

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

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

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 7, 2016

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## Len Evans

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 21—The Mental Health Amendment Act  
(Better Use of Police Resources)**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady), that Bill 21, The Mental Health Amendment Act (Better Use of Police Resources); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale (utilisation judicieuse des forces policières), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, this responds to long-standing concerns of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, police officers themselves and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in particular.

This bill enables a qualified person other than a police officer to assume custody of and remain with an individual who's awaiting an involuntary mental health assessment so the officers can be freed up and available for other calls for public safety responses.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Any further introduction of bills?

Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports. Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Manitoba Legislature this afternoon to pay tribute and commemorate the life of Len Evans, the single greatest public servant the city of Brandon has ever had.

Len Evans passed away on January 2nd, 2016, at the age of 86. With his passing, the Evans family lost an extraordinary father, uncle, grandfather and great grandfather. The city of Brandon lost a legendary member of the Legislative Assembly, and I lost a dear friend and mentor.

Len Evans was raised by a working class family in Transcona and was the only member of this family to attend university. His father served as an alderman for the City of Transcona and politics was in Len's blood.

In 1953, at the age of 24, Len ran federally in St. Boniface under the banner of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. That same year, Len met the love of his life, Alice Mazinke, and they married three years later and soon after started a family.

Sixteen years later, in the midst of pursuing his Ph.D., Len ran for the NDP. As part of the Ed Schreyer government, and from 1969 until his retirement in 1999, Len Evans helped transform the province of Manitoba.

Len was proud to be a democratic socialist, a man who believed in the power of the state to transform society and build a better world for all people. Much of what I know about serving the people of Brandon East I learned from Len Evans. His commitment to social justice and community has been incorporated into my soul. In working for Brandon the spirit of Len Evans informs everything that I do. I stand on the shoulders of a giant.

Mr. Speaker, Len was predeceased by his wife Alice last year. To Alice and Len's children, Brenda, Janet and Randy, to their grandchildren Jamie, Devon, Andrew and Jeffrey, and their great-grandchildren Spencer, Corbin, Reegan, Keira and

Griffin, and all of Len's family and friends, our hearts here in the Legislature are with you.

Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully ask the House to rise for a moment of silence in honour of Len Evans.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to observe a moment a silence? *[Agreed]*

Members will please rise.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### **St. Benedict's Monastery**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I was invited by Sister Joan Mormul to visit and tour St. Benedict's Monastery located at 225 Masters Ave. in West St. Paul.

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, St. Benedict's celebrated its 100th anniversary of their incorporation as a Roman Catholic religious order in Manitoba, and I was honoured to be amongst the guests during that celebration.

In 1912, equipped with only a few pennies and their conviction, four nuns began a tradition of hospitality, prayer, peace and service. When they began their venture, all they had was 27 cents. In 1961, the sisters moved to their current location and opened it up as both a monastery and a Catholic girls school.

Today, St. Benedict's is an incredible 72-acre shared community space along the Red River. Currently, the complex houses a conference centre with six boardrooms, a retreat residence with spaces for 50 beds, a chapel and nuns' residence, a full kitchen and dining room to feed 100 people, 20 suites for seniors living along with three meals a day and provides 30 good jobs.

Unfortunately, the greatest challenge currently facing this community space is the \$150,000 replacement of their 44-year-old elevator. The elevator provides access to all levels of the complex and is used by the public conference and retreat users, the kitchen staff, the chapel as well as the 18 nuns.

With this elevator disabled, many seniors struggle to move around the complex, needing to walk multiple lengths of long hallways in order to get to a ramp.

As the Sisters of St. Benedict's begin to apply for provincial grants, I ask that you remember that they

selflessly serve the public who visit, the public who uses their conference and retreat centre and the 20 seniors who now call the monastery home.

Thank you.

\* (13:40)

### **Jon Hanec**

**Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel):** As a former Dakota graduate it's always great to hear success stories about fellow alumni. Jon Hanec, a former Dakota Collegiate student, will be inducted into the Manitoba High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame this coming spring.

During his time at Dakota, Jon was a multisport athlete who excelled at basketball, volleyball and athletics. In 1991, Jon led the Lancers to the provincial volleyball championship, earning him the title of provincial all store-all star. What's more, he held the same title in basketball for three straight years, from 1990 to '92. In '92 Jon was the MHSAA Athlete of the Year and a finalist for the MHSAA Athlete of the Half Century.

