugs and that to, you know, basically, to ward off Alzheimer's, but things you can do. And that's a terrible, terrible disease that I would wish nobody have to go through, whether it's yourself or your family. I guess if you went through yourself, you might not remember what you were going through—but, no, it's very terrible. And I really like how the Manitoba government has actually built specific health-care facilities for Alzheimer's.

When my dad went into a seniors home in Flin Flon—I can't name it right now, but there's floors—help me out here, isn't there seniors housing here in Winnipeg with different floors with different levels of care? And in—when you're in smaller communities, you'd—you're not lucky to have that because there's not enough staff, not enough money or whatever, and so in Flin Flon, in the seniors home, everybody is lumped together. And if there's one thing I'd like to see, is that there, you know, like—and I know the seniors home there was trying to, say, have them eat at different times, stuff like that. It's just very, very hard to go through it. And for seniors, like I say, you want them to keep their dignity, which is everything—even in this government, dignity is everything. *[interjection]*

And, yes, well, it is. But, like, you weren't here earlier. I don't know if you forgot the time or you were just late because you were late, but what—*[interjection]* Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, I can't talk about people, and I'm sorry.

No, what I was saying is that—*[interjection]* God, I don't want to break the rules.

An Honourable Member: Focus, Clarence.

Mr. Pettersen: Yes, I'm trying to focus. I'm trying to focus here. He's got me all mixed up. But, no, what I'm trying to say—*[interjection]* With all this abuse I'm getting here, I'm losing my memory.

What I'm trying to say is that seniors need our help. Seniors need to be protected. Seniors need a direction from us to show that we care, and I think our government has done that with the amount of units that we built. I think our government has said that seniors are front and centre.

I know we all want more seniors homes. We all want more senior homes in our communities. I know Flin Flon, we're waiting to hear about some seniors housing. I know Lynn Lake, which is an old—excuse me—mining community which is having a boom now, some of the older people would like to know.

And I'd just like to say that over the time that we have—we've been there—I'm just looking for the stats that I have here, because I've got some rumblings in my ear, rumblings that I can't talk about. But what I have to say is that we've also gone from 69 supportive housing units in the whole province in 1999—that's 69, Mr. Speaker—and we have 700 today.

And I want to, I guess, stop on that before I get all wound up and just appreciate. But this bill doesn't go far enough.

Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to put a for—a few words on the record on The Seniors' Rights and Elder Abuse Protection Act that was brought forward by the member from Emerson.

And I was pleased to hear the member from Flin Flon, being a senior myself, suggest that he was quite willing—I think the way he worded it was direction from us to help seniors. So I'm pleased that he has offered some direction to me. I'm not sure I'm going to take it, but it was kind of nice to hear him offer some help to us poor elderly people.

This bill has essentially three parts to it. Part 1 establishes a seniors' bill of rights, and I think that's a very important aspect of this bill. I think we need to have a seniors' bill of rights in this province. We talked—I heard a couple of others talking about the baby boomers. I'm in the first wave of the baby bloomers and so I'm getting there a little quicker than some of the others in here—or not quicker but a little sooner, I guess, would be the right phrasing.

Part 2 would establish a senior—an elder abuse team and, you know, the—we don't know, we [*inaudible*] been no statistics kept in the province here, but the estimations are that between six and 16 thousand cases of elder abuse in the province of Manitoba, and that has to be addressed and there has to be a record kept of that. An elder abuse team would look at the various incidences and have some ability to address the issues a little more quickly than they are now, if they are now.

Part 3 then puts in general provisions and associated penalties for those indulging in—engaging in acts of elder abuse, and those penalties are reflective of the existing legislation and are already provincially accepted guidelines such as those found in the protection of persons in care act, the vulnerable persons act—The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act.

You know, in my own community we had a personal-care home built in the early '60s, I believe. It was called East View Lodge and it was personal care but it was ambulatory personal care, not what we think of as a personal-care home at this time, but they had a cafeteria and all the residents or literally

all the residents were able to go down to the cafeteria for their meals and were quite mobile.

It was—and I remember it well for several reasons. Number 1, I had an uncle that was in there when it first opened. I had a bachelor uncle that had had a stroke that was in that facility for quite a number of years. But my father was the chairman of the board at one time there. He was on the board of directors of that personal-care home for quite a lengthy time and he was chairman of the board for a period of time, and it operated very well.

They usually had—were within budget and they usually had a couple of reserves and a little bit of surplus sitting around, which—it was very well run. It was run by volunteers. They had a facility manager, and a number of years later down the road they put that chief operating officer in charge of both the hospital and the personal-care home, and the hospital was 36 beds and the personal-care home was 125 beds. Well, it was expanded in the '70s; it was 75 beds to start with and then it went to 125 beds.

Now, as I said, that was built in the '60s. My mom worked in there as a nurse for quite a few years, too, back in the early days of that facility. So I had a pretty good understanding of what went on there.

Time went on and people needed—the people in the facility were aging and became less ambulatory and needed a different level of care. And the facility wasn't really built for that. The hallways and the doorways weren't quite wide enough for some of the things they needed to do now. So the decision was made after I believe it was about 10 annual announcements by the government; I know they started back in '99 and it took until about 2009 before they actually started on a new facility. But a new facility was built. It's called Country Meadows. It—surprisingly, when we talk about the baby boomers and the load they're going to be on the system, it was built at 100 beds. The old one was at 125; the new one is 100 beds. You would think you would at least maintain the status quo or possibly even expand it, but that did not happen, and the reason given was that there would be a lot more assisted living provided, and that really didn't materialize.

* (10:30)

They—there's a Manitoba Housing unit in Neepawa called Yellowhead Manor, and what they did was take one floor of it—and I believe it's eight or nine units—and made them assisted-living units.

Well, that doesn't even address the extra 25 beds. We still have people panelled in the hospital, waiting for beds in the personal-care home. And, on top of that, they—for a period of time last year, there was 10 empty beds in the personal-care home because they didn't have nurses to cover it. I'm not sure of the status right now, but we had people in the hospital at a far higher cost per day than the personal-care home, and then they were there simply because there weren't enough nurses to provide the facility in the other—in the Country Meadows facility.

You know, the—I think we've somewhat moved in the wrong direction on this, and we're not looking at the charts and looking at the numbers and looking at the needs that are out there. I hear the government of the day talking about all these extra nurses, and yet we're experiencing nursing shortages all over the place that I don't see any real need for if we've got all these extra nurses.

Now, I know there's others that want to speak to this, and I—just in closing, I know that the NDP have already voted against the seniors bill that we put forward in the last session. And I hope they're recognizing the error of their ways and they will support this bill and get past their disrespect of seniors in this province.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the House this morning to once again speak to this important issue, and I know that these issues have come to this House on a regular basis and I think that that's an important part of what we have to talk about in terms of the overall health and well-being of our province and specifically our seniors.

What—I wanted to start, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I think oftentimes I get pigeonholed, and it's not, you know, for a bad reason. But I do think that sometimes folks think, you know, because I am the youngest member in the Chamber—and I do feel that I do bring a certain perspective to our caucus and a certain perspective to this Chamber, and I'm proud of that—I am—and I think that's an important thing.

Mr. Ted Marcelino, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

But sometimes I do feel that folks concentrate and they feel that young people maybe don't see the value or respect seniors or see seniors' rights as being as important as I think that they do. I, in fact, think that my generation does have a certain perspective that, of course, everybody in their lives at one point

does get to experience, but I'm certainly living it right now, and that is that not only do you see your parents getting older and getting towards the age of needing more supports, but we also in many cases still have our grandparents that are alive, and so we can see, you know, it's right to the final twilight years and just some of—what some of those challenges really can be.

