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PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 301—The Salvation Army William and Catherine Booth College Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that Bill 301, The Salvation Army William and Catherine Booth College Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège William et Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: At the beginning, I'd like to acknowledge the presence, in the public gallery, of the president of Booth College, Dr. Don Burke and also the dean, Mr. David Neale, and we welcome them to the Manitoba Legislature this morning.

Booth College is, I believe, an outstanding learning institution in our city and currently they are changing their name to include the use of the term "university". In fact, to summarize this rather short bill, the purpose of it is to add the word "university" wherever the word "college" exists, and I'm sure that this will get unanimous consent in this House.

So the bill will amend the act by renaming it as the William and Catherine Booth University College. The use of the term "university" in William and Catherine Booth College's name recognizes that this college has been providing university level education to Manitobans since it was established in 1982, and

some people will have seen the billboards advertising Booth University College. So a little while ago the Booth College was given permission to advertise as a university college, and now we're making it official by putting it in their act.

This is a very important bill for Booth College. In fact, I don't think we can underestimate the importance of this bill to Booth College because it will be very beneficial to them in terms of attracting students. In some jurisdictions college has a different meaning than it does in other places, but by adding the word "university" it will be very clear to everyone, and in particular to perspective students, that they will, indeed, be attending a university, a post-secondary educational institution that will grant university degrees.

Now, they have been granting university degrees, but now it's official and in the sense that it's also in their name, which is very helpful for advertising purposes.

This decision was made because Booth has been operating and offering degrees in Manitoba since 1982, and Booth has the explicit mandate to offer university level programming in its incorporating legislation. Using the term "university" in advertising and promotion fairly represents the Legislative Assembly's intention when it passed the college's incorporation legislation and, as I said, this bill makes it official.

Booth is a high-quality institution deserving of this classification. The college serves an important role for Manitoba in that it is the sole degree granting institution for the Salvation Army in the world, and we're very proud of the fact that it is located in Winnipeg. It represents an important and unique feature of Manitoba's post-secondary system.

It was established by an act of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thereby receiving formal sanction of the government. Booth has received annual funding from the Council on Post-Secondary Education since 1998 and reports its enrolment, graduates and tuition fees to the council. The college is able to grant degrees in accordance with a degree granting framework established by The Degree Granting Act.

Booth has articulation agreements with the University of Winnipeg and is an approved teaching centre of the University of Manitoba. Upon graduating from Booth College students are eligible to be accepted into graduate programs at the University of Manitoba. In its legislation Booth states that one of its purposes and objectives is to promote and carry on the work of an educational institution providing university level education.

And I believe and the university—or Booth University College, as it will soon be known—believes that it will be easier for Booth to attract students, particularly out-of-province and international students, by changing their name, and this will help increase their enrolment. And, in fact, I believe that their billboard campaign helped to increase their enrolment by virtue of the fact that they were able to advertise that they are a university college.

Receiving accreditation as a certified university college signals an important recognition of Booth College's invaluable role as a Christian educational institution. Booth College has an important role in the community. At present, approximately 85 percent of its student body are Manitobans, and these students are benefiting from a university level education within a small learning environment. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves, explore their faith and assess global complexities through one-on-one relationships with professors and small classes, an ideal way to learn and one that is unique to Booth.

And in addition to 85 percent of the students being from Manitoba, many of the students from outside of Manitoba are international students and are learning by distance education.

I was sent an e-mail this morning by our Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford) who sent me Academia's top 10, and Booth College is No. 3 today in this top 10 list because of the act being amended today.

I would like to conclude by listing some of my association with Booth College and involvement there. I've had the pleasure of bringing greetings on behalf of the government and the Minister of Advanced Education at several of their convocation ceremonies, including one just a couple of weeks ago. I hosted a class by Ray Harris at the Legislature, and I was a guest at the class of Cathie Harris, not at Booth College but at the staff training college, which is affiliated with Booth College. And a number of

years ago, after I amended the bill, Booth College, very kindly honoured their legal counsel, Ray Taylor, and myself at a fall convocation.

* (10:10)

I've taken part in worship there, and I'm very pleased to have been involved with Booth College over the years for a number of reasons. They've been very hospitable and friendly to me and because they're a good educational institution.

And a final word—it would be a bit of a personal plug, I guess, but not wanting to miss an opportunity—there's a new course being introduced in the religious studies department in January 2011, Religion 395, Politics—no, pardon me, religion and politics, and I will be the instructor, and I'm looking forward to that. I think it'll be very exciting to be involved with Booth College students, and I'm hoping to teach the course in the Legislative Building, which I think will be an added attraction for students.

So with those few words on the record in support of this bill, we look forward to it going to committee and being approved so that Booth College can change their letterhead and change everything to reflect this bill, so that it will be a university college. And I'm sure that both opposition parties will be in support of this amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, prior to its passage, would like to put a few words on the record in terms of being in support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there are many different forms of education, and our society believes that the better educated we are, ultimately, the better we are going to be in a position to be able to move forward.

And one of the things that I often believe gets underestimated in terms of its importance and its contributions would be organizations such as the Salvation Army, who has done so many—so many—things over the years in making our society that much better. The establishment of Booth College and the contributions that Booth College has made over the years is immeasurable in terms of how it has had such a positive impact on the quality of education and the contributions that go from many of the graduates from Booth College.

I know and I have had discussions with individuals that have participated in Booth College, and I think what we have before us today in terms of

recognizing Booth College by adding in the word "university" will go a long way in terms of building on what is already a very strong foundation. It's a educational facility that has done Manitoba well over the years, and there is no reason to believe but be optimistic about the future of the Booth University College, in anticipation that we will see a greater participation, a greater recognition for the quality of education that is being provided at this particular institution.

So it is with pleasure that we see it here before us today, in anticipation that it will in fact be passing, and to let all those involved, all the stakeholders involved, in knowing that they do have the support—the unanimous support, I believe—of this Legislature in recognizing the efforts of this wonderful educational organization, and wish it the very best well into the future, Mr. Speaker, as I know it will do this Chamber and all Manitobans proud. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 301, The Salvation Army William and Catherine Booth College Incorporation Amendment Act.

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

Bill 302—The Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll now move on to second reading, Bill 302, The Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that Bill 302, The Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le « Southwood Golf and Country Club », be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Brick: At the outset, what I would like to do first of all is recognize Mr. Brian Macpherson, who is here representing the Southwood Golf and Country Club. And it's been my pleasure to work with Mr. Macpherson on this incorporation amendment act, and I would like to say it's been a pleasure, really, to

work with him. So thank you very much for being here today.

This bill proposes to amend The Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Act by making amendments to the club's corporate governance provisions including amendments relating to the issuance and redemption of shares. The previous incorporation act dates to 1956, which, Mr. Speaker, we know is over 40 years old, so it is time for, probably, some revisions to this act.

The Southwood Golf and Country Club is Manitoba's oldest golf course. It is currently well on its way into a large relocation project that will allow it to expand and take in more members. And, I'm pleased to say that it will be a part of my constituency in St. Norbert, and will be alongside one of our beautiful provincial parks, the St. Norbert Monastery park.

Under the current Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Act, the club is not able to issue shares unless they are paid in full ahead of time. Revised legislation includes two additional shareholder categories, with the same rights, privileges, restrictions and conditions as the shares of the two previously issued categories.

Mr. Speaker, when I take a look at this legislation, the revisions to this legislation, I notice that one of the main things it deals with is share capital, and how that share capital is able to be purchased, and also how it is able to be redeemed to an individual. There are, under this particular changes to the legislation, two new categories. Those categories will still have the same shares as the other categories did, and they will still be worth the same amount, but this does allow the golf and country club to expand its membership and it does allow it to have more flexibility.

This amendment also introduces a more modern concept of incorporation and it enables the club to better organize its shares. The limitation on the club's issuance and redemption of shares, was brought forward in the club's latest annual general meeting and I'm happy to say, it was passed with full agreement of all the members present.

Under the current Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Act, the club is unable to issue shares unless they are paid in full ahead of time. This has been restrictive and there is an interest in changing that so that individuals could purchase their shares in a time fashion if they so chose to do this.

This amendment introduces a more modern concept of incorporation. The amendment also deals with the powers and duties of the club in terms of how it governs its actions, and also how people are voted in, and it also deals with the ability of people who are estates to call back the shares, if they so wish, from the golf course. The amendments divide the club into 4,000 shares between four classes, all sharing the same rights, privileges and restrictions.