Throughout his time in high school, Jon maintained a strong dedication to study, winning the credit unions scholar athlete scholarship of 1992. This scholarship is awarded to four students who maintain a maximum 85 per cent average and participate in at least two competitive high school sports. Jon continued his dedication to athletics at the University of Manitoba where he played basketball and volleyball while pursuing a double major in financing and marketing.

Jon credits the great teachers, coaches and staff at Dakota Collegiate. Everyone would do what they could to give students as much access to athletic facilities as possible, creating an amazing atmosphere for both athletes and academics.

Jon's coaching idols are Jerry and Gerry Ilchyna, long-time former teachers, partners and basketball coaches who are both inductees in the Manitoba Basketball Hall of Fame. He also credits Phil Hudson, the legendary volleyball coach who always inspired athletes to do their best.

Congratulations to Jon Hanec, best of luck to all Dakota Collegiate students, and thanks to all the wonderful teachers, coaches and staff who motivate and encourage students to always do their best.

Thank you.

### Triple E Recreational Vehicles

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** I rise today to draw the attention of this House to Triple E Recreational Vehicles. Triple E is a fourth-generation business located in Winkler and it recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. They manufacture class B and C RVs, and their warehouses—their facilities house a welding, paint, fibre shop and mould shop, a sewing department and a cabinet manufacturing department.

Triple E was incorporated in 1965 by P.W. Enns and his sons-in-law, Peter Elias and Phil Ens. In 1966, Triple E built a total of 97 compact trailers. The following year, it produced 327 for an order to meet a demand caused by Expo 67.

Since that time, Triple E has seen ups and downs. They built Canada's first motorhome prototype in 1967. In 1972, their whole operation was destroyed by fire, but they came back after a controlling interest was sold to Jim Pattison in 1969. It was restored to family ownership in 1974 when P.W. Enns and Phil Ens bought back the company.

Over the years, Triple E has brought in many different types of travel vans, motorhome and fifth wheels to their market. It's their 50th anniversary now and they've given a lot to the community from which most of its dedicated staff come from. Triple E funded the construction of an 1,100-square-foot dining room at Salem and a personal-care home in Winkler.

Mr. Speaker, they're also the major sponsor of this year's harvest festival.

A hard-working business like this becomes successful because they're strategic and they're good with money and they have to keep an eye on the bottom line, unlike this NDP government where a deficit is going in the wrong direction, the debt is up to \$34 billion and their continuing mismanagement continues to result in downgrades to Manitoba's credit rating.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to congratulate Triple E on their successful financial management and strategy over the years on their 50th anniversary, and thank them for all they've given to their community. I wish them the best moving forward.

### Remembering Conrad Santos

**Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities):** Mr. Speaker, it is with

sadness that I reflect on the passing of Dr. Conrad Santos. One of the constituencies he represented was, of course, Burrows, and he was always a champion of the people of Manitoba.

In 1981, Dr. Santos became the first Filipino-Canadian to be elected to office in Canada and he remained a fixture in the Legislature for 24 years.

Dr. Santos studied at Harvard University and the University of Michigan. In 1965, he moved to Winnipeg to teach political science at the University of Manitoba. He also worked with the Central American Institute of Public Administration in Costa Rica and served as a board member of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba for several years.

In 2002, Dr. Santos was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for his community service.

Dr. Santos was always a strong advocate for his constituents, particularly on issues of immigration and social justice.

In 1985, after a violent incident in a Winnipeg school was claimed to be racially motivated, he publicly urged city school official to confront racial tension between students. Through his lobbying, WSD hired two ethnic co-ordinators who worked to dispel racial tension between students and bridge the gaps between groups.

Our NDP government upholds Dr. Santos's values with legislation like our antibullying legislation which works to make schools a safe place for all students.

As an accomplished academic, Dr. Santos was passionate about advancing the rights of immigrants in the areas of education and the workplace. He was a steadfast advocate for employment standards and credential recognition for new Canadians. He argued that when professional associations refuse to recognize foreign certificates and degrees, they are creating inequities that unfairly exclude new Canadians from participating in society.

I don't personally know most of Dr. Conrad Santos's family, but I do know that his spirit of kindness and generosity and brilliance lives on in his son, Dr. Rob Santos, who works every day to improve the lives of Manitoba's most vulnerable.

Along with all other members, I send my condolences to Dr. Santos's family. His work set a path for future MLAs to push for equality, and we are grateful to him.

And I would ask leave from the House for a further moment of silence for Dr. Conrad Santos.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to observe a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

Members will please rise.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** That concludes members' statements.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Just prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests to introduce.

First, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Dr. Sima Samar, chairwoman of the independent Afghanistan human rights commission, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Cochrane, base commander of CFB Shilo, and also Professor Marilou McPhedran, director, Institute for International Women's Rights at the University of Winnipeg.