So I think that our generation does—my generation does, you know, think about these issues and does care about these issues. And this is where I really, actually, you know—I feel that people oftentimes don't give enough credit to people of my generation in terms of the importance that they place on seniors' issues and how important those are. We also—I think my generation sees this as our duty in regards to protecting seniors and making sure that the rights that we see as universal, that those extend to those most vulnerable in our society, and that certainly includes seniors.

So I—it's my pleasure to speak to this particular resolution—bill, sorry—this morning, and to just add my perspective and, certainly, as somebody—as an elected representative of some great seniors' communities in my neighbourhood, and just talk about just how important seniors' issues are.

Of course, we know that seniors have built our province, that they're the ones that gave us the foundation on which we build our province and our society. And, of course, we know that they're an important part of that picture going forward.

We've placed an enormous focus in terms of public policy on our—from our government on programs that can help protect seniors from abuse, you know, from long-term health-care issues. It's been an absolute focus of our government to make sure that seniors have those supports that they need going forward.

And I think paramount among those—that support system, Mr. Speaker, is safe and affordable housing and a safe place for seniors to call home. And there's a few different ways that seniors are taking advantage of the supports that we put in place, whether it be that, you know, they can still be at home and still be in their homes, that in many cases when I knock on doors I love to ask folks in my neighbourhood: How long have you lived in this house? And I often get 40, 50 years they've lived in their home and I think that really speaks to the strength of the community and their commitment to it.

But for some of these seniors, that's still a viable option and I think that by giving seniors the supports that they need to stay in home, you know, whether it be home care, whether it be, you know, a very significant tax break with regards to education property tax—which we've increased again this year and will again next year—I think these are the kind of supports that allow seniors to feel comfortable in their home and to continue to live there. And it's always with a lot of pride that I, when I speak to seniors, I share in their pride of staying in their own home, being self-sufficient and continuing to support our community and live in the neighbourhood. So that's certainly something that I take a lot of pride in, Mr. Speaker.

For those seniors who aren't able to stay in their home or just need a little bit more support, of course, Mr. Speaker, we know that affordable housing is an important issue for seniors as well. You know, we want to make sure that they have a place that's not only safe and comfortable, but that's also affordable. And so that's why we've put, you know, a lot of additional resources into affordable housing and social housing and will continue to do so over the next number of years, 500 new units and—of social housing and 500 new units of affordable housing over the next three years, which I think is an incredible commitment.

As well, we are also increasing, of course, our Rent Assist level to 75 per cent of the median market rate, which we're very, very proud to have announced in our Throne Speech and to be committed towards. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, this is, of course, a universal benefit and it applies across the board and for some seniors this is the difference between finding an affordable house—a place to live, affordable apartment, or not. So I feel very proud that we're able to support seniors in that way as well.

And then for some seniors, of course, assisted living is the next step and that's absolutely vital, to make sure that we have the proper supports for them as well.

And in my home community, we've got some incredible examples of government-supported assisted living which the community has really embraced, has taken to the next level, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and has really tailored that support to the kind of needs that seniors today are experiencing.

So, I mean, we have a number of assisted-living facilities but I just wanted to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, about Concordia Village, which I think

is a really important part of the puzzle with regards to housing in the—at least in the northeast quadrant of the city. The Concordia Village project was initiated by the Concordia Foundation and really what the—and Concordia projects—and what they were able to do was, again, to take initially for the first phases of the construction, take very little actual government money, but able to leverage that and to build amazing, top-quality, top-notch housing for folks.

And that was kind of the first phase of the project. Now we're into phase 4 where they've identified that not only do seniors need housing, seniors with mental health issues are a specific subset of that. And so again, they came to the government. We were, you know, very happy to work with them, to partner again with Eden health services, which is an incredible partner in other parts of the province, where we could see that the work they're doing is important to seniors, specifically with regards to mental health issues and to, again, put in that initial investment of—through Manitoba Housing to give them the support that they need, to build the facility.

* (10:40)

I can tell you the place is, I think, at capacity already and the waiting list has begun. But what I'm trying to say here is, Mr. Speaker, is that there's an absolute need for having that tailored, specific supports for seniors whether it be with mental health issues, whether it be with specific other health issues, but to give them the supports that they need and to make sure that they are looked after into their later years.

Very quickly, Mr. Speaker, I can see my time is running out, and that's unfortunate because I could go on and on. But I just wanted to very briefly mention our Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, because this is something I've brought to the House before with regards to a private member's resolution in the past just to talk about how the impact of this across not only in my community, but across Manitoba. And, you know, we're a national leader with regards to promoting supportive environments for older adults. And, I mean, this is a program that I think all of us in this House should be, you know, very proud of, maybe more aware of in terms of what it does in our specific communities. But you don't have to go far, you know, it doesn't matter where this—where your seniors clubs or groups are. You know, when I talk to them, they see the benefits of the age-friendly initiatives and how it can really

support them in the work that they do to give seniors an environment, a community within the community that they can feel comfortable and that they can then thrive in.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, whether it be the Elmwood-East Kildonan senior club, whether it be the Bronx Park seniors club, these folks are active—and I did it again—they're the active living clubs. They're not seniors' clubs, active living clubs and they truly are active and they truly do create a sense of community and support for seniors.

So I'm proud of our government giving that support and look forward to continuing to support seniors in the future.

Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Indeed, it's a pleasure today to speak to this bill, Bill 213, brought forward by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), and I certainly commend him for bringing forward this important legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as a course of record, I introduced a seniors' rights bill recently in the Chamber and the NDP government chose not to support that particular legislation. So we're giving them an opportunity to rethink that position on seniors.

And Mr. Speaker, what the member for Emerson did in this particular legislation actually is taking the premise that I put forward in a previous bill—and it was 205 at the time—and he's actually taken that premise and actually expanded it, which I think is really important. And he's actually taken it further and talked specifically about elder abuse and elder abuse protection in this particular act. And I certainly commend him for taking the framework, which was put forward before in terms of rights of seniors, and adding in that important factor about the elder abuse component.

And I think what this legislation does, it actually provides some teeth in legislation now to actually say to the public that seniors deserve the—their rights and to be protected under this legislation, and I certainly want to commend him for bringing that forward.

And when we look at the statistics in terms of the number of seniors that are—have been impacted by abuse—or I guess in Manitoba we're not really tracking that number, but we can make an estimated guess, is really what we're doing—and some of the

data suggests anywhere between 4 to 10 per cent of Canadian seniors are abused. So if we use that in the context of the Manitoba situation, we're somewhere between 6,000 and 6,000 instances each and every year in Manitoba. But we don't really have the accurate numbers here in Manitoba because the current government is not tracking those types of situations. And that's something that I think, you know, if we had those kind of numbers we could be more concrete in moving forward in terms of where we should be going with legislation and the details of some of that legislation.

We know what the federal government has done. Certainly, the federal government has recognized the situation around elder abuse, Mr. Speaker, and in November of 2014, the Honourable Alice Wong, who is the Minister of State for seniors as well, reaffirmed that age would now be considered an aggravating factor in Canada's Criminal Code when sentencing. So this inclusion of age is certainly important, and that particular legislation came forward in Bill C-36 and was granted royal assent in December of 2012. This now creates seven aggravating factors showcasing that age needs to be seriously taken into consideration when sentencing those found to be victimizing seniors.