The Southwood Golf and Country Club was established in 1894 and, as I mentioned previously, Mr. Speaker, it's one of Manitoba's oldest golf courses and, I must say, one of Manitoba's most beautiful golf courses. It is a premier, private club in south Winnipeg with a long and distinguished history in the community. It is currently well on its way into a \$15-million project that will relocate it on to a 297 acre parcel of land at the west edge of St. Norbert. It's the first known complete move for a full-time golf course in Canada since 1961. The new expansion, along with the new incorporation act, will ensure the Southwood Golf and Country Club is able to respond to the needs of its members and continue in its long tradition of excellence.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that it's really been my pleasure to bring forward this amendment act on behalf of Southwood Golf and Country Club, and it's been my pleasure to work with them over the last couple of years as they moved forward with their project in St. Norbert.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to speak briefly to indicate our support, from the Manitoba Liberal Party, for this initiative. We wish the members of the Southwood Golf and Country Club all the best in their relocation and hope that there will be many, many years of happy golfing in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading, Bill 302, The Southwood Golf and Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act.

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

Okay, we'll go to second readings of public bills.

* (10:20)

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll go to second readings of public bills.

Bill 219—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Harassment and Violence in the Workplace)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I believe if you canvass the House, there'd be leave to move straight to Bill 219.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to go directly to Bill 219? *[Agreed]*

Okay, we'll call second reading, Bill 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Harassment and Violence in the Workplace).

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 219, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Harassment and Violence in the Workplace); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité et l'hygiène du travail (harcèlement et violence dans le lieu de travail), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk to Bill 219, The Workplace Health—Safety and Health Amendment Act. It is a measure which reflects the fact that we in the Liberal Party have been working for quite a number of years to get legislation in Manitoba which deals more effectively with harassment, bullying, violence in the workplace than we have at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced in March 9th, 2006, a bill to address workplace safety and workplace bullying, workplace harassment. And when we introduced it at that time, the NDP said, we already have regulations that deal with harassment in the workplace. Indeed, the highbrow, snobbish NDP said, shame on the Liberals for introducing this piece of legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the number of years since then, we have a—had a steady stream of people coming in to our office and who have talked with us about continuing problems with harassment in the workplace, under the NDP. We need this legislation to protect workers, we need this legislation to improve the workplace and so we are—continue to work on this legislation. We have looked at what has happened in Saskatchewan, at a bill in Ontario, we

see that there has been significant progress in Saskatchewan. Indeed, we have looked at jurisdictions around the world.

And the result is a much revised bill from the one we originally presented in 2006. Indeed, I think members would agree that Bill 219 is, in fact, by far, the most comprehensive bill targeting harassment, violence and domestic violence in the workplace in Canada.

Manitoba right now is behind other jurisdictions, and workers and employers deserve better. There is significant problems in Manitoba, as we are seeing day by day. Unfortunately, the stories for most people who have experienced bullying in the workplace are not ones that they are ready to rush to talk about publicly because it's not been a good experience. And yet it is important to bring this issue forward.

Thankfully, a year or so ago, there was some significant attention in the media about this issue and the need for considerable improvement over what we have today in Manitoba under the NDP. And that has generated some renewed impetus to have changes here in Manitoba. It is estimated that up to 40 percent of workers may have been victimized by bullying or harassment at some time in their working careers. Most of the targets, approximately 60 percent, are women. Nearly half of all those who are victims of workplace bullying suffer stress-related health problems. And of the workplace bullying harassment, only about 20 percent is based on illegal discrimination. And, therefore, only about one in five cases can be dealt with as human rights complaints.

The fact is that about 70 percent of people targeted by a bully end up leaving their workplace, about a third for health reasons and a little more than a third because they were victims of a performance appraisal that was manipulated to show that they were incompetent. It is tragic when people who have been bullied suffer such severe consequences in the workplace, such mistreatment and the loss of a job. And that is the situation that we are trying, as Liberals, to stand up for—the situation that we are trying to change.

Let's look at some of the health problems that will arise and that do arise from bullying: stress, severe anxiety, sleep disruption, loss of concentration, post-traumatic stress disorder, clinical depression, panic attacks. These can lead to heart disease—stress-related heart disease, more

susceptibility to infections, problems with headaches, migraines, sleeplessness, exhaustion, perhaps conditions like irritable bowel syndrome, irritability and fearfulness. We wouldn't wish these problems on anybody who's tried to do—on anybody, let alone those who have tried to do a good job in their workplace and have been mistreated by—as a result of workplace bullying and harassment. There are serious economic costs of workplace bullying on both the victims and the employers: the lost productivity, the increased absenteeism, the lost earnings, workers' compensation, disability insurance, decreased employee morale, turnover in recruitment is higher, the costs of interviewing and of hiring, problems of strained relations among co-workers, higher company and government health expenses and potential liability issues.

So that is the reason that we have brought this bill forward, is we want to improve health. We want to improve the workplace environment and we see that there is a need. There is a need to help people in the workplace to improve the quality and the environment of the workplace. There is a need for business reasons, because the cost to employers is high, estimated to be in the millions of dollars, probably the tens of millions of dollars a year in Manitoba. So those are the reasons we are bringing this legislation forward.

As I said, what this legislation does is to build on the legislation which has been put forward around the world to provide a—an optimum way of dealing with bullying in the workplace, so that these issues can be resolved in a much better way than they have in the past, and that we will have less bullying in the workplace. And I believe that this decrease in bullying in the workplace will help us in decreasing bullying in other areas, including in our schools, because we will change the culture in Manitoba and have less overall bullying.

* (10:30)

One of the noteworthy aspects of this bill, I should add, is that it also talks about domestic violence and helps in a number of ways to address domestic violence issues as they impact the workplace and so, in that way, it brings forward another issue, that in dealing with it in a workplace context and emphasizing measures that can be taken in a workplace context to decrease domestic violence, that we can also have a positive impact on society in general, as well as in the workplace. And I

think the members around the Legislature would agree on the importance of efforts to reduce domestic violence in Manitoba. Thank you.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): It's my privilege today to stand and put a few remarks on the record about what we currently have in place to protect Manitoba workers from harassment and violence in the workplace and some of our plans to strengthen those provisions.

Regulations to protect Manitoba workers from harassment and violence in the workplace came into effect in February 2007. Those were developed after extensive consultation throughout the Minister's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health where we have representation from workers, employers, as well as professional and technical associations.

Those changes expanded upon working-alone protection that has been in place for many years and helped to provide a greater measure of safety for workers by helping to protect them from violence and harassment.

And I think it's important at this point to just explain for the House the way that we go about developing regulations in safety and health in Workplace Safety and Health. I think our government has a good record, a proud record of working together with business and labour when we look at regulations affecting the workplace, whether that be Workplace Safety and Health or the Employment Standards Code.

I think what we have found that although it may take more time to work in that way and to develop a consensus approach, it does lead to better regulations, I believe, and I think it also leads to regulations that are easier to enforce because we have developed that buy-in among the people who will be living by them in the process of developing them.

In addition to the changes that came into effect in February 2007, we have been working with business and labour on strengthening existing harassment and violence regulations to include psychological harassment. This has been an issue that has been raised with us. I think the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) explained the issue that has been raised with him. And so we are interested in how we can strengthen the existing provisions to make sure that there are also protections from psychological harassment.

I want to just explain a little bit about how the existing regulation—the regulatory system works and what it requires of employers. Then I think the other thing to note is that it is the way of Workplace Safety and Health to really put the onus on employers to develop policies and procedures, to work with Workplace Safety and Health committees in the workplace between employees and employers to help develop those procedures, to make sure that those procedures are in place and those policies are in place.

We really try to emphasize the responsibility of employers to ensure that their workplaces are safe and then, of course, we monitor and enforce those provisions through our Workplace Safety and Health officers. This legislation, as it's written, changes that approach somewhat to take some of the responsibility away from employers, which I think is not the direction that we certainly want to go in.

So the way that the current requirements for harassment and violence prevention work under Workplace Safety and Health legislation, employers have to develop a policy that ensures workers are not subjected to harassment from co-workers or others. That policy has to include a process for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints, and employers have to take corrective action towards any person under the employer's direction who subjects a worker to harassment.