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome all of you.

Also seated in the public gallery we have with us this afternoon from Kildonan-East Collegiate, we have 37 grade 9 students under the direction of John Thompson and Luke Klassen, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also while I'm on my feet, I want to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right where we have Mr. Al Mackling, former member of St. James.

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you to the Legislature.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Children in Care Statistics Counting Method Change

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, with much undeserved celebration, the government had announced a few weeks back that it was going to change the way that it reported to Manitobans on the number of children in care, and we learned last Friday that the government was caught in making a false case for such to

be done. This seems to continue a trend on the part of this government, Mr. Speaker, to attempt to create a false favourable impression where one is not deserved, an impression of competence when, in fact, the opposite is the case.

Would the Premier admit, yet again, that his government has tried to torque the statistics to their favour and that the NDP communication spin machine is at it again?

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, all children in care, regardless of their status, need to be counted. They need to be cared for. They need to have services and supports to themselves, to their families and to the communities, which is why we have the customary-care legislation in front of the Legislature as we speak, legislation that will allow us to work with families and communities to allow a child to be close to their home, close to their language, close to their culture, have that ability to be cared for safely in their community. That's legislation that we strongly support. I look forward to the members of the opposition passing that legislation.

It grows—goes on record investments that we made in the child-welfare system and, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it goes towards a philosophy of building strength in our communities, building off their strengths, identifying the strengths that they have. Some members of the front bench with myself were meeting on this very topic just a couple of days ago in the city of Winnipeg up in the North End. We talked to young advocates for the child-welfare system and we heard them and listened to their way of doing things, which is in partnership with the community.

### Fiscal Management Government Record

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the government isn't genuinely partnering with anyone if it simply attempts to torque the facts in its favour in the interest of self-promotion.

If the NDP Premier will attempt, as he just did, to manipulate the statistics on children in care, Manitobans would be right to ask themselves what numbers will he not attempt to manipulate.

Last election he was a budget balancer. That's what he promised the people of Manitoba. In fact, he

said he was ahead of schedule—whoops, off by at least half a billion dollars, possibly more. He got that very, very wrong.

Then he was a no-tax-hiker guy, and Manitobans understand, who are paying higher PST among other many additional taxes, that he got that wrong too. So I would ask the Premier to explain to all Manitobans, given his record of broken promises and getting things wrong, why would anyone take his fantasy financial forecast seriously?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** What we won't do is cut a half a billion dollars out of services, which is what the Leader of the Opposition proposes.

He starts out with a very important question on child welfare and then pivots to an austerity message, a message of reducing services to families and children, a message of making sure that people aren't cared for when they're at risk in the community.

And we were very pleased to be part of a national round table in Winnipeg less than two weeks ago on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We were honoured to be able to host that round table. That connects to the child-welfare issue. That connects to human trafficking. That connects to the problems that young women are experiencing in our community as the victims of misogyny, racism, class differences and poverty experiences. Those things come together in a way that puts people at extreme risk, and we're committed to working on that, not cutting the budget; making sure the resources are there for those families in their communities with language and cultural appropriate treatment, the kinds of things that will make a long-term difference and a short-term difference.

Those are the things we're committed to, and if the Leader of the Opposition believes he's committed to that as well, he will support our approach to the budget which is to protect those core services and grow the economy.

### **Tax Increases Impact on Manitobans**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** What budget? How can I support an approach that produces a non-existent budget. There he goes again.

After 17 years in government, Mr. Speaker, he's complimenting himself on an agenda that's resulted in us leading the country in children depending on food banks and leading the country in children in

care. That's brutal There he goes again. He tries to pretend he knows my agenda, he knows our agenda. He doesn't even get his own agenda right.

Manitoba workers—*[interjection]* It is a secret agenda. If he doesn't produce a budget, it is a secret agenda. Manitoba workers and their families know who pays 8 per cent tax on benefits now. They know who that is. That's them. And the Premier added 8 per cent to all the benefits for all the workers and their families in this province. Manitoba home-owners know who's paying 8 per cent on their home insurance. They know who that is. That's them. And they know they were promised that they would pay zero—zero—PST on their home insurance.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier expect the average Manitoba family, who has forked over \$5,000 to him in broken-promise taxes, to believe a word out of his mouth?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Well, Mr. Speaker, let's review the record.

When the Leader of the Opposition was in government—*[interjection]* Let's review the record. What he did was the National Child Benefit was taken away, clawed back from families on social assistance, among the most vulnerable families in our community. We have added that National Child Benefit back to all families in Manitoba, regardless of their source of income, worth over \$75 million. The opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, has consistently voted against that. That's his track record of serving people at risk, children and families in this province.