And, clearly, we do hear extreme cases from time to time. We see it on the news and hear about on the news, so these situations do occur, and what we're trying to provide with this legislation is a framework to actually put penalties in place against those that are abusing Manitoba seniors. Obviously, now that the federal government has implemented this with—that change has been formalized, we felt, certainly from a Manitoba perspective, that a bill that would stress the provincial side of it would be important and absolutely make sure that elder abuse is real, it's recognized and that there should be repercussions for those that abuse our elders, Mr. Speaker.

For this particular legislation, this bill actually defines elder abuse as mistreatment or neglect of a senior, Mr. Speaker, so this really underscores that elder abuse can be both an active exercise and also a passive one and certainly neglect of a senior is still an example of abuse.

In terms of, you know, the numbers of seniors in Manitoba, it's estimated but—the University of Manitoba's Centre on Aging's estimate, by 2026, the proportion of the population in Manitoba, aged 65 and over, will increase to 20 per cent. Now, due

specifically to these demographic trends, the unfortunate reality is that instances of elder abuse will increase unless something is done to make sure that we engage and educate the public that that is not a proper thing to do. And, certainly, Mr. Speaker, this bill will put some teeth and some legislative requirements in there. For those that are caught abusing elders, there will be repercussions, and I think that's an important signal that we should—we, as legislators, should be sending to the general population.

Mr. Speaker, this particular bill is certainly divided into three parts. Obviously, the first part is the bill of rights which was discussed in the Chamber previously, and this is an opportunity for the NDP to stand up for rights for Manitoba seniors. Obviously, we move forward into part 2, and this is a proponent of establishing an elder abuse team which would actually act as a dedicated advocacy body for seniors who feel that they may have been subject to abuse. And part 3 establishes general provisions and associated penalties for those engaging in acts of elder abuse, and—abuse, so that's really the meat and potatoes of the—that side of the regulatory review.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping—I'm optimistic that the NDP will move forward to support Bill 213 that's brought forward by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Thank you very much.

Hon. Mohinder Saran (Minister of Housing and Community Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a few words down on this bill. I thank the member for bringing forward this bill and it gives us a chance to discuss about the seniors' needs and also our means and how we can afford—seniors—help them.

* (10:50)

I think I cannot speak Punjabi over here, but I would like to sum up the saying of the first guru of Sikh religion and who said, the place where people who are not that fortunate economically taking care of and that place blessed by God, socially speaking, the place where we can take care of our elders, our seniors, and that will be more attractive a place because seniors would like to—seniors, like people, will like to stay there because when they are old they will be taken care of.

And I have some discussion with my constituents. I was going to some pastor—retired pastor—he called me. He said, I want to talk to you. I

said, sure, why not come to my constituency office. He said, I don't have a car. I said, sure I will come to you. When I went over there, he talked about one cent per dollar raise of the PST—why you guys are squeezing us when we have a limited income? And I said, well, maybe you are reading the paper who are really supporting the Tories and perhaps that you should a little bit think out of the box. And he said, okay, tell me, I can listen.

If I am senior, I don't know how much income you have and how much money you are getting in your pension. I won't have more than \$2,000 to spend for apartment. Out of \$2,000 apartment, maybe there's items which don't charge PST. So take away about 500 to 700. Only you have to pay extra if you really have to pay 12 to 15 dollars extra. Now, think about that.

Sure, we have to get money from somewhere. Don't think about that Tories will help you out, because they are going to cut \$500 million out of the budget. And who will be affected? It will be the low-income people, our limited income people, and you think about that. If you have to go to a doctor, if you have to pay user fees—because money have to come somewhere—and then what will happen, you will be able to do that? He said, no, I won't be able to do that.

I said, what about—unfortunately, seniors use more health subsidies compared to younger ones, and think about that. If somehow have to go to—for operation, it might cost 3,000 to 5,000 dollars per day. Will you be able to afford that? I know you will say, well, there are going to be insurance, and who will lose money on insurance? They want to make money; it will cost more than \$12 or \$15 on the apartment.

And so in that case, and on the other hand, sure, maybe your children should be take care of you when you are staying in your—with them. No, no, they are not going to help me out; they are busy. I—okay, then money have to come from somewhere and—to provide those services and, therefore, we must have to think about that, how we can keep affordability for the seniors.

So he said, listen. You came to me and there are lots of media being said about your party about the PST, but nobody explain it to me like that. If you guys go explain to people and they will understand. I understand very well. So that was the, oh, one situation.

Then, because I was talking to seniors, we're going door to door. They wanted to—their school tax credit eliminated—the school tax credit—they wanted the school tax credit. So what—oh, when while we're going, a guy said, well—oh, I said, this time it will be eliminated \$235 you can stay longer in your house. Next time it will be \$470 and by 2016 almost majority of the seniors the school tax—they will—a school tax rebate and the school tax will be eliminated totally.

He said, well, you guys won't be in. I think, sure, if we are not in you need us even more. Because in that sense you won't get that rebate, and you think you can afford to stay in this house. No, no, I won't be able to. I said, you have to think about that.

So then other—there was other, like, wrong propaganda. We have more car insurance as compared to the—Saskatchewan. I said, no. I—next time I am the—took and gave him a chart. He said, well, there's so much media wrong information that you're putting out. I said, unfortunately, media is also turning into, like, Asian media where media is somehow is being controlled by the rich people, and when they're controlled by the rich people, they will put all the wrong information, and that's what happening over here. Unfortunately, I left that country and I came over here; I want media to be more fair, and I don't want this country to turn into the Asian-like politics.

And so that's what—so, seniors are getting lots of help from the government because—now, Manitoba seniors helped build this province we are proud to call home. They deserve to live with the dignity and know that the services they count on are there for them. Our government has many programs in place to help protect seniors from abuse and also to deal with the long-term-care issues.

It's not only that—like, I also brought the—we put in the Throne Speech—like, personal-care homes should be culturally sensitive and sure, I—we have to create that kind of environment because sometimes new communities, they don't have know-how, and they need that help which we are trying to figure out how we can help them out.

Because I remember my aunt, she was in a personal-care home, and she stayed about two, three years before she died. But in my opinion, she died even three years earlier because she was not able to speak her language, because she was not able to speak the English language, and there were not that many people who can speak her language. And she

died before then. That is why I think personal-care homes should have—be culturally sensitive so people in their old age, and they can talk to each other, they can have—talk about their culture.

So those are very important, I think, for the seniors. Not only I am thinking that's personal-care homes; also, we need for them to drop-in centres and different places where they can go, where they can talk about each other—with each other and they can talk about the—their culture, their old times; they can tell stories each other. In that way, they will be—if they're be to die at home at least they will be able to talk to each other. So that's a more better way to connect them with other seniors.

So all these things have to—have come from all the different directions. There's not only one solution. So we are trying to figure out and we are help—trying to—we are trying to build seniors homes where they will stay longer and talk to each other.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

So all that is part of our strategy. And that strategy would not be bring forward unless we have money. And that around \$500-million cut won't help that, and people should make sure—people should be clear that that money will be taken away from the seniors, taken away from the low-income people, and that will be the rich people, the regime, and ordinary people will suffer. Therefore, have some—be patient; we are working diligently, and we are trying to cover from all corners so this could be a better society and—where everybody will be taken care of.

Thank you.

Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): It's an honour to be up to speak to this. I know that as the member from Concordia mentioned, there's no age where you're not concerned and wanting the very best for our seniors, and I'm very pleased to get a chance to speak to this.