The current regulation is consistent with the Human Rights Code in defining harassment in terms of any objectionable conduct, comment or display that is directed at a worker in a workplace, is made on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, age and ancestry or other factors and creates a risk to the health of an employee. And, as I stated, we are currently looking at ways to expand that regulation to include psychological harassment as well.

In terms of violence prevention in the workplace, this is also an issue that has been raised most recently by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and we will be working with them on things that we can do to strengthen the employer's obligation to violence prevention and looking at things that are not maybe necessarily regulatory. There are often things that we can do in workplaces, model behaviour that we can look at in different workplaces and talk to other workplaces about that they can adopt that can help effect a safer workplace.

In terms of violence prevention under the Workplace Safety and Health regulations, employers have to identify and assess the risk of violence in the workplace, and they have to inform workers of the nature and extent of that risk. They also have to develop a policy to eliminate or reduce the risk of violence, including a process for training workers and reporting and investigating incidents.

The legislation also mandates them to take corrective action towards any person under the employer's direction who subjects a worker to violence. In terms of compliance and enforcement of those regulations, employers who fail to comply with the violence or harassment prevention requirements may be issued an improvement order by Workplace Safety and Health officer to develop and implement effective prevention policies for the workplace.

And I will just take a moment to add, Mr. Speaker, that in this latest budget we added additional resources to hire additional officers to inspect workplaces under the Workplace Safety and Health regulations, an additional five officers which will bring to 20 those that we will have provided funding for since 2007. And in fact, since 1999 we've more than doubled the number of inspectors under Workplace Safety and Health regulations. And I would just remind members opposite who introduced this legislation, that they just finished voting against that very budget that increased the funding for compliance and enforcement of Workplace Safety and Health legislation.

So far be it for me to insist on consistency, but it is interesting to me that two weeks ago you can vote against a budget that puts in place more resources for Workplace Safety and Health, and then stand in this House and insist on increased regulations that you don't believe there should be enforcement provisions for.

Additionally, on the issue of domestic violence which the member has spoken about, this is an issue, of course, that I'm very concerned about and interested in, and am very interested in taking a closer look at some of the legislation that's been put in place in other jurisdictions on this issue.

One of our concerns, always, on domestic violence, is how we protect the confidentiality and privacy of victims as we put in place services to help them and protect them. We don't want to revictimize people by insisting that they disclose their victimization of domestic violence in the workplace. We certainly wouldn't want to see a situation like

that so we have to be cautious as we move forward that we don't jeopardize the confidentiality of those victims.

We have taken action working with Family Services on the Workplace Initiative to Support Employees on family violence, otherwise known as WISE. And that program is really groundbreaking in that it takes information on the signs of domestic violence and the proper way to deal with issues of domestic violence right to the workplace, talks to supervisors and managers, as well as co-workers, about what to look for in their co-workers, what to do when a woman discloses to you that she's been a victim of domestic violence.

And it's very important that people have that information because often, Mr. Speaker, a victim will disclose, perhaps only once, and it takes a tremendous amount of courage for her to come forward with that information. And so it's very dependent on how the person hears that, and what they do with that, what her next steps might be.

But we will take—I will definitely want to the member to know that we'll take a further look at what he's suggesting in terms of domestic violence and see what more we could be doing to help those people that are victims of that in the workplace.

On Workplace Safety and Health also, Mr. Speaker, I want to note for the House, that this is NAOSH—this is NAOSH week, North American Operational Safety and Health Week. And I spoke yesterday to people very much involved in creating safer workplaces. We have since 19—since 2000 experienced a 30 percent reduction in the injury rate in Manitoba. And that's been done, of course, with the good work of employers and employees, as well as our Workplace Safety and Health inspectors.

In fact, in 10 years we've seen inspections go from 1,600 a year to 10,000 a year. When we came into office, Mr. Speaker, there were whole industries that believed that they weren't subject to Workplace Safety and Health rules because they'd never seen an inspector.

So I think there has been tremendous progress made in Manitoba. We have a ways to go. I welcome the interest from the opposition in strengthening Workplace Safety and Health. I only hope that in future budgets, where we increase the resources for that, we'll see additional support from the opposition. Thank you.

*(10:40)

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Harassment and Violence in the Workplace), Bill 219, provides workers with a right to a workplace free of harassment and violence. And Bill 219 defines workplace related harassment and violence and requires employers to take a number of steps to prevent and address workplace related harassment and violence. And the bill also requires employers to take precautions to protect workers from domestic violence if the employer is, or should be, aware of domestic violence occurring.

The bill appears to be an attempt to legislate compassion and common sense. Mr. Speaker, the last part of it, the common sense part, I wish there was something that we could do to legislate some common sense. Having been an employer for a number of years and hired a number of people, I always wished that, in some way, I could instil that element of common sense. And especially in some of the younger people, and we all needed to start work at some point in our lives. But if a person could instil that common sense into a person. Some, of course, have more common sense than others. But it would be something that would be great that we could do, because I think that's really where the majority of our safety issues start, where people just are not thinking and thinking clearly.

Bill 219 is well intentioned. Workplace violence and harassment are serious issues. It can affect the person's well-being, not only at work, but can extend to the private life and can add some real stress to the individual. And I think we would all, in this Legislature, know of people who have been harassed in their workplace or wherever they are at, whether it's domestic, and this is something that carries on, and you can see that within the family as well, and it causes undue stress on the individuals.

There's no doubt that every worker should have the right to a workplace and a home that is free of harassment and violence. And I know, too, that when they're under stress of that nature, this can add to some real health issues in the reasons for people being absent from their workplace. And, again, as I say, I believe that we've all known of people who have been subjected to that, and we could give instances of where this has actually taken place.

There are other steps that the Province could take to address workplace conditions and harassment and violence. In Manitoba and, again, as we—I

shouldn't use the word celebrated, but as we remembered workplace accidents and those who lost their life—we did this last week, in the walk from the Union Station to the Legislature here. This was something that we do on an annual basis. And so it's something that no one wants to see—where anyone is injury—injured, rather—or where anyone loses their life when they are in the workplace.

If this NDP government was serious about eliminating domestic violence, it would have supported Bill 221. That was The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Act that was introduced by the MLA for Charleswood and debated in April 29th of 2010. Unfortunately, the government was unable to put aside their partisan politics, and so the issue is back again.

A committee of experts to review domestic violence deaths in Manitoba is necessary. And this idea was first put forward by Dr. Jane Ursel, someone with whom members opposite should be familiar. Dr. Ursel is the director of the RESOLVE family violence research centre at the University of Manitoba. As indicated, I think most of the members opposite would recognize or remember that name.

She first made the suggestion back in 2008, after the death of Shannon Scromeda, a 25-year-old mother who was murdered by her boyfriend in their home. Ms. Scromeda's killer used a hammer to murder her, and she died of blunt force trauma.

This committee and its expertise are needed in Manitoba. Statistics Canada found, a few years ago, that women—Manitoba women are at a higher risk of being murdered by their male partner than women in any other province. And recent events across Canada that even the families who took—who look the happiest from the outside may have problems that no one is aware of.

And, again, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that all of us know people who this is true and, in fact, I can indicate, and I won't mention any names, of course, but my wife right now is counselling with a family where this has taken place. And when you look at it from the outside, you would think that everything appeared to be normal. It is sad. It is tragic that these kinds of things are taking place. And it's—no one specific's laid to blame, other than there are two people involved in this, and they cannot see and come to a resolution of the differences that they have, and so it's creating tremendous trauma on the family.

A committee that this bill would establish would, as per Dr. Ursel's recommendation, review the circumstances surrounding all domestic murders to identify trends, risk factors and patterns. This would help prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future because it could identify issues that lead to abuse. The committee would also be able to identify gaps in resources and make recommendations to help prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future.

We owe it to the families to pay attention. Ending domestic violence is about paying attention to details, to signs. And, I think, again, as I indicated, for those of us who are aware of this, you need to find signs that are actually leading towards the violence that's taking place. When it's too late and we've missed the details, we owe it to the victims of domestic violence to examine their story and what we may have missed before tragedy struck. That's what this committee would do. It would be able to identify the signs that domestic violence is happening and provide opportunities for educating the public.