What else did he do when he was in opposition—when he was in government? Every Friday child-welfare workers were laid off without a salary. They were not available to support families. They cut daycare as well. They cut education funding. Children were at risk in schools for lack of funding. Children were at risk in the child-welfare system because the social workers were not there to support them.

We've added money to the system. We're bringing in progressive legislation in partnership with our communities, and the members opposite are using excuses every day to stall that legislation and hold up progress for the families of Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

### Budget 2016 Delivery Expectation

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, the greater volume, Mr. Speaker, indicates a premier unwilling to run on his own record. It indicates a premier willing to go back in time and try to rationalize previous administrations while attempting to distract Manitobans from his own miserable failures on this and many other files.

The budget—the fantasy fiscal forecast—I'm sorry, it is not a budget. Another promise, a promise this Premier made and his Finance Minister made repeatedly. Another promise made, another promise broken. And you know that if the numbers looked good, they'd be out there for Manitobans to see. This is deception; this forecast is deception. Or—or—if it is not, there is no budget ready, and that's incompetence.

Which is it? Is it a deliberate attempt to deceive Manitobans by hiding a budget that's ready, or is it a failure to produce a budget and pure incompetence on the part of the Premier?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does a very good job of pretending to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

His approach to looking after people is to cut the front-line services that they need. He's proposing a half a billion dollars in cuts. His approach is to lay off people. Seven hundred teachers were laid off when they were in the education system. His approach is to claw back these central resources that support families with income. That was the approach he took. He has never recanted that. He has never acknowledged that that was an error. He has never said that he put young families into poverty with the approach he has taken.

We have consistently supported families. Even during the economic downturn, more money in the child-welfare system, more money for daycare, more money for the education system and culturally appropriate services that support families and children to be safely looked after in their communities.

If he really cares about that, he will vote for the bill on customary care today in the House.

**Mr. Pallister:** Mr. Speaker, if his own caucus believed him, more of them would be seeking re-election.

If the Premier and his colleagues, who are seeking re-election, really, genuinely cared, they'd care about results, Mr. Speaker, and they haven't got results for the children of this province. They haven't got results for the students of this province. They have taken money off the kitchen tables of Manitoba homeowners, put it on the Cabinet table to no good end because the results they've achieved are miserable, bottom-of-the-barrel results.

Now, the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) said during the rebellion of a year 'agote'—year ago, that the Premier was too preoccupied with his own priorities to be concerned with the priorities of Manitobans. And that must be the case, that he's been too preoccupied with lawsuits and negotiating departure bonuses and blacking out documents so Manitobans couldn't see them, that he didn't have time to produce a real budget.

Now, if that's the case, I'd like the Premier to admit that there is no real budget. Either there is, and it's being hidden, or there isn't and the Premier's incompetence is on display for all Manitobans.

Which is it, deception or incompetence?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, we are focused on the priorities of Manitoba families. They've told us they want children in care to be looked after. They've told us that they want children in care to stay close to their families, in their communities, close to their language and their culture, with networks of support, and we are funding that.

\* (14:00)

The member opposite has demanded, year after year, day after day, that we make a half-a-billion-dollar cut in those services, and that was what he did when he was in government. He always says actions speak louder than words. His actions were cuts to child welfare. His actions were clawbacks to National Child Benefit. His actions were layoffs of teachers. Those are the actions of a mean-spirited Leader of the Opposition who's hiding in the bushes right now and not telling us what his plan is for the future of Manitoba.

We know what our plan is; it's to look after families.

**Mr. Pallister:** That's hilarious, Mr. Speaker. The Premier claims to know my plan, and then asks me to tell him what it is. Actually, he has no idea, does he? None. Check out our website.



Either the Premier has prepared a budget and done the work that a government should do, or he has not. Either he has prepared a budget for the people of Manitoba to see and he's hiding the news because it's bad for him, or he failed to.

Now, the real reason for not producing a budget—I think, quite frankly, this calls for conjecture—because, well, it's bad news for the Premier. And it's bad news for the Premier because it's more bad news for Manitobans because it reveals that he's broken all his promises yet again. He's broken his promises to balance the books, broken his promises to not raise taxes. He's broken his promises and our credit rating is in jeopardy, and all the services that Manitobans need are in jeopardy, too, as long as this incompetent and deceitful action is allowed to continue.

The Premier is running away from transparency, running away from accountability.