I think one of the most important things, Mr. Speaker, that government can do is to ensure that life remains affordable for all people in Manitoba and also, of course, for our seniors. And specifically for seniors—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Children and Youth

Opportunities (Ms. Wight) will have nine minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 12—Support for a Strong Public Child Care System

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it is time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution under consideration this morning is entitled Support for a Strong Public Child Care System, sponsored by the honourable member for Fort Rouge.

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that

WHEREAS quality, affordable child care is crucial to ensuring parents can choose to work, attend classes or upgrade their skills, all of which contributes to Manitoba's economy; and

WHEREAS the official opposition recently revealed a hidden agenda to cut affordable child-care spaces in favour of privatized, for-profit daycares, a move that would jeopardize the 29,000 affordable child-care spaces that the provincial government has helped grow over the last decade for families; and

WHEREAS the Leader of the Official Opposition has a history of attacking universal, affordable child care as a Filmon Cabinet minister when Manitoba was the only province to veto the federal government's national child-care plan, and again in 2006 when he helped push the Harper government's decision to cancel the \$176-million agreement with Manitoba for a national child-care program; and

WHEREAS the last provincial Conservative government cut \$8 million from child-care centres and reduced operating grants for nursery schools by 50 per cent; and

WHEREAS a privatized, for-profit child-care system would more than double the fees families pay and would hit low-income families the hardest; and

WHEREAS since 1999, the provincial government has provided funding to almost double the number of public child-care spaces available in Manitoba and has a long-term plan that will help fund affordable child care for all families that need it; and

WHEREAS the provincial government recently announced the continuation of a plan to invest in

another 5,000 child-care spaces and build or expand daycare centres across Manitoba.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba affirm its support for a strong public child-care system that supports Manitoba families, allows parents to work or further their education and invests in the futures of the province's children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to continue to grow the public child-care system in Manitoba rather than aggressively cut child-care spaces in favour of a privatized system.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Fort Rouge, seconded by the honourable member for Concordia,

WHEREAS quality, affordable child care is crucial—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

The resolution is in order.

Ms. Howard: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion, and I want to thank the member for Concordia for seconding it. I asked the member for Concordia to second it because we both are parents of young children. We both rely on the child-care system to be able to do our jobs, that we both know the importance of quality child care in the development of our children's lives. And I know there's many members in this House, and not all members who have had that experience at one time or another and may currently be having that experience.

I want to start off this debate by acknowledging the challenge in child care and acknowledging the problem that I think has brought the members opposite to what is a phony solution, and I'll go into why it's a phony solution.

There is a challenge finding quality child care for children in this province. It's a challenge that we acknowledge as a government. It's why we have invested year over year over our time in office in building that public child-care system and making sure there are trained professionals there to look after our children, that they have better wages—there's still work to do there—that they have access to pensions.

But, absolutely, it is a challenge for parents looking for that child-care space to find it, and for

many parents that is a stressful time, knowing that the day is coming when they want to return to work or go to school and they want to make sure that their children are safe and looked after.

And there's been progress—there's been tremendous progress over our time in office. We now live in a province where every new school has a child-care centre built into it. You travel, you talk to people in other provinces, you talk to people in states; they think that that is an amazing thing, a fabulous thing and something that they want to emulate. But there's more to do, absolutely.

But I want to use my time to talk about why a move to a privatized for-profit system isn't the solution. I don't dispute the good intentions of people who work in for-profit child care. I don't dispute their calling to look after children at all. But we know from examples around the world that moving to a privatized system of child care doesn't work. It costs more. It costs government more. It costs parents more. It limits choice for parents. It limits the involvement of parents in the early-childhood education of their children. And it can have a negative effect on the quality of that care because there is attention in a for-profit system between maximizing profit and ensuring that there is quality in the delivery of that service.

We should create more spaces. We are creating more spaces. And I think there are things we can do to make it easier for those spaces to be created. Some of the work that we're doing creating child-care hubs so that one board can look after more than one centre. Things that we're doing to work with community groups who are interested in building child care so that it's easier for them to do it.

Currently in Manitoba, and I believe it hasn't changed much, the vast majority of child care delivered in this province is not-for-profit and it's overseen by parent boards, some 90 or 95 per cent or better.

I want to use the time I have to talk to the members opposite about what happened in Australia when they moved to a system of privatized child care. This—and we can learn much from this example, I think. Starting in the 1990s, they shifted from a not-for-profit, community-based child-care system to a private, for-profit system and the results, Mr. Speaker, were disastrous. They were disastrous for children and they were disastrous for families and they were disastrous for taxpayers.

The largest player in Australia at that time was a company named ABC Learning. They went into receivership on November 6th, 2008, affecting 1,000 child-care centres. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if we got the word today that 80 per cent of our child-care centres were going to close down because the company that owns it was going bankrupt. Imagine that—what that would do to the families and the children and the child-care workers. It affected 120,000 children in Australia and 16,000 child-care workers. And the Australia government, knowing that it could not allow the collapse of the child-care system, that it would have a disastrous impact on the economy of that country, spent hundreds of millions of dollars to bail out those child-care centres.

Part of that shift to corporate privatized child care was also to end operating grants to not-for-profits. So in our system, we give operating grants to not-for-profits. There's a formula. In Australia, after they moved to the for-profit system, the question became, why is there this unlevel playing field? If it's going to be a level playing field, if we're going to allow for competition, we can't give the not-for-profits an advantage, so those operating grants were ended. That meant that many of those centres closed and ended plans they had to expand. What happened as a result? Well, in came the company, ABC Learning, who bought those child-care centres. And so, over time, you ended up with that company growing so rapidly, that in some areas, 73 per cent of available child-care spaces were private, for-profit and owned by one company.

Anybody, I think, can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of situation is a setup for problems. And as they grew and as their monopoly grew, do you know what happened? Well, prices went up. Prices went up for those spaces, prices went up for parents to pay and the cost for government went up because government was still providing subsidies to parents to pay for child care. And so the cost for those subsidies, as the cost of corporate child care raised, the cost of those subsidies to government raised, so government ended up paying far more for the same spaces that were not-for-profit spaces just a small time before.

And that is the case over and over and over again, when public services are privatized, it costs government more and it costs citizens more. That's the situation with health care when health-care services are privatized, and it was also the situation in Australia with child care.

The other thing that happened, of course, when you're a private for-profit company, you need to make money. You owe a debt to your shareholders to make money. And so lobbying began of the regulator—the government—to reduce the red tape, reduce the regulation, make sure that they can maximize profit, and that, of course, had an effect on quality.

Those that promoted for-profit child care in Australia made many familiar arguments that I'm sure we'll hear today. They argued that there would be more spaces as a result. That did happen in Australia, but it doesn't—isn't the only way that you can create more spaces.

* (11:10)

They argued that there would be more choice for parents as a result. As we've seen, that did not happen. What happened was a monopoly ownership of child care that when it collapsed, sent the entire system in that country into collapse and required hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to bail it out.

They said privatized child care will reduce government expenditures. In fact, the amount of money that the government had to spend on child care doubled in eight years because of the need to ensure profit in those privatized systems.

They said that this would reduce parent fees. In fact, parent fees escalated because there was mostly one player offering child care and parents didn't have a lot of choice.

They said it would be better care, be higher quality care. But of course that wasn't what happened. There was pressure on government by the corporate sector to reduce the red tape and to reduce the regulation.

And when the system in Australia collapsed the other thing that is true is the Australian government didn't own the assets, they didn't own the buildings, they didn't own the equipment. All of those things were owned by a holding company of ABC Learning. So not only did they have to bail out the child-care centres, they had to buy back the assets that had previously been owned by not-for-profit organizations.