Reviewing all deaths resulting from domestic violence is the least that we can do for victims and their families. If we can learn something that can help prevent other deaths in similar circumstances, we ought to seek out that information.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that all of us in this Chamber here really believe that we need to do everything possible and within our grasp to be able to put an end to this.

With those few comments, thank you.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 19 that is being proposed by the Leader of the Liberal Party.

I'd like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Howard), for her comments in regards to the very significant work that has been done in Workplace Safety and Health in this—over the course of our mandate as a government, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the Honourable Becky Barrett, who was our first Minister of Labour and Immigration, who did a lot of work in this area, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, when we first became elected in 1999, there was no culture of workplace health and safety in this province. Quite frankly, that whole area had been ignored by the previous

government, and it took our government to tackle this very, very important work that needed to be done so that we could, quite frankly, get into the Canadian mainstream.

I'd like to also thank some of the champions of workplace health and safety. I'd like to thank Bill and Cindy Skanderberg, who lost their son Michael. He was working as an electrician helper and he was in a school in rural Manitoba and he was untrained. He was unsupervised and he ended up losing his life, Mr. Speaker, because he ended up working on voltage in a Xerox room, which he wasn't aware of, and, unfortunately, they lost their 19-year-old son to a workplace accident. And they have been champions in regards to advocating for Workplace Safety and Health legislation first.

I still recall Cindy Skanderberg speaking at the Legislature in 2002 when the previous minister passed this legislation, and they have been champions here in Manitoba in regards to all of the changes that have taken place over the course of the last 11 years. They have a long-standing relationship with the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow, and I'd like to thank that organization for the work that they have done here in Manitoba in educating young workers about the risks that they face every day when they go to work. Because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that's really where we have to focus our work in regards to protecting young people from some of the serious things that can happen to them in the workplace.

* (10:50)

So I'd just like to thank, once again, Bill and Cindy for all of the work that they have done. Passing that legislation was the basis for us to have a framework here in Manitoba so that we can begin the long and arduous process of changing the Workplace Safety and Health regulations here in Manitoba so that we could have safer workplaces, and I also want to thank, Mr. Speaker, the employers here in Manitoba that have, you know, quite frankly, they've come a long way in regards to accepting the changes that we have implemented.

They've become our partners in workplace safety and health. You look at the Heavy Construction Association; they now have a person that is totally dedicated to working, Mr. Speaker, with employers in the heavy construction industry, which we all know is one of the serious areas where lots of these accidents occur. And they have really come a long way and been partners with us in regards to changing the culture and making our workplaces safer and

they really have come a long way and we continue to work with them on a daily basis.

The regulations came into effect in 2007 after five years of consultation and they were the size of a phone book when they finally came out, but they were important regulations and the consultation was absolutely critical because we had a Workplace Safety and Health advisory committee that had all of the stakeholders on it, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank them for their work in regards to helping us pass—doing all the work on the consultation and helping us pass regulations that really met the needs of everyone in our province in the industry. Those members represent workers, employers and professional and technical associations and experts all across Manitoba and their work really was incredible in regards to providing protections and putting measures in place that would provide us with a safer and a healthier province.

And, you know, I know that the MLA for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has heard me be critical before about this very important issue, but I believe that consultation with our stakeholders is absolutely critical, particularly around these kinds of initiatives and this kind of legislation, and I am concerned about this legislation because I do not believe that there has been the appropriate consultation with the stakeholders.

In fact, I know that the Manitoba Employers Council—I've had a couple of individuals from that council talk to me, Mr. Speaker, about this particular legislation and what is it all about and really wanting to know exactly, you know, whether or not it's needed and if it isn't a duplication of what is already in place. So I would ask the MLA for River Heights, once again, to take the opportunity to do the proper due diligence and the proper consultation with our stakeholders here in the province of Manitoba because we've really changed the culture here in Manitoba and working with all of our partners is absolutely critical because this is a very—this can be very, very contentious and we've come a very, very long way in regards to changing the province and making it a healthier place not just for workers, but if our workers are not getting injured on the job, it's better for employers as well because it keeps their costs of doing business down and creates a better workplace.

So, once again, I'd just like to ask the MLA for River Heights if he wouldn't mind just taking some

time and consulting with the employer stakeholders in our community about his legislation to make sure that it is definitely needed.

Changing the culture, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba has been a long process. It's been a strategy. First of all, it was the legislation in 2002, then it was the Workplace Safety and Health regulations in 2007, but it was also putting resources in place so that we could implement those regulations and implement the legislation, and those resources revolve around our workplace safety and health officers that have increased dramatically since we passed this legislation. And it's not just about workplace safety and health officers, it's about inspections and I'm pleased to say that, since 1999, we've increased inspections from 1,600 inspections in 1999 to over 10,000 inspections last year.

And I'd like to thank the Workplace Safety and Health officers for the work that they do in workplaces when they go in and they work with those employers to bring them into compliance in regards to what is happening in the workplace.

And, of course, the other thing that we did was we implemented fines. In '09—in December '09, we made an amendment to Bill 4, and we substantially increased the maximum fines for workplace safety violations to \$250,000 for a first offence and \$500,000 for a second or subsequent offence. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation better reflects the serious nature of violating the laws that we have here in place in Manitoba.

And, once again, I would like to thank the Minister's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health because they approved these changes being made and these fines being implemented, and there are employers, Mr. Speaker, on that council, and I want to thank them for taking seriously the nature of workplace safety and health incidents in workplaces, and I'd like to thank them for working with us.

And I find it interesting that the MLA for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) stood up today in this House and spoke in favour of this legislation. I recall that he voted against our legislation in 2002. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that they've come a long way; they've come a long way with everybody else. They've come a long way since 2002, and, you know, they now understand how important this is. And I'm thanking him for his speech. I'm thanking him for his interest.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would like to pick up on a couple of points the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) has talked about. I understand that maybe she hasn't really read the bill and understands what it is that this bill is proposing to do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of her time was spent in terms of the working environment and minimizing workplace injuries along with patting her government, former ministers, in terms of a job well done. Well, I would have appreciated the Minister of Education sticking more so to the topic and what this bill is actually proposing to do.

Bill 219 imposes duties upon the employers: (1) to ensure as far as reasonably practical that the workers are not exposed to workplace harassment, violence or domestic violence; (2) prepare a written policy respecting workplace related harassment and violence and review of policy once per year; (3) assess the risk of workplace violence; (4) to adequate—to take adequate steps to stop harassment and violence; (5) take precaution to prevent display of domestic violence from distressing their employees; (6) in certain cases, employees must post the policies and have a program to investigate and deal with incidents, complaints and threats of harassment and violence.

Mr. Speaker, the government needs to be aware that there is a need for legislation of this nature in terms of being able to allow for employees to be able to work in an environment in which they are comfortable to be in.

In terms of consultation, this is just a word that the minister uses in order to procrastinate actually recognizing a good idea. This is a good idea. There has been a great deal of consultation. We have been talking with many workers, Mr. Speaker, and if I had the time I would provide some of the detailed examples. Maybe then the Minister of Education and the current minister would get a better idea in terms of just how sensitive and how important this particular issue is before hundreds if not thousands of Manitoba employees.

I'm going to stop talking now because I would like to see this bill pass into committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): I find it interesting, this flashes back to the discussions of last

Thursday, and the discussion around actions speaking louder than words and, again, we have another example of words as opposed to a decade of action.

I would like to thank the previous ministers responsible for the Status of Women and involved with labour and immigration and workplace safety for the work that they have done, including the current member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) and the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) because, again, we've got a decade of action—

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

* (11:00)

The hour now being 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions.

House Business

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

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker, I would seek leave to introduce our private member's resolution for next Thursday, May 13th.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable have leave to introduce the resolution for next week? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Hawranik: In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered on Thursday, May the 13th, 2010, is the resolution on Making Alternative Health Practices more accessible, sponsored by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou).