Not producing a budget means he's also running away, and will he admit this, running away from his own miserable record as a Premier?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says we should ask him what his plans are. He's already told us what his plans are. He wants to privatize the daycare system, less wages for the people that work there, an elimination of pensions, higher fees for the family and a lower quality of services, not a plan anybody would recommend for the future of child care in Manitoba.

What does he want to do in the child-welfare system? He wants to bring in private social impact bonds, Mr. Speaker. He wants to privatize the child-welfare system, cream off the cases where people can make a profit and ignore the rest of the people that really need the support. That's his approach: privatization, more inequality, less service for the people that really need it.

His agenda is a half a billion dollars in tax cuts. His agenda is one of privatization. His agenda is to transfer wealth from those that need it to those that already have it.

We will take a different approach. We will look after working and low-income families in Manitoba, and the member opposite, I guarantee you this, he will vote against it.

#### **Budget Consultation Meetings Cost to Manitobans**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** And all they have left is more misinformation and spinning

yarns from a broken government with a clearly broken record.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Last spring, the NDP said that there would be another budget before the spring election. The Finance Minister even invited Manitobans to budget consultation meetings. The NDP said, and I quote, we want to hear about their ideas so we can build a strong budget that focuses on what matters most to Manitobans, end quote. But it is unacceptable to Manitobans that the NDP did budget consultation meetings that did not result in a budget.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Finance Minister: How much did this bogus financial budget consultation process cost Manitoba taxpayers?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I'll be presenting to this House a very robust fiscal update. It will draw a contrast between ourselves and the members opposite. It'll talk about our plan to go—to continue to keep our economy growing and it'll outline spending in the various departments.

The member talked about the budget consultation process. Again, I want to thank the hundreds of Manitobans that participated in this. All of their views and their opinions and suggestions, we've taken that into consideration and it'll be part of the update that I'll present tomorrow.

#### **Budget 2016 Delivery Expectation**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister, clearly, did not answer the question, but I will: I'm tabling a freedom of information request, a response that reveals that the cost to taxpayers of this phony budgetary consultation process is over \$40,000.

Mr. Speaker, it's another glaring example of NDP waste and mismanagement, but it's also about credibility. This is about keeping your word. They promised one thing and they did another thing. And Manitobans should be angry to discover they took their time and shared their priorities and their ideas with the NDP, and the NDP wasn't actually planning to deliver a budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister now wants to create an impression that he is moving in the right direction with his phony fiscal update.

My question to the Finance Minister: Why would Manitobans believe you this time?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** Again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the members of the public who attended our meetings in The Pas, Winnipeg, Gimli, Brandon, Dauphin, Ile des Chênes, Morden-Winkler, Churchill, Thompson; three or four meetings here in the city of Winnipeg. I want to thank all of them for attending that.

I'll draw attention to the House that when the opposition party was in government, Mr. Speaker, they held meetings behind closed doors. The public were not invited to any of their budget consultation meetings, and the Finance Minister did not even attend their meetings.

And I can tell the members, our meetings are open to the public. Anybody could attend our meetings, where we did not invite people—only specific people; everyone was invited. And I went to all those meetings.

Again, I want to thank all those individuals who participated, and their input will be reflected in tomorrow's outlook.

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister wants to thank them but he should be apologizing for wasting their time.

Mr. Speaker, let's sum this up. The NDP spent over \$40,000 on a phony budget consultation process that didn't result in the delivery of a budget. They promise one thing, and they do another. Manitobans deserve nothing less than a full budget. Now, with the self-promotional kind of tendencies of this NDP government, it is clear that if it was good news they would be bringing it. But it is bad news again.

So the question is: What is the nature and the extent of the bad news that the NDP is now hiding from Manitobans? There's still time to do the right thing.

Will the Finance Minister today commit to delivering a full budget to Manitobans?

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I make no apologies to consult with Manitobans regarding their priorities when it comes to economic matters here in the province. The member is prejudging what we'll be presenting to the House tomorrow. I can tell him it's a very robust statement about the revenues and expenditures of the government.

But I want to remind the member that when his leader was a chair of the finance committee in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker—the Harper government—and he says he was a very proud member of the Harper

government, and he was a chair of the finance committee, that government presented an economic statement to Canadians, very similar to what I'll be doing tomorrow to this House.

Mr. Speaker, you know, maybe you should ask his member: Why did he flip-flop? Why did his leader flip-flop on that issue?

### **Children in Care Statistics Counting Method Change**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services wants to walk away from her handling of the number of children in care fiasco.

Political staff work under the supervision and direction of their elected official. The government's own spokesperson said, and I'm quoting, political staffers were to blame for the mistake the minister based her decision on.