This is not the road that we want to head down in Manitoba. And so I hope that in the time we have in this debate that we can have a rational, reasoned debate. I believe firmly that the not-for-profit parent boards who are currently in charge of 95 per cent of

this province's daycare are the best ones to deliver daycare in the future, are the best ones to expand spaces. Do we need more child care? Absolutely. Are there things we can do to make it easier to set up child-care centres? Absolutely. But let us not destroy a system that for the most part is working well.

And I want to close by relaying a story about regulation and red tape. You know, often we hear from members opposite about the drive to reduce red tape. A few years back, the minister at the time, who's currently the Minister of Justice, introduced a policy that child-care centres should make sure their doors are locked and closed. And we heard no end of opposition from the opposition that this was horrible, it costs so much money, it was so unnecessary.

My child attends child care, and last year a woman tried to enter the child-care centre who was clearly mentally ill. And the only reason she didn't get in is because those doors were locked, and the children were led into the basement. And when my son came home that day and we had heard about it, of course, because the child-care centre let us know because that was the policy because it was required by red tape—when my son came home that day and I asked him how his day went the only thing he said to me is, mommy, we got to see the basement today.

And that's what I want for my child, and that's what I want for all of our children.

Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate many of the member's comments regarding the PMR that she has brought forward, certainly is well thought out and many of the comments that she has made certainly make a lot of sense. I really did kind of expect we were going to see the Australian example today because it is certainly a classic case of what not to do because it certainly—a monopoly was eventually the net result of the policies in place.

But comments about providing parents some choice certainly are relevant. Parents are, in fact, the parents of the child. The government does make decisions for them. The government does not make decisions for the child. You need that engagement from the parents right from square one because it really should continue through their whole process of education. And I know that there's certainly been some comments made in the past about the disengagement of parents in the—in their child's education process and I think that actually applies to some degree with child care as well, and it's not a

good thing. So we certainly need to engage the parents all the way along in the process.

We do know that we have a substantial waiting list, and I think—I thought I heard the member across acknowledge the fact that there is a waiting list and that we have yet to go a long way to deal with that waiting list. And certainly I hear all the time from parents that are on that waiting list looking for any alternatives that might be out there.

And I think it's—for many parents when they bring—make the decision to bring a child into the world, they think through a lot of the process, realizing that it's an obligation for them, lifelong obligation for them, and it is very important that they get things right. And I do believe that perhaps sometimes parents have not thought about all of the associated costs, and child care sometimes gets to be one of these associated costs, as is their education later in life, and you need to plan and it is an obligation that you make as a parent. You need to show some plan as to what your intention is to do and look for alternatives, and I believe that many parents can find some alternatives.

The not-for-profits are very valuable. We have never really said anything about taking them away. We actually indicated that we would continue support for them, not that the NDP have all heard that comment. In fact, they very quickly took that, the fact that we are interested in enhancing some forms of private child care, as a comment that we would privatize the whole thing. That is simply their interpretation of the facts. Spin doctors being what they are, they tend to overstate almost everything and certainly that's been the case here.

But we are interested, in particular, in looking at family-based child cares which, at one time, we had a substantial number of in this province. Now we have very, very few. And I think the members across know that and, yes, some of it is related to regulation, and no one's certainly doing—encouraging to do anything to take—reduce red tape that would provide a safety issue. But the fact is there is a lot of red tape in that business. And we have been through a consultation process and I have met with a number of private child cares, and red tape is an issue for many of them. Red tape is an issue also for the not-for-profits. We certainly hear from them that they feel they have a very large amount of red tape, some of which is valuable, some of which they certainly question the value of.

And red tape in any area is certainly something that we need to think through very carefully. If it's for a good purpose, if it provides safety factor, it's something that is certainly justified. If it's paperwork that will go and sit on someone else's desk and sit in a file drawer without any positive response, I really seriously wonder whether that's the case, and I can give you quite a few examples of red tape where it really just goes and sits and collects dust in the future and has not been interpreted or used in any way to make it valuable. So I think red tape that provides us with some form of documentation and shows trends and shows problems and is used for the information that it generates is valuable, but I don't see this happening in many of these cases. Really, what we're talking about is just moving paper around and generating someone else a little bit more work, which is not necessarily contributing to the child's care in the future.

Now, we certainly see a big demand with 12,000 families—children on the waiting list, which may or may not represent 12,000 families but certainly represents an awful lot of families. We hear repeatedly how people are frustrated, how they can't get back into the workforce, which is certainly something that has an economic impact across the province, but how they're concerned about the—their children and they're looking for alternatives. In some cases, they have the resources to perhaps contribute a little bit more towards child care, and that should be an option that's in place. But if there's no one out there to do that, you certainly—you're certainly limited in your options, so you basically have to wait for the not-for-profit to have available space.

And, particularly in some areas here in the city and in rural areas, the number of people that are available to serve on boards for not-for-profits, and the member opposite made reference to the fact that that's a challenge, and, in fact, that's a challenge everywhere, a comment you hear almost endlessly: We simply can't find people for our boards or if we do they're only coming to the odd meeting and they're really not contributing in a valuable way. They're not—and they certainly lose interest quickly as their children move through the system and into the rest of the education system, which I think is to be understood.

And many parents have indicated to us that they would look at the option of providing a for-profit small-scale in-house child-care option if there were some method or some programs to help them with the initial cost, which is quite substantial. As the

member knows, during their government's era-government time, in the last 16 years they really haven't changed that in any way. They've left it the same as it was way back then and so that we're really not moving forward. In fact, we continue to lose numbers in that area.

* (11:20)

So there certainly needs to be a careful examination of options on child care. I recognize it's very important to many families. I think most people are very supportive of the fact that when we build a school now there is child care in association with it. It makes a great deal of sense to everyone and has certainly becomes the focal point for the community. Your kids make a much smoother transition in that situation when they're familiar with the—at least a portion of the school and can—familiar with the school environments so that they can make that sort of soft landing when they go from child care to kindergarten and all the way through to school. It becomes much easier for them, and I think that that actually serves them well in their whole life. I hope we're going to see some results in terms of kids being more ready to go into school, because we're certainly struggling with that issue. And if we were so successful in that, would we be seeing the kind of results in terms of education results that we're seeing in the province where we're not progressing, we're actually moving backwards against the other provinces. So I think we have to do a serious evaluation as to how well this is working, both in this situation and others.

I do believe that the government's heart is certainly in the right place with their intentions, but I think they're a little bit blinded by their partisan view that only not-for-profits can work. We believe that a combination can certainly work to the best advantage here in Manitoba and we believe that it'll also free up some additional spaces to help deal with that 12,000 waiting list.

Now, we 'non't' think it'll take the whole waiting list, that would be foolish for us to believe that, but the Province, with their not-for-profits, despite the fact they have promised 5,000 additional spaces, have yet to deliver on that. And I'm not sure where they're planning on doing that. They keep announcing new initiatives, but somehow the numbers just don't seem to match up with their announcements. I don't know whether we're losing them somewhere else. I know we did lose some when they went with the K-to-3 class size; we lost

some in-school child-care facilities because they had to take the classrooms back. And certainly that didn't do anything to improve the numbers.