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with rule 31(9), it's been announced that the private member's resolution that'll be considered next Thursday, May 13th, 2010, is the resolution on Making Alternative Health Practices more accessible, sponsored by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 6—International Nurse Recruitment

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will now deal with the resolution, and we'll deal with the Resolution No. 6, International Nurse Recruitment.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady),

WHEREAS between 1992 and 1999 Manitoba saw a net loss of 1,573 nurses, according to the Manitoba nurses' colleges; and

WHEREAS there has been a net increase of 2,532 nurses since 1999, according to Manitoba's nursing colleges; and

WHEREAS rural and northern Manitoba has seen a net gain of nurses since 2000; and

WHEREAS there have been an additional 124 nurse training seats added since 2007; and

WHEREAS there is still a need for more nurses in Manitoba, particularly in rural Manitoba; and

WHEREAS a key component of the Manitoba Nursing Strategy is the recruitment and retention of nurses; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has recently completed a successful recruitment mission in the Philippines, recruiting more than the targeted 100 nurses to over 20 communities in the Brandon, Assiniboine, Central and Parkland regional health authorities that need them the most; and

WHEREAS the Province and the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba are ensuring that all internationally recruited nurses are qualified and capable to practise in Canada.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba welcome the new nurses relocating to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Brandon East, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park,

WHEREAS between—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Caldwell: It's a privilege to rise in the House to speak briefly on this private member's resolution.

Mr. Speaker, there are few areas of government more important than the provision of health-care services to the people of the province of Manitoba. In fact, arguably and, in fact, economically, in terms of the fiscal resources expended, health care is the top—undisputed top priority of this government and

health care is the top priority of the citizenry of this province. People in Manitoba expect, quite rightly, that we provide stewardship for the health-care services that are provided to them. And this includes, not only important capital investments, of which we've seen so much of in my home constituency of Brandon East over the last decade, but also it speaks to the human resource need. And we're very, very lucky in this province, we're very fortunate in this province to have such diversity.

The Philippine community in Winnipeg is one of long-standing and great prominence and, speaking as the Brandon MLA, I'm just so thrilled to see that community expanding its presence in Brandon through the professional recruitment, in this case, of nurses. Mr. Speaker, those of us who have been in the—had occasion to experience in our own personal situation the health-care system in this province over the last couple of years will see a huge diversity in the professional components of those staffing our health-care facilities. It's—I know that Philippine nurses are present in my part of the province, in many of the health regions, and certainly in the city of Winnipeg.

And we ought to, I think, as legislators, celebrate the fact that people and families are choosing to make Manitoba home and that, in this case, those who are choosing to make Manitoba home are very, very much needed and respected and—in our health-care system, and working in our health-care system.

Mr. Speaker, nurse recruitment, more broadly speaking, is a top priority and a high priority for the Province of Manitoba and our health-care system, as is recruitment of other health-care professionals and the training of doctors. Our government has identified a very real need for increased nurses in northern and rural Manitoba.

We are addressing this need very aggressively through international nurse recruitment efforts and, as I said, this is particularly the case with the Philippines. The provincial government has recently completed a successful recruitment mission to the Philippines which far exceeded our targets and we've recently recruited over 120 new nurses to work in Manitoba from that recruitment mission. These new nurses, as I said, Mr. Speaker, will deliver much needed health-care services in over 20 communities in Brandon, the Assiniboine, the Central and the Parkland regional health authorities; the Province and the College of Registered Nurses has ensured

that these nurses are all qualified and capable to practise in Canada.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, those of us who have been in the health-care system at all, recently, have seen that presence in the emergency rooms of our hospitals. You know, we've supported over 600 nurses from out of country to move to Manitoba with the support of a relocation assistance grant as well, to give further support to these new Manitobans coming to our province.

In addition to the Philippines and other parts of Asia, Mr. Speaker, nurses have come to Manitoba from Africa, from Australia, from the United Kingdom, from Brazil, from the Caribbean, the United States and, of course, from Europe.

In June 2008, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) announced this—an increased offshore nursing recruitment initiative to the Philippines, and Mr. Speaker, some of the fruit of that initiative has been delivered to Manitoba with the 120 nurses that came in the last year.

Part of the—these are overly complex international labour undertakings, Mr. Speaker and the partnership that was involved, and I think it's reasonable to commend the folks in the partnership to ensure that this sort of transition of people from the Philippines, in this case, to Manitoba, took place was a very innovative partnership between the departments of Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and Manitoba's regional health authorities to develop a framework for the ongoing treatment—ongoing ethical and safe recruitment of internationally educated nurses.

Mr. Speaker, the pilot recruitment initiative took place in November of 2008 and of the 120 nurses that came to Manitoba as part of that initiative, 116 of those 121 have already passed their examinations and, in fact, are practising. Upon arrival in the province, all of the nurses participated in a settlement orientation program to assist them in their transition to our country. The nurses also participated in lengthy workplace orientations which included worksite mentorship and classroom instruction. Nurses were also provided with assistance to study for their certification exam. The Province provided the nurses with free tutoring sessions and exam preparation workshops in preparation of their transition into the workplace in Manitoba.

* (11:10)

In Brandon, Mr. Speaker, in addition to our work to increase nurse graduation rates in the province and in our community colleges, we were allocated 20 Filipino nurses. And as I said, in Brandon, that, you know, relatively small community—the Philippine community is very large and prominent in the city of Winnipeg. In Brandon, it's starting to grow with this immigration to my home community. And I'm very, very much looking forward to an increased Filipino presence in Brandon—in fact, in Manitoba. Because I think it contributes greatly to the fabric of our life in the province and, certainly, I'm looking forward to that sort of benefit becoming more apparent in Brandon as families relocate from the Philippines to Brandon.

The government recruitment of nurses to Brandon and other rural areas, Mr. Speaker, not only helps the RHAs but the nurses themselves. Trisha Depaynos, who left the Philippines six months ago for Brandon, says she intends to stay long term in Brandon, which, in her words, have welcomed her with open arms. It was reported in the *Winnipeg Sun* in December, Ms. Depaynos said the people are very nice; they helped us, especially when we were first moving in; the opportunity to work in another country will definitely help my family.

I mean, this is so gratifying to see Brandon being praised in this manner by new Manitobans and new Canadians. And I think this resolution is well worthy of support to celebrate this not only new presence in the fabric of our province, in terms of social and cultural life, but also our work on increasing health-care excellence and enhancing health-care excellence in the province of Manitoba.

As I began my remarks, saying health care is our top priority, and we continue to work as a government, hard each and every day, to improve health-care services for all Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand and put a few words on the record today about this resolution. And while we can be supportive of the last statement within the resolution, in recognizing and acknowledging internationally trained nurses, there are other aspects of that resolution that I don't think accurately reflect the whole picture of nursing in Manitoba.

So I would like to, first of all, just say that I love the opportunity to get up and talk about nurses and nursing, and I see myself as a champion of nurses.

And I feel very honoured to also think of myself as a nurse politician as well. This morning I felt very honoured to be able to bring greetings to the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, who are having a national conference here in Winnipeg. And there were 250 nurses, and I listened to the plenary that was put on by Karen Neufeld, who is the president of the Canadian Nurses Association, and it certainly took me back to my days of working within the health-care system. And it was wonderful to have that opportunity to sit there and think back on those nursing days. And it's certainly an honour to be able to be here working with our Progressive Conservative caucus as we look at the issue of nursing and look at ways of strengthening nursing recruitment and retention, working environments, et cetera, for nurses in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly do welcome the internationally educated nurses that have come to Manitoba. I've worked with a number of nurses, actually, from the Philippines over the many years that I did work as a nurse and I have to say that it was a privilege for me to do so. I have had some great experiences working with them and I have a great deal of respect for the work that they do. I've also worked with a lot of health-care aides from the Philippines and, again, there were some that were so central to our working environment that we could have never done without them. So I have huge respect for people that are moving far from their countries, moving here to a place they don't know very well, moving from family in order to look for a better life for themselves.

And I warmly welcome them, and I congratulate them for all of their efforts, and what they are doing, and for the contributions that they're making within health care and to our communities.

But, as I said, Mr. Speaker, this resolution is missing more than a few key points that are necessary in order to round out the discussion on nursing in Manitoba. In fact, the resolution itself pretty much skims the surface of the problems in the system.

Now, I would like to put some facts on the record. I know that the NDP like to zero in on certain aspects of the '90s. I would like to just tell them a little bit more about the '90s and some of the things that they tend to ignore.

In fact it was in the '90s that the \$7-million nursing recruitment and retention fund was set up. It was also a time where we increased the role of public

health nurses in Manitoba. We also more than doubled LPN enrolment from 90 to 190 students. We established the Manitoba Nursing Professions Advisory Council in 1994.