Political accountability should never be ignored, but especially not when someone makes an error in the way children in care are being counted. The Minister of Family Services said: We are all to blame for this.

Will the minister take full responsibility for this error or is she going to blame her staff?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, what do I want to ensure all Manitobans is that every child counts in this province. And we've—there has been no changes to how we count children in the province of Manitoba. It's the number of children that we counted in '14-15 is going to be the same that is represented in the annual report.

What's important for us to talk about are with the investments that we are making to protect children within the province of Manitoba, to support their families so children don't need to come into care, so they can stay in their loving environment with their parents, within their community, experiencing their culture and their tradition. That's our priority.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, every day is becoming more and more difficult to trust this NDP's government research and data. Depending on how they're feeling, the way children in care are counted seems to change from week to week.

Now, the NDP realizes a mistake has been 'nade' and are again including voluntary placements in their final count. Many provinces also include a number

for the children over 18 that are still the responsibility of the ministry. These are often called extensions-of-care children.

\* (14:10)

Will the minister confirm that the number of children this minister is responsible for, including those under extension of care, exceeds 11,000?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** What we are doing within the province of Manitoba are supporting indigenous organizations to provide services to their communities, to their families. That's our priority. That is a commitment that we've made.

We know what the members opposite think of devolution. We should be very, very afraid of their opinions of devolution and the risk that they will cause for families within this province with them slashing a half a billion dollars from the province of Manitoba.

What is that going to do for our ability to provide prevention services, good-quality housing, to ensure that we are providing the supports that are needed to reduce poverty within this province?

We need to continue to work together with all of our community stakeholders to appropriately support Manitoba families across this province.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, on February 24th we presented evidence to this House that indicate the minister's new methodology for counting the number of children in care was inconsistent with other provinces'. The minister defended her decision to this House in spite of the proof. The counting methodology was only changed after a Globe and Mail article called her out on March 4th.

If it was inadvertent, accidental or a mistake, as the minister contends, why did she wait so long?

Her credibility on this issue is certainly lacking. The minister looks more like she was caught with her hand in the cookie jar than anything else.

Why is this minister deliberately misleading Manitobans?

**Mr. Speaker:** It's very clear that the use of the words just chosen by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) are clearly unparliamentary, and I'm going to ask the honourable member for Portage la Prairie to withdraw those comments, please, in his question.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the use of the word misleading—

**An Honourable Member:** No, deliberate—deliberate misleading.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, I'm not going to repeat the word that was chosen by the honourable member, but—

**Mr. Wishart:** I apologize for using the term purposely misleading Manitobans, even if it's true.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank the honourable member.

I want to caution all honourable members to please pick and choose their words very carefully. That wasn't quite the word that the honourable member used, judging by my memory, but I want to caution all honourable members. Please pick and choose your words very carefully and make sure that we keep within the parliamentary language that is permitted in the Assembly.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** It is clear that our priority is to support Manitoba children. We're going to continue to provide the supports that they need. It is a much better plan than what the members opposite have done in the past and what they're suggesting they'll do in the future.

We have tripled the budget for Family Services. What did they do? They slashed it by millions. We have continued to provide support for foster parents. What they did is that they discontinued support to families that were a part of the kinship program. We've extended that, and we're going one step further in supporting customary care. They started to eliminate the use for services for children that were 17 and 18 years old. What we are doing is we've extended it to 21 years, and we also will provide support with a tuition waiver.

We continue to support Manitoba families today and tomorrow.

### **Children in Care Statistics Counting Method Change**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** After 17 years of NDP government we see the number of children in care doubled, Mr. Speaker, and that's not a kind of record that any government should be proud of.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services said, and I quote: We have a responsibility.

I agree that she has a responsibility to be honest; she owes it to the vulnerable kids in care under her watch.

Why didn't she do her homework before allowing political manipulation of the data to try to justify excluding and not counting hundreds of children in care?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services):** Every child counts in Manitoba. We are continuing to provide services and supports through the authorities and the agencies across this province.

We have a robust focus on prevention and ensuring that families are getting the services that they need in the front lines. Whether it is improved housing, whether it's looking at good, early access to child care, whether it's looking at all of our poverty reduction, whether it's about education and employment, we're making those investments. Those investments create a strong economy and opportunities for everyone in Manitoba.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** And, again, we find that we have twice as many kids in care today after 17 years of NDP government mismanagement in the child and family services system.

Will the minister today now admit that the only agenda she has is to politically manipulate the numbers to make her NDP government look good at the expense of vulnerable children in care under her watch?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our priority is to continue to support families so they can care for their children within their families and within their communities. That has to be our priority.