So, certainly, there are some alternatives out there. We believe that it's important that we look at these alternatives in the future. One model only doesn't seem to be the answer. Clearly, the member's example out of Australia is not the answer, but we're not suggesting that anyone would create a monopoly, that would be foolish, but we do see the need growing. We hear frequently from parents that are very frustrated that nothing happens, and, certainly, in some rural areas, we're seeing people so frustrated they're actually going out of province for child care, which you've got to really wonder how desperate they must be to drive for two hours, in some cases, to get their kids into a child-care facility in another province.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record. I do hope we have a civil debate about this and that it's not all about political rhetoric. Certainly, we have thought long and carefully about the options here and we believe that there is room for both models.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak about an issue that I am passionate about, but—and I do have some prepared notes here, but I just wanted to take a moment to highlight that the member opposite actually questioned the value of regulation and red tape, what he calls red tape, with regards to the safety of our children. I mean, it absolutely boggles the mind, especially in light of the very personal story that the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) shared with the House just before this, and it just absolutely really bothers me that the member opposite would suggest that this is something to—regulation is something to be eliminated or to leave in the hands of the private for-profit sector. It just absolutely boggles the mind. And I just really hope that, and I would never go so far as to suggest that anyone in this House has anything but the best intentions when it comes to the safety of our children, but this is just something that I just thought should be highlighted with, with regards to what he had to say.

I will take a step back, Mr. Speaker, and I did want to just share my own personal experience, as well, and as the member for Fort Rouge had mentioned, I'm also in the situation of having two very young children, preschool children, and, of

course, nobody warned me before I got into that, but it is—it's a lot of fun. It is also, as many in this Chamber know, it's a very challenging time and a time that parents spend a lot of time with their families and with their children and put a lot of emphasis on raising them to the best of their abilities.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, my commitment, first and foremost, has been to this Chamber and to my duty as a representative for my community, you know, as well as being a father. For my wife, she was able to take some time from her career, take a step back and be with our children and put in a focus there. And that's something that I genuinely appreciate and value so much, that she was willing and able to do that and to spend the time that she was with our children when they were very young. But I also recognize that she was interested in continuing on with her career and, as well, that we felt that there was some value in giving our children an experience in preschool or in daycare, giving them that opportunity to interact with other children, to get quality education from early childhood educators and really expand their horizons. So that was a choice that we made, and it's a choice that was—we were very comfortable with, but it wasn't easy to access the system and, you know, I think every member in this Chamber will—who knows anything about this issue will understand that this is a—it's not an easy—there is no easy solution and that there are certainly challenges with regards to access to the system.

So this is the situation we found ourselves in. Others in my peer group, and I have a great group of friends who are all kind of in the same stage of life and we all have young children, they have chosen other paths. Maybe they stay at home, maybe they've accessed the daycare system, maybe it's preschool. The point was is that, Mr. Speaker, they were able to make those choices and they were given that option.

You know, one of the very—one of the public policy issues in my life that's really gotten me going was in 2006 when I really got angry about a public policy when we had—we were on the cusp of a national child-care program, and it was absolutely eye-opening to me. And at that point, I didn't have kids, and I got to say, I wasn't—it wasn't even on the radar, but I did understand the value in giving families that opportunity. And to have lost that opportunity, you know, I felt it was once in a lifetime. Maybe it's coming once again, and fingers crossed with that regard because I know this is a-going to be a federal issue. But the idea that the

federal government would have an ideological bent towards a certain kind of delivery of service with regards to child care has really put the province in a really tough situation. We as a provincial government were ready to continue on: \$176-million agreement, an opportunity to build infrastructure, to do a lot of the things that we are doing now on our own but in a national context where we could be leaders in that. We could actually push the agenda and ensure that everyone across the country has the same access that we hope for all of our children. And it was just an—just—it actually made me angry, Mr. Speaker, that we came so close and that it was shot down.

You know, and I know there's a call for, you know, for us to—I mean, you know, we try—I try, at least, personally, not to be too partisan in this House. But it's very, very clear that when we see what the Leader of the Opposition has done, not just what he is now saying he's going to do and what the other members of this Chamber, I think, will, you know, follow lockstep behind with regards to privatization, but actually what he has done in the past, you know, where we actually had an opportunity when he sat around the Cabinet table in the 1990s when the federal government came to them at that point and eight provinces at that point expressed an interest to go forward with it and only Manitoba was the one that refused. He was part of that decision. He was at the Cabinet table or around the caucus table when the federal government decided to cancel the national child-care program. So this is a partisan issue in the sense that on this side of the House, we have a very clear vision and we have a clear record on investment and on prioritizing child care for people. And on the other side of the House, they have a very clear record of not supporting that initiative.

So it's just—I do want to focus on the positive and on what we've done, Mr. Speaker, with regards to child care, but I really do have to mention that this is a very clear divide in this House. And it does happen from time to time that we are very clearly divided on what we think are the best ways forward. Here on this side of the House, we've been very, very clear on moving the discussion, you know, towards supporting child care, and I would say that almost any member in this House, if they go out knocking on an—in an afternoon or in a morning any day of the week or in the evening, I can tell you, at least in my experience, I get this on the doorstep I would say at least one time every time I go out and knock on doors.

* (11:30)

And I'm, you know, it's very easy to say, well, this is an issue. You talk to a young mother who has young children, yes, she is going to talk about this. But that's, again, not what—not the only people that are interested in this issue, sometimes it's the grandparents, and, again, they have the experience of being in their family, sometimes it's a family friend or an aunt or an uncle who sees the pressures that are being put on a member of their family or their friends.

But I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, I would say that it's not just those people and it's actually broader than that. As I said, when I was young and I had no children and I was not thinking, at least in terms of the practical side of having children, that was not my focus at the time and this got me upset. I believe that there are—most people in our society understand the value of providing child care and see the value of supporting child-care workers, training them, offering the training that allows them to be proper early childhood educators.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've moved that conversation, we've walked the walk. We've got 14,300 more spaces, a hundred new facilities, a few of which are in my home constituency where people can see the actual benefit of these new centres, improved wages as I mentioned and a pension plan. We've tripled the training with regards to the funding for early childhood educators. And just the fact that we call them early childhood educators, it's like—it's a seismic shift in how we think about child care.

And I feel that this conversation has been shifted and that we are on the right track here in Manitoba. But it would be a mistake for us to believe that that trend will continue, and that focus will continue. Maybe people could have believed that, you know, a few months ago before the Leader of the Opposition made his intentions clear. But we now see so crystal clear where they're headed. We can see based on their record, we can see based on their words now, and, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that we should be going backwards on this issue. I think there's more work to be done. People understand when I talk to them on their doorstep they understand the challenges, they get it and they want to see improvements, and I agree with them. But to take a step backwards, to take the step towards privatization would be a mistake and it would be a step back and a step in the wrong direction.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak on this resolution and it's a resolution that's obviously is near and dear to many individuals in this House as they're in this Chamber's heart.

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the earlier speakers and to see what they had to say on this topic. I note, it was with interest I listened to the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) who brought forward the statement, or brought forward this resolution and she commented that we all know what happens when you privatize services, and she said that it costs governments more and it costs citizens more.

And I thought to myself, well, that's interesting coming—considering that the last Crown sold in the province of Manitoba was under today's NDP, and, in fact, that was 2012, Mr. Speaker, that the—that today's NDP decided to sell a Crown corporation for \$75 million.