We established the Provincial Nursing Resources Task Force in August 1998, to establish a collaborative process that would facilitate development of strategies to ensure an adequate nursing work force. I have to indicate that I was very, very thrilled, as a new MLA at the time, to be put on to that Provincial Nursing Resources Task Force and to work with all of the nursing bodies out there and the University of Manitoba to start to form a very, very important strategy for moving nurses forward in Manitoba.

Also in the 1990s, in fact in 1998, under the auspices of the Manitoba Nursing Education Strategy, we charged the Faculty of Nursing to increase nursing enrolment to 400 students a year by the year 2002. That process started under the Progressive Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. I can remember sitting at the university with the dean of Nursing having discussions about how the university could move forward in that area.

We established the Brandon site of the Faculty of Nursing in 1994. We established two northern degree nursing programs; Norway House in 1996 and KCC in The Pas in 1998.

Also, very interestingly, Mr. Speaker, in the 1999 budget, we allocated \$32.5 million to fund 650 new and existing nursing positions in Manitoba. That is what has started to change the shape of nursing resources in Manitoba, was a lot of the groundwork that had been laid in the '90s.

We implemented a fast-track nursing degree program. We began offering a joint Bachelor of Nursing program with Red River College in Winnipeg and Keewatin Community College in The Pas and Thompson.

We provided new scope and flexibility for nurses and recognized the changing role of nursing by providing the necessary legislative changes in The Registered Nurses Act, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act and The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act. Those were massive, massive changes to legislation which has, basically, modernized nursing legislation in the province. And also, Mr. Speaker, probably many people might not know this, but in

1998 Manitoba had more nurses per capita than any province west of the Maritimes.

Now, when you hear all of the doom and gloom from the NDP, and they're always focussing on the negative. They don't tend to paint a very fair picture of some of this. So I think it is important to have that on the record.

Now, let's look at the NDP record in the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker. First of all, they were elected to fix the nursing shortage. In fact, they were going to fix health care. They were going to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. But Gary Doer—and I recall it so well—said he was going to fix the nursing shortage. He said they had a credible plan to do it. It wasn't going to be that difficult.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, let's get some real facts on the record right now. The government's own numbers, which they quietly put on a Web site interestingly last week—usually when they've got something to celebrate, they put out news releases, and they have a ribbon cutting and they have a photo op. But, very, very quietly, they put their most recent numbers on the Web site.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that Manitoba, right now, is short almost 1,500 nurses. In fact, the percentage right now is higher than it was 10 years ago. The vacancy rate in Manitoba is 11.49 percent. So we're short almost 1,500 nurses right now in 2009, at the end of 2009.

* (11:20)

In 1999, 10 years ago, Manitoba was short 751 nurses. Today, that's pretty much doubled. Well, that's not what Gary Doer promised in 1999. He said he was going to fix it.

So what these numbers show is that the NDP have a problem. They are not keeping up with nursing retirements in this province. In fact, I just got a phone call the other night; I'm invited to a barbecue for a nursing friend of mine that just retired. And this is happening over and over, so we're seeing this government not doing what they promised to do.

Interestingly enough, too, they also promised to address the issue of increasing full-time nurses. Again, Manitoba and Alberta are the worst in Canada. They barely budged the numbers here in Manitoba. So despite their promise, they have not increased the number of nurses working full-time. And in fact, according to CIHI numbers, we have

the—between Québec and Manitoba, we have the highest percentage of nurses working in administration of any province in the country.

When we look at the nursing vacancy rate, other members have talked about it and made it sound like it's not so bad. Burntwood right now has a 24 percent vacancy rate. Brandon has a 12 percent vacancy rate. South-Eastman has a 17.19 percent vacancy rate. These are not vacancy rates that this government should be bragging about. In fact, when we see nursing vacancy rates like that, patient safety jumps to mind for me, Mr. Speaker. I think patient safety is a huge issue, and with these types of numbers, I think we're seeing mistakes being made. And when you put nurses in positions where they're forced to work overtime, where they're working with such high vacancy rates, where sick calls are not being replaced—and that's a policy within institutions, not to replace either one or two or three of the first sick calls—then you've got a problem.

And while the NDP like to take advantage and paint a glossier picture of what's happening, in reality, Mr. Speaker, there are some huge, huge concerns out there. And that vacancy rate now is higher than it was 10 years ago, and the government has not done what it promised to do and that was to fix the nursing shortage in this province.

So, I think that—thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): It's my privilege to rise today to speak to this resolution. I want to thank the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) for bringing this resolution forward, as it really is a very important thing that we all do as legislators and that's to welcome the nurses from the Philippines.

I also will appreciate the opportunity to speak on a few of the issues raised by the member from Charleswood. You know, Mr. Speaker, I've always found in my life, during and since being a teacher of high school English, that in fact there's a line in Hamlet for everything, and certainly in this case, methinks the lady doth protest too much.

But, first, let's, of course, begin with the overwhelming joy that we all feel about receiving the nurses from the Philippines. We know that this was a very successful project, that going to the Philippines on this recruitment exercise has proven to be very fruitful. We know that we had a target of recruiting 100 nurses to rural Manitoba from the Philippines, and we surpassed that 100-nurse target. As has been

mentioned, 121 nurses have arrived; 116 of those nurses have already passed the national licensing exam to work as a registered nurse, and the remaining are working as graduate nurses until they pass the exam.

But this has been an overwhelming success, Mr. Speaker. These nurses, many of whom we had the privilege to meet some months ago, have travelled from the other side of the world to work here in Manitoba, and they're making a very significant difference to patients and to families in over 20 communities in the Assiniboine, Brandon, Central and Parkland regional health authorities. We know that these nurse recruits are stabilizing health care in these regions. They're adding to the existing nurse complement. They're helping reopen beds in some communities and they're preventing service disruptions in others.

It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that while the communities have done an extraordinary job of welcoming the Philippine nurses and helping them feel at home, it's the nurses from the Philippines, the community members say, that have really been an incredible boost to morale, not only in the work force but to the community, bringing their vibrant personalities and ideas to the communities, and we're very grateful to them, just as they have expressed their gratitude to members of these communities.

I note with interest some of the comments made by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) on the issue of nurses, and, you know, there's so much material and so little time. I would just note that if we're going to put facts on the record, we need to begin with the very important fact, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba had a net gain of 498 new nurses in 2009, the largest recorded increase.

That's a total net increase of 943 since 2007. That, incidentally, surpasses our election commitment, Mr. Speaker, in sharp contrast, might I add, to the members opposite who didn't promise to train one single nurse when they stood up in front of Manitobans and said, here we are; here's our best foot forward; we can promise you exactly zero training for nurses. And they apparently succeeded in their commitment too. So I can congratulate them with the greatest of sarcasm, of course.

I can also say as a fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen a total net gain since 1999 of 2,532 nurses, or I suppose another way of looking at that is for

every nurse that they've fired, we've now hired two and a half back, and I think that that goes a long way.

I also noted with interest, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite thinks that we publish nursing numbers in stealth, putting them on the Web site of—the secret Web site, the secret Internet, but I might also add, for the member, that we did issue a release saying that we were putting the numbers, just in case anybody missed it. I agreed, we didn't have time for a parade that day, but I wish we had because anytime that I get a chance to stand up and talk about nursing, I am very pleased to do so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, don't misunderstand me. I'm not going to suggest that we don't continue to have challenges in building our health work force. That's why we promised to bring 700 more to the work force in 2007. It's why we promised to add a hundred training seats which, by the way, we've surpassed now at 124, again in stark contrast to zero from—that was promised from members opposite.

But I noted with interest that the member was speaking about vacancy rates and I do think it's an important discussion to have. The member was saying that we have a higher vacancy rate. I think it's important that the member realized that since the year 2000 we've created nearly 4,800 nurse and health care aide positions, and we have filled over 80 percent of those, Mr. Speaker. Now, indeed, that does leave some vacancies, but let me tell you a little something about vacancies. It's very simple to achieve a zero vacancy rate, no problem at all. All you have to do is hack away all the positions in your work force.

Members opposite crow about having a very low vacancy rate. I would suggest that when you take away all the positions so that there isn't a job for anybody that you can have your own parade, I suppose, about a very low vacancy rate, but we have created nearly 4,800 nurse and health care aide positions. We've filled over 80 percent of those, Mr. Speaker. That's more of a work force on the ground, and the members opposite can brag all they want about having a low vacancy rate, but it's because they decapitated all of the positions, which I don't think is anything to brag about anytime soon.