But we will never ever regret protecting a child when they are in the need of protection. That is our No. 1 priority.

After that, it is our goal to reunify that family. That is our second commitment, but we need to ensure that we are providing adequate supports to those families. We need to work with families and communities to ensure that they have the necessary supports so that their children can grow up and thrive in a healthy environment.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** But it's clear, Mr. Speaker, after 17 years of NDP government mismanagement of the child and family services system we see twice as many children in care today. We're going one way when every other province is going in another direction, so clearly things aren't working.

Will the minister today stand up and just admit, now, that she's trying to prop up her NDP government?

They have a political agenda and they don't have an agenda that looks at protecting the most vulnerable children, children under her watch.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Mr. Speaker, that there are people within the front lines every day that are delivering services to vulnerable children and to families, and making investments on prevention to ensure that they have the skills and the tools they need to parent their children and to have success. We value that and we need to keep doing that. I have no concern about our belief, about us caring about children.

I'm very concerned about what they define as caring. I don't feel that they do care. When you're going to slash a half a billion dollars, when you have a record of slashing millions of dollars from the family services, when you're discontinuing services for young people that are 16 and 17 years old, when you are not involved in reducing poverty, that is a crisis for vulnerable families.

Manitobans need to be afraid.

#### **Nursing Overtime Credits Private Agency Nurses**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP try to keep their health failures buried or they try to cover them up with over-the-top spin.

There is a major crisis right now, a very expensive one happening under the watch of this NDP government, and the NDP are dead silent about it. Through freedom of information, we have new information.

Can the Minister of Health explain why this government has had to pay over \$47 million in nursing overtime in just two years?

**Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health):** Thank the member for the question.

First like to begin by thanking all of the hard-working nurses in Manitoba. I can tell you that we have a lot more of them than we did under members opposite's watch, and I know because I was part of training them. And I appreciate the hard work that they do and I know how important it is to keep them at the bedside.

And, in fact, I would like to personally thank the nurse and nurse practitioners that looked after

myself, my son and my neighbours at the new QuickCare clinic on Portage Avenue.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure Manitobans that we're working with nurses to ensure that our nurses do have a safe working environment, they are paid well and they are at the bedside to look after all Manitobans.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, it gets worse.

The NDP remain dead silent about a crisis that is escalating under their watch, and nurses are burning out under their watch.

Can the Minister of Health explain why this government has had to pay over \$49 million for private agency nurses over the past five years?

\*(14:20)

**Ms. Blady:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

And I would like to remind Manitobans that the Conservatives would like Manitobans to forget that they lost 1,573 nurses between 1992 and 1999. They've gone so far as to claim that no nurses were fired.

Here's a quick history lesson. My cousin's wife was one of them, as were different friends and family. The free-Winnipeg Free Press reported that the Conservative government had eliminated 1,100 nursing jobs over the past six years; that's from March 12, 1999. The Manitoba Nurses Union reported that 1,000 nurses have been laid off by government, and that was in the Health Care in Manitoba report in the nurses—from the Manitoba Nurses Union in 1998.

So, you know what, Mr. Speaker, if it means paying nurses overtime to have them by the bedside, at least we're paying them and we're not firing them like members opposite.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, these numbers are staggering and they are alarming.

Mr. Speaker, \$100 million for nursing overtime and for hiring private-agency nurses. This speaks to a nursing-shortage crisis in Manitoba under this government that they do not want to admit to.

So I would like to ask the Minister of Health: Why is she dead silent about this? Because when we have a nursing shortage that is the worst in Manitoba history—worse than in 1999—why is she silent about this?

**Ms. Blady:** I'd like to thank the member for the question and, again, put a few facts on the record.

One of the things that's been told to me by many a nurse is the fact that, if there's any crisis now—first of all, it doesn't exist, and second of all, it's on the shoulders of what happened under the—under their watch. Because we committed to hire more than 2,000 nurses by 2015; we covered the retiring nurses and, again, 14,092 nurses were practising in Manitoba when we took office compared to now when we have 15,665.

We were elected to fix this problem. We've brought in more nurses. We are doing the work. We are hiring nurses. We are working with nurses and, you know what, again, Mr. Speaker, the only crisis happened under their watch. We work with nurses; they fire nurses.

### Support for Arts and Culture Government Funding Record

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Manitoba Liberals have committed to put a priority on arts and culture right from day one. In contrast, the NDP have waited for 16 years before deciding to pay attention to arts and culture.