And there's been some serious questions, Mr. Speaker, about the value that the government received for the sale of land titles. And I remember actually even reading at the time the union representing those workers, MGEU, was strongly opposed and were quite stunned that this government would go around and turn around and sell a Crown, an action that, again, the member for Fort Rouge just got up and stood in the public record and said will cost government more and cost citizens more.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're here and we're talking obviously about child care and the value of child care in the province of Manitoba. My son, who is just coming up on his 10th birthday, I remember when he arrived in 2005 and we attempted as a family to find, obviously, appropriate child care. And, you know, we're looking at various options, and my wife and I worked both in the downtown area, and we thought, you know, we would try to find some public child care for him in that area. Well, we made many, many calls, we made many, many visits, and, unfortunately, the waiting lists were insurmountable, to say the least.

And, in fact, I know that there's actually still over 12,000 families on the waiting list. And to sort of put the waiting list in perspective, I think it was when my son turned, I think, about five or six, we got a call from one of the public child-care providers that we had left our name with, and we'd assumed that our name would eventually fall off the list, but it hadn't, and they called us up to say that we now have

space for your child. And I'm like, well, our child is now about to enter grade 1, but thank you very much for the call, but we obviously don't—we don't need your services at this time.

But so, Mr. Speaker, we need to look towards, you know—so we looked at our own community, where we live in the constituency of Morris, and there are no options. There is no public child-care spaces, not one, anywhere where we live, so in-home daycare was the only option afforded to us.

And we were very, very fortunate to meet Debbie and her family, who were foster parents, Mr. Speaker, actually, and a critical component actually in the larger child and family services system, because they—not only were they foster parents but they provided emergency foster care and there are far too many—or far too few individuals that provide that kind of emergency care. In fact, I remember one incident in the middle of night they got a call and CFS workers asked if they would take a young infant who's—who was—had been—who had been seized, whose parents had only, instead of feeding the—providing you the breast milk or at least formula, the parents had—were providing coffee whitener as a drink for this infant. And not surprisingly, there were some health consequences with that.

But Debbie and her family took in our son, and then when our second child arrived a few years later, Mr. Speaker, again we were very fortunate that Debbie made room for that child because, again, there were no other options in our—the community where we choose to live and, in fact, where over 2,000 other individuals choose to live. And, again, our third child arrived, our youngest, who just celebrated her sixth birthday, and, again, we looked around at options. And, obviously, we were fully satisfied with the provision of care that our other two children were receiving, but, obviously, you want to take a look at all the options that are available to you.

And surprise, surprise, Mr. Speaker, there were no other options. There was, again, despite all the time that had elapsed in the 16 years under this current government's mandate, there are no public child-care options for any of the residents that live in my area. So, again, we were very, very fortunate to have an in-home daycare offer down the street, literally four, five houses down the street, wonderful care, wonderful people, and these individuals, Debbie and her family, left an indelible mark on our children. That they were there for many milestones

that we often think, as parents, are our milestones, but with Debbie and her family, they became our collective milestones, whether it was first words or first talking. In fact, I would imagine that Debbie rivalled us, my wife and I, in terms of the number of diapers changed and bottoms wiped.

Unfortunately, health concerns, some serious health concerns, resulted in her having to close down her daycare and move to the city of Winnipeg to be closer to the health-care services that she required on a far more regular and intensive basis, and she continues that fight. Unfortunately, it seems to be a losing fight, Mr. Speaker, but she continues to bravely face that.

So, again, we—our daycare is closing. We looked around the community for options and so we looked at those options when she closed. And so we chose—we found another local provider, Mr. Speaker, and had put our children in there.

* (11:40)

And then, of course, the—it was quite an issue within the community when the government came in and actually closed down that provider because according to the system they had, they were over the allotment of the number of children. This was a provider that had been there for well over 10 years and so at the time I sat on the community centre board and I remember a number of parents came and presented to us asking, are we in any position to provide any kind of service because this individual was a significant provider of services—of child-care services.

And I remember one individual, Mr. Speaker, she is a police officer with the Winnipeg Police Service, and she told us about how if we could only see first-hand the homes that she visits in as a police officer in the city, and she will go home—go to homes at 2 and 3 in the morning for a variety of reasons and she will see young children there in appalling conditions, she told us, and, of course, they are just simply left there in those conditions when they're done making their calls.

And she said, you know, and she found it quite shocking that she, as a police officer and she as a mother, had no—took no issue with the provision of child care that was afforded to her child, and yet the government said at the time, no, you can't have your child there, and yet the government on the same hand had no problem [*inaudible*] awful or seem—or in very

questionable situations during her role as a police officer, Mr. Speaker.

And so, again, Mr. Speaker, as a community centre we were able to actually come together very quickly and create a before and after program at our new community centre, and it helped fill at least part of that void, again, with those individuals for the before and after program.

And, you know, I will give the current member for Child and Family Services, the minister—and I've spoken to her a number of times, the La Salle KIDZ Inc. recently received I believe it was a two or three hundred thousand dollar grant from the Province for the creation of a pilot child-care space in La Salle, so maybe after it should be up sometime in 2016 or so.

But, of course, again, Mr. Speaker, the community needs to fundraise the other approximately 400 to 450 thousand dollars. So even in the members opposite, when they talk about their—about the public child-care system, and, again, I welcome it, it's going to be a great addition to the community but the community as well needs to have financial skin in the game.

So with those—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has elapsed for this matter.

Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I'd like to thank the member from Fort Rouge for bringing this forward.

I can't think of anything much more important to our province than affordable quality child care, Mr. Speaker, and I have to say personally I was, maybe naively, shocked when I read in the paper the member from Portage wanting to privatize child care. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised at all but I was.

But as I look at what happened from the Leader of the Opposition when they were last in government, I guess it shouldn't have been a surprise to me obviously. So I admit to feeling silly about having been shocked that they would want to do that to a system that we have worked so hard to continually move forward on and make better in every way.

So when the Leader of the Opposition was last in they actually eliminated the funding, Mr. Speaker, for the Manitoba Child Care Association. They cut \$8 million from child-care centres. Parents saw their child-care fees more than double as a result. So the

Leader of the Opposition has never supported a public system so I guess it was silly of me to have thought that perhaps that would be something where they would want to continue on if they were to get in.

I mean the federal—the member from Concordia spoke about the—how disheartening it was to come so close to a national child-care program that we know is desperately needed in our country. We need to have that national child-care program federally at the table. We need the federal government at the table for this, and we were so close. And to see, you know, the Conservative government come in—and I believe that the member, the leader opposite, would have been—in fact, refused the federal government's offer to set up a national child-care program back in 1996 when eight provinces expressed interest in the plan. Manitoba was, in fact, the only one, Mr. Speaker, that refused to be a part of that. So, anyway, I'm over the surprise now of their desire to do this in Manitoba.

I was surprised, again, I guess, by the member opposite, as the member from Concordia mentioned, the member from Portage talking about regulations for our children as if—as red tape, as something they need to get rid of. Well, I know that as a single mom, when my daughter was going to child care, I wanted to make sure that she was well. You worry all the time, Mr. Speaker, and you want to make sure that they're getting the best possible care, and our government has worked hard on those things to make sure that that happens. The member from Fort Rouge mentioned the change in making sure the door remains locked, that's incredibly important. Making sure that the people who work in early childhood centres are getting excellent training, that's incredibly important. That's because of regulations that those kinds of things occur. If we get rid of those things, our children will be the losers, that's for sure. And we know that those early years—more and more research comes out all the time on the incredible importance of what happens in those early childhood years and how it affects the children's brain development.