I think it's really important, Mr. Speaker, to just go back to the resolution for a moment and really take the time to say thank you to the nurses who've come from the Philippines. These are nurses that

have, in some respects, left their families. I spoke to a few of the nurses indeed who have left their children in the view of making a better life for their family, and when I think about that, it's about as profound a sacrifice that a mother can make, in my view, and so we are indebted to these individuals in ways that perhaps we've not touched upon today.

* (11:30)

Like every member of this House and all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, I know in very real terms, in the here and now, what it's like to spend a lot of time in a hospital with a loved one, and they are the most difficult times of our lives. And during those highly stressful times, as you contemplate the difficulties of saying goodbye, more often than not, it's the nurse that comes into the room that not only lends the tender hand to your loved one and asks him or asks her if there's absolutely anything that can be done to make them more comfortable, but without exception, that nurse extends the hand to the family too. Can I get you a cup of tea? Are you cold? Did you need to make a phone call? And all of the things that you'll never really find written down in the international exams or the college descriptors about what nurses do, the all-encompassing act of caring.

And so to the nurses from the Philippines and to the nurses from all across Canada and around the world that have chosen Manitoba to be their home and the place that they work, I want to stand with all of my colleagues today and say thank you from the bottom of our hearts, because the gifts that you give to us in our times of most serious need are unquestionably the most important gifts of all. And we thank you for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I'm pleased to be able to put a few words on the record with regard to the resolution that was put forward by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) with regard to the international nurse recruitment.

I've had the privilege of actually travelling to the Philippines in 2008 and had the opportunity to meet with various organizations that play a critical role in the practice of international nurse recruitment. I met with the Professional Certification office, met with TESDA, which does training for individuals who are wanting to work in different skilled areas overseas, and also met with the employment immigration office in the Philippines. These meetings were very

useful for me as a legislator in Manitoba and an individual who lives in another country who was—you know, had the opportunity to meet some of these new immigrants or these new workers within our country.

The challenges that were raised by these organizations to myself and to the Honorary Consul for the Philippines—we met with them together—and the concerns raised were the challenges that these families were going to have in moving to another country and working there in a profession that they were trained for in the Philippines. Some of the concerns that were raised were with regard to them being trained as RNs and possibly not passing the testing when they come to Canada, and then having to work as lesser professionals or—as they were trained, meaning that they would be working as LPNs or health care aides. And I think that the concerns that were raised were legitimate, in that we need to be cognizant that these individuals have taken pride in their training and have worked really hard to become registered nurses. And the Philippines is known as a country that exports individual—their citizens to other countries to not only 'emigrate' their own opportunities but also for family members that they've left behind.

And I think that there's been some challenges and, I guess, you know, we see a number of nurses that are now working in our communities who, as the minister has said and the member for Brandon East, have, you know, have done great things by moving into a community, being engaged in the activities within that community and really wanting to be a part of the community in every sense. And a number of them have been successful and have passed the tests that are required of them to practise as RNs. There have been some that haven't had that success and, you know, I know the communities are doing what they can to help these nurses retain that level of professional accreditation. I know some communities have actually pulled together and raised money so that the nurses can actually do the rewrite. So the people in the communities that these nurses are working in are doing their part in ensuring that they do receive the credentials that they need to practise as RNs in our province.

I also had the opportunity of taking the Honorary Consul for the Philippines on a Parkland tour. And we toured the Swan River health facility and the Dauphin facility and met with members of the regional health authorities in those communities.

And the communities were, and are, in dire need of nurses. Dauphin, at one point, was grey-listed and was in a very serious situation. And I know that that community was looking at the Filipino nurses as a critical piece to overcome the challenges that they were facing. And I do know that there were a good half—or two dozen nurses earmarked for that community.

What I found really interesting and really empowering for the new nurses that were going to be coming to that community is that there is—there was a woman who was from the—who originally was from the Philippines and actually worked in the health-care field in Dauphin, who was part of the recruitment drive for the Philippine nurses. And I thought, what a great way for this woman to give back to not only the Manitoba profession, but she had seen—helped her family integrate within the Canadian or Manitoba culture.

But this woman also was going to be able to go to the Philippines and work with these young individuals, who were coming to Manitoba to work as health-care professionals. This woman was going to be their mentor. She was going to help them with their integration into the hospital, into the community, into the church, into the community as a whole. And I think that that was a key piece in the success of this international nurse recruitment: is giving the opportunity for people who are new immigrants or new Canadians in the last decade or century to have a role in helping these nurses move into their new roles.

So I think that there's been some good things happening. I think that there's some things that can be done to improve the way that nurse recruitment is occurring. And I think that we have to be cognizant of the fact that there is a continual nurse shortage, that what the government's side is speaking to as the magic fix hasn't happened. We still have a number of ERs that are closed in our rural communities. We have a number of personal care homes that have nursing shortages, that have created wait lists for personal care placement and are forcing people to move their family members away from the communities that they know and love.

So there are a number of things that need to be addressed that are not being addressed by this government. And 1,500 nurses short, obviously, has to lead to a number of consequences within communities and within the province.

So, I believe that the intent of the resolution of great. I think it's addressing a segment of the challenge but I don't believe, by any means, that this government has solved the problem. When you get statistics that are saying 47.6 percent of RNs are working full time within the province, and with the shortages that we are facing, I know that many of the health-care facilities are looking for nurses who want to work full time and we need to be looking at ways to address those needs.

My sister's a nurse, Mr. Speaker, and I know of the challenges that she faces as a caregiver. And I know that she works very hard, and I know that there are days when she's asked to work an extra shift. It causes family issues. It makes her tired. It makes it harder to be a mom. So I think that we need to be looking at the health and well-being of our health-care professionals. And, when we see the consequences, such as a shortage of nurses and the number rising, it speaks to forced overtime. It speaks to nurses leaving their workplaces because they just can't handle the stress of the work environment anymore.

We need to be looking at ways to address these needs, and I thank the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), who has raised this issue to be discussed. And I think that they, obviously, have more work to do. And I believe that rural Manitoba has seen just a little bit of an improvement, but there is a lot more that has to be done to see the quality of health care that rural Manitoba, northern Manitobans and urban Manitobans deserve is not anywhere near what it should be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:40)

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to add a few words to those of my colleagues in support of this private member's resolution calling on the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to welcome over 100 new Filipino nurses to Manitoba.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

As of December 3, 2009, there were 2,034 more nurses working in Manitoba than there were in 1999. Speaking of December 3rd, on that day there was a brief reception at the rotunda to acknowledge over 100 Filipino nurses working in rural Manitoba health-care facilities as a result of a successful recruitment mission to the Philippines in late 2008. I have met and spoke with many of these nurses who

attended the reception and was so delighted to hear that many of them took the licensure exams for the first time and passed.

We're proud to say that to date, of the 121 nurses who have landed in Manitoba as a result of this recruitment initiative, 116 of them have already passed their exams. Also at the reception on December 3rd was Jason Marchand. He is the vice-president for human resources and support services of the Brandon Regional Health Authority, and he said that the addition of the Philippine nurses to Brandon region have been extremely positive. In concert with Brandon University and other nursing grads, they are a breath of fresh air to our organization. These additional nurses have allowed us to keep beds open, approved vacation for nurses that deserve a needed break, provide training to current nurses into specialty areas like the operating room and the emergency departments, and have saved significant health-care dollars. Those were the statement from Mr. Marchand.

At that brief reception as well, one of the nurses who became the spokesperson for the recruited nurses, stated that they were grateful for the opportunity of working in Manitoba. They have shared that in one way or another, lives of their families have been improved as the result. And that support they send to their families help treat illness and save lives, help send children to school and help build a new future for their families. And she added that to us who may be distant from our loved ones, it still feels rewarding to touch their lives in the finest ways we know; that's Miss Joan Duhaylungsod speaking at the rotunda on December 3rd.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, the 2008 nurse recruitment from the Philippines is the second time in this decade. I remember in 2000 or 2001 when I heard that there is a team going to the Philippines to recruit nurses. I phoned my niece who was a nursing instructor from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, to apply. She did apply along with her best friend. Both of them passed the exams given in Manila, and they came to Canada later that year. I was still working at Red River College then when one of the staff at the nursing department told me that she was part of the team who interviewed and supervised the exams given to applicants in Manila.

She said that she was all praises for these recruited nurses, and she added they were given much more difficult exams than the one given here,

and those who passed were certainly the cream of the crop.

Mr. Speaker, the success of the recruitment mission builds on other work to support nursing education and training in Manitoba, including investing 1.2 million to begin training 74 additional nurses in communities across Manitoba, including programs at the University of Manitoba, Brandon University, the University College of the North and Red River College. Also, it creates 40 new training seats in 2008—it has created 40 new training seats in 2008 at the University of Manitoba, Red River College and the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. It also provided permanent funding for 10 additional joint baccalaureate nurse training seats over and above previously announced commitments at the University College of the North, and it has invested an additional 500,000 in the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund to expand access to continuing education, staff development and other opportunities that strengthen nurse retention.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention the valuable work being done by the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba under the inspired leadership of Ms. Alda Ruiz. Besides providing scholarship grants to nursing students of Filipino descent who are enrolled for the first time in a nursing program at any accredited institution of learning for a nursing program in Manitoba, this group also conducts review sessions for nursing graduates and internationally trained nurses who will take the licensure exams through the CRNM. This—I commend the work being done by the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba, as they have helped many internationally trained nurses to pass the licensure exams here being given by the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, on a few occasions, I have experienced first-hand the excellent and valuable care provided by nurses in Manitoba. And still, on many occasions, in my visits to relatives, friends and acquaintances who needed hospitalization, the nurses who have attended to them were all dedicated and conscientious. Truly, this profession is a calling, and the nurses I have encountered here in Manitoba are all caring, cheerful, highly competent and faithful to their calling.

I thank God for nurses, and may their tribe increase. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm welcoming the opportunity to put a few words on the record in

regard to the resolution brought forward by the member from Brandon East on international nurse recruitment.

And—specifically, Mr. Speaker, he is saying that—be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba welcome the new nurses relocating to Manitoba, and certainly that goes without saying. We welcome all newcomers to Manitoba, whether it's nurses or any professions or anybody that wants to come and work and play and live in our great province. So, certainly it's something that we support, that particular portion of welcoming international nurses to Manitoba.

But I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that international nurses to Manitoba is not something that is new. I worked at Health Sciences Centre, many years ago now, but I did work there for 15 years. And I can tell you that at that time, there was a lot of international nurses and other health-care professions, particularly from the Philippines and from India.

* (11:50)

So, I know it may come to a surprise—come as a surprise to the member from Brandon East, but this is not something that happened this year. It happened many, many years ago, and we've been the beneficiary of many, many international nurses. In fact, I'm just recalling as I'm speaking that a friend of mine that I did some golfing with was one of the very first international nurses to come to Manitoba, and she's been here for—well, I'd have to guess, but I'd say it would be over 30 years, probably closer to 40, and she and her family all located here from the Philippines.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of friends that are nurses. As I said, I've worked at the Health Sciences Centre for many years. I wasn't a nurse; I was a laboratory technologist, but at that time we were all very young health-care professionals working at the Health Sciences Centre. It was very much like a community with—at that time there was about 6,000 employees there. Now it's up over 8,000, so it's very much like a small little city of people working there. So people were very close and had relationships in the work that they did. So—and I know that some of my friends still are nurses there and some have retired.

But I can tell you that the work that they do is extremely important, extremely valuable and extremely stressful, particularly in situations if it's

emergency room nursing, operating room nursing, neonatal care, Mr. Speaker, when you're dealing with a little wee—little wee babies that are premature. It's a very stressful situation, and I think that it is absolutely critical that we have enough of these health-care professions to care for our little premature babies, our moms, everybody that is stricken with a disease that lands them in the hospital, people that need surgeries and all the way to those of our valued elderly people that are requiring care in nursing homes and personal care homes.

These people all depend on the nursing staff for their care, and when we see that there are shortages in nursing, as we know because the province is currently short about 1,500 nurses, and that is according to their own numbers—and that is the worst vacancy rate in seven years. So, when you have that many people short, you are going to have shortages of care, Mr. Speaker, fewer nurses working less than full time, and it does impact on the quality of the care that our loved ones here in Manitoba get.

Not only do we see that there is not enough nurses in the system, but when nurses come into the system, are they going to the appropriate places or are they going into bureaucracy, because we can know that the numbers will tell us that Manitoba is the second-lowest province in terms of the number of nurses that are going into direct care or front-line care, Mr. Speaker, and that's very important because that is health care, is the front-line services, the people that help those people that are in hospital, that are coming into hospital, that meet the people coming in at the emergency room doors, that are there when the patients come out of anesthetic from a surgery to reassure them that things have gone well, to help them with their post-surgery care and to help them when it's home care that's needed or directions of what needs to be done, and, certainly, when we're looking after our elder patients.

So it's critical that we have the number of nurses that are required, and it's disturbing when we find that even though the NDP claim that they have more nurses, in fact their numbers, their own numbers, tell a different story. There are fewer nurses—fewer nurses working in this province than there were seven years ago. So—[interjection] Well, the members opposite think that I'm talking silliness here, Mr. Speaker. They're laughing because I'm speaking about the good work that nurses do, and I think that's very—that's just the way they are. They want to—talk about the arrogance of them laughing

about the good work that nurses do, discrediting the work that nurses do, intimating that nurses aren't doing the jobs that they are intended to be doing here.

So I would caution them on that line of thought, Mr. Speaker, because when we see that there's a lack of nurses in this province, the members opposite laugh, but I think it's a very serious issue. Because when you have nursing shortages, what you have is you have less care being given to people that need it.

And if there is no nursing shortage—as the members opposite claim—why, then, do we see the heavy workload reports that are initiated when people have—feel that their workload is too heavy for the time they're given to do that work, Mr. Speaker? You know why we have these heavy workload reports? Because there's not enough nurses. Why do we have so many incident reports, the incidents that happen when nurses are tired and mistakes happen? Why do we have this high number of incident reports? It's because there's not enough nurses. Why do we have cancelled surgeries? Well, I can tell you, it's not because there's no beds. It's because there's not enough nurses. Why is there an increase in overtime and double shifting? Why are nurses required to work long hours? I'll tell you why. It's because there's not enough nurses. Yes, the member over there got it right. There's not enough nurses.

And there's 150,000 people in this province that don't have a family doctor. Well, why, when there's not enough nurses and not enough doctors, why wouldn't they look at nurse practitioners—something that they have been very reluctant to do—embracing nurse practitioners and using them in their full scope of practice?

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, nurses are very valuable. They've always been valuable. International nurses have always been here. For many, many years we've welcomed them. We've needed them. We welcome more of them. Hopefully, they will get more of them because we do have a shortage here in Manitoba, a shortage that has been going on for the last 10 years. We need more nurses. We need to stop heavy workload reports. We need to stop these incident reports. We need to stop cancelled surgeries. We need to stop overtime and double shifting, and we need to reduce wait lists at personal care homes. Because if we didn't have these

things, that would mean we had enough nurses in the system, but it doesn't mean that. It means we're 1,500 nurses short; that's a fact, and we need to have more done in this area.

So, Mr. Speaker, they can say what they want, but—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, if you go by the THERFORE BE IT RESOLVED in the statement, I think that it would have unanimous support of this Chamber. We all recognize the value that nurses from other countries contribute to our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if the government truly wanted to be able to get this resolution passed, that there should have been some sort of discussion with opposition members, because I think the THERFORE BE IT RESOLVED is something in which we all agree to. The government has chosen to politicize the resolution, and it's unfortunate, because, at the end of the day, I do believe that we need to recognize the sacrifices that many of those immigrants that come to our province make in order to fill the jobs that we require to be filled.

There are many different issues that need to be addressed in the whole area of immigrant workers that come to our province. And, quite frankly, I just don't think that there's enough time for us to be able to debate the issue as thoroughly as we could this morning, unless we were provided the leave from the government to continue on, because there are issues that do need to be highlighted.

I remember back in the '90s when the Minister of Health approached and asked if there was something in which we could work together in terms of opposition working within the Filipino community. And we got the Philippine Nurses Association to sit down with the Minister of Health and to take a two-prong approach. Where can we bring people from the Philippines, for example, to fill the gap? Where can we recognize the skills that are currently here today?

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

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