I'd like to just mention a couple of things that we're also doing that certainly won't be happening, Mr. Speaker, if there's a privatization of this child care. We're working to do—to ensure that we get intensive early childhood education into particular areas where that's needed. A great example of that is Lord Selkirk Park and the hub centre that is occurring there and—where the children are involved

in learning games, in conversational reading, in enriched child giving, language priority, and we have seen the numbers for those children in their test scores for being ready shoot up because of those kinds of programming. We know that that levels the playing field, that it improves outcomes for our vulnerable children and families, and that kind of programming has been proven to improve cognition, school-related outcomes, improved outcomes for parents and families, improved longer term outcomes for participants, reduced criminal activity, decreased teen parenting rates. Just in every area, it has proven to be excellent. You will not be seeing that under a privatized child-care system should they get in.

It was interesting because the member from Portage also mentioned the need for parents to be connected, and that's—with their children and while they're going to child care. And that's exactly what happens, Mr. Speaker, with non-profits is that they can be—I think the member from Fort Rouge has mentioned that they're even on the board—is that correct?—that the parent of her children—one of the parents of the children is on the board. That's what happens with non-profits. They can actually be on the board. They can work on the policy. You can't get much more connected. That is not going to be what happens under a privatized system.

It was also interesting to hear the member from Portage sound like he was dissing the reduction of class sizes and not mentioning that, as the member from Fort Rouge did mention, that we have a policy that in every new school built, child-care spaces are put in there. And as the member from Fort Rouge mentioned, we've heard from people all over what a visionary plan that is and how much they wish they had that same kind of thing happening, and you can be sure, Mr. Speaker, that's not going to be what's happening if the event—in the event that the Leader of the Opposition gets in and privatizes our child-care system.

* (11:50)

We have done so many things, Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of the time that we got in. We've doubled the spaces, for example, in child care. We established a child-care commission to look at ways to redesign our early child-care system to guide our future plans. We have launched a new five-year early learning and child-care plan, which will involve creating 5,000 more funded child-care spaces. We're investing \$25 million to build at least 20 new or expanded child-care centres in the schools,

like I mentioned, and another \$2.8 million per year to build child-care centres outside of schools, and as I—looking back, trying to think back to what the members opposite built when they were in—child-care spaces, and, I don't know, maybe my memory's failing me, I don't know, but I cannot remember them being builders of anything, and certainly not builders of child care.

In the recent 2015 budget, we didn't mention—or we announced that we're investing in 900 new child-care spaces, but some of the most important things that we've done, Mr. Speaker, is with regard to the wages and ensuring that the people working in child-care centres are getting an improved wage, because that's incredibly important to who's—people's willingness to stay and to build relationships with the children, and that's so important in providing excellent care.

And under a private system, Mr. Speaker, the goal is to make money. I mean, there's no question about it, that's why they're there. They're there to make money, and I want our child-care system to be there to ensure the very best for our children. So we want to make sure that that's what's happening all the time in our system, and I don't want to see that changed in Manitoba and I want to continue to ensure that Manitoba families are able to afford their child care and that the regulations stay in place, which it's clear it would not under the Leader of the Opposition.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk on this resolution and first of all to emphasize that there is a problem, a big problem with the way the current government is running child care. There are approximately 11,000 people, children, families, waiting to get daycare and early childhood education. This is not good enough. There should be a much better public system than this government is providing. It should make sure that there are enough spaces for those who need it. What is happening at the moment is that this government is falling far short of what's needed. There are severe economic consequences to this because people are not able to work, because when they want to work but can't work because they can't find child-care spaces, that hurts families, it hurts children, it hurts the economy.

There needs to be a much better public system which is what Liberals advance, but not the system that this government is advocating with

11,000 people, this huge long waiting list. Families and children not able to get care, daycare and early childhood education. The problem is that you've got mothers and children waiting, not a few days, not a few weeks, not a few months, sometimes a few years. I mean, this is not good enough. This is not a way to run an accessible child-care system. I even ran across a mother who had to send her child to Jamaica because there were no spaces here, you know.

You know, that is what is happening in this province. I was knocking on doors. It happened to be in a constituency where there is an NDP representative, an NDP MLA. So, you know, that's the issue, right? There wasn't child-care access to spaces. There was no other alternative for her but to send her child to be looked after and go to school in Jamaica where her grandmother was. And, you know, she had to work, and she did, and so did her husband. This was, you know, the only choice that they had.

That's the kind of system that we've got, where people have to go to extraordinary lengths if they want to work in this province, if they want to have their child in child care—11,000. And the problem is that the list has not been getting shorter; it's been getting longer. *[interjection]* It has been, you know, eight or nine thousand a few years ago, it's now on up to 11,000.

We vote against people who don't provide a system which works. This is the problem. You need to have the attention, the funding, the approach which makes sure that there's access to children, and it should be a public health-care system, a public child-care system, which is so important. I mean, the problem is that this government is just not delivering it.

And one of the things which happens when this government doesn't deliver is that it creates great pressure to have private child-care spaces because there aren't enough public child-care spaces. So this government is a major problem when it comes to child care in this province. And this government is just not doing the job that needs to be done. And that's something that this government needs to recognize, that they're falling far short of what children and families need in this province.

And the—*[interjection]* I want a public system. The problem is that you need to support a public system so that the children who need to go there and the families who need daycare and early childhood

education can get that support. Where we are now, 11,000 children short of where we need to be, that's a long, long way short. We should be doing much, much better and this government is letting us down.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up and put a few words on the record regarding today's NDP PMR.

I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, what those letters are actually standing for. It seems to me that they're starting to—the N is still the new, and the D is standing for deflect or delay: the new deflect or delay party.

Under the failed policies of the NDP, over 12,000 families have been stuck on child-care wait lists. A PC government will increase the number of child-care spaces available to reduce the wait lists perpetuated by this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we're paying far more and getting far less in this government—or in this province, and we know that Manitobans are tired of this NDP government and their broken promises, and they're all looking for a change. We're going to consult with child-care providers in the province and find ways to reduce barriers to create more flexible and accessible child-care spaces, including reducing the regulatory burden on all child-care providers.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in this House and I heard the member from Fort Rouge bring the private member's resolution to the floor today, she said that she's looking forward to a civil debate on the issue. And then we hear the member from Burrows, who's actually a minister now, stand up and try to filibuster this private member's resolution. And I'm not sure, maybe the whip, maybe their party whip hasn't exactly explained how this works to her, but I know as part of her—the class of 2011, the newly elected MLAs here, we know that—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), on a point of order.

Ms. Howard: I take from—point of—on a point of order, I take from the member for lac du boney's—Lac du Bonnet's (Mr. Ewasko) comments that he wants to see this come to a vote. And so I would certainly ask leave from the House that we continue to sit so he can complete his comments, and when it's done, that we allow this motion to come to a vote.

* (12:00)

Mr. Speaker: No further comment on the point of order?

The honourable member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) has raised a point of order but, in my view, didn't reflect on any particular breach of a rule on this matter, and so I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: And the hour being 12—and I also noted in the honourable member for Fort Rouge's comments, she did ask the House for leave to allow the House to continue sitting past the 12 hour recess point, to find out if the House is willing to have that continue.

And I'm asking the House, is there leave to allow this matter to continue past 12 noon to allow all members the opportunity to debate? Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Leave has been denied.

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

And the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) will have eight minutes remaining when this matter's again before the House.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 23, 2015

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 12—Support for a Strong Public Child Care System	
Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills			
Bill 213—The Seniors' Rights and Elder Abuse Protection Act		Howard	2085
Friesen	2075	Wishart	2087
Pettersen	2077	Wiebe	2089
Briese	2079	Martin	2091
Wiebe	2080	Wight	2093
Cullen	2082	Gerrard	2094
Saran	2083	Ewasko	2095
Wight	2084		

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>