With the Premier calling a review of his policies indicating, just as in so many other areas under their watch, that something has gone off the rails. Why is the Premier now reviewing his lack of support for arts and culture after 16 years? Could he, for once, be forthright and admit he doesn't need to waste time and tax dollars on another review of his failings?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we've been a very significant contributor to arts and culture funding in Manitoba all across the board.

Just take a look at the national Museum for Human Rights which we contributed \$40 million to. Just take look at the Manito Ahbee Festival in Manitoba, the largest festival celebrating indigenous music and culture in North America, a beacon for indigenous peoples throughout North America. We've made significant investments in the schools for the Artists in the Schools program. We've put in place support for endowment funds for the symphony and the opera and the theatre. All of those organizations, we've worked closely with them.

We also know that during these last years of austerity that arts and culture has seen some very significant pressures on them, and that's why we're reviewing our policies and meeting with them and

finding a way forward, Mr. Speaker. Because we know that when it comes to Manitoba, that our commitment to arts and culture is a very important dimension of the quality of life of all Manitobans, and we have, literally, thousands of creative people in this province that make a contribution to our quality of life at the community level.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, pressures caused by his government's cutbacks.

The government budget for Culture, Heritage, Sport and Tourism dropped by \$7 million, from \$88 million down to \$81 million from 2008 to 2015. This is in spite of adding further responsibilities to the department. An 8 per cent decrease is an odd way to put a priority on this department and its activities to support arts. The Premier is surely not putting a priority on human infrastructure.

Why is the Premier not, at least, presenting a plan, instead of just cutting the budget and then calling a review to see why he's been headed in the wrong direction for the last number of years?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, you can go to the Festival du Voyageur. You can go to Canada's largest Ukrainian festival. You can go to the Folk Festival. You can go to the jazz festival. You can go to the Fringe Festival in Manitoba. The contribution of arts and culture in Manitoba is triple that in Saskatchewan, a province that has, until very recently, a more rapidly growing economy and more resources.

Arts and culture in Manitoba is fundamental to who we are. Arts and culture in Manitoba is something that we express, not only through the traditional organizations, but through the new media, through our film tax credits, which are the best in Canada, Mr. Speaker, if not the best in North America. We have a tremendously dynamic artistic and cultural community in this province. And it's our intention to continue to support them.

And I do say to the member opposite, he wants to support arts and culture in Manitoba; I look forward to him supporting the fiscal outlook tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, when we hear it in the House.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, under the Premier's watch, since 2008 the grants to cultural organizations have fallen from \$11.4 million down to \$9.7 million. This is a 15 per cent cut.

Manitoba's ethnic diversity and our culture is one of the reasons we attract immigrants and tourists

to visit our province, and one of the reasons we need investments in this area is to grow our economy.

Why has the NDP government been neglecting support for cultural and ethnic activities in Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** We will continue to support arts and culture.

We will work with the talented people in that community. We've made very significant announcements going forward: the best Inuit art gallery in the world, we're supporting that, we're the lead contributor to that project, Mr. Speaker, along with the private sector; the Diversity Gardens, one of the lead contributors along with the community and the private sector; the aviation museum, one of the only—and the only level of government supporting it at this moment.

But I have to say to the member opposite, when he cuts \$471 million out of the budget on the health and education levy, does he really think there'll be any money left over for the arts? I think not, Mr. Speaker. When he privatizes liquor in Manitoba, will that 2 per cent that's there for social responsibility support any artistic endeavours on social responsibility? No, it won't.

His policies will take Manitoba down the rabbit hole. Alice in Wonderland will become real in Manitoba with the negative policies of the Liberal Party of Manitoba.

### **Women's Equality Government Initiatives**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we all celebrate International Women's Day. As a father, when I think of my own daughter's future, I want her to have absolutely every opportunity possible as she grows up. So we take this time to reflect on the incredible progress that we've made in supporting and promoting equality, including passing first-of-its-kind legislation in this House just last week. It's also a time, though, to think about the work yet to do.

Can the Minister of Health please inform the House on the progress we've made to further women's rights and equality for all genders in this province?

**Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health):** I'm proud to be part of a feminist government, a government that has a clear vision for equality for women and individuals of all genders.

We are proud of the steady progress we've made so far. We've passed first-of-its-kind legislation to provide paid leave to victims of domestic violence and we are strengthening protection orders to keep victims safe. We've been a strong and long-time advocate for a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. And we're continuing our support for family resource and women's centres.

And that's why I'm so proud to be part of a party that is committed to continuing that work to address the pay gap, combat violence against women and other gender-based violence and to bring more women to decision-making tables.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there's still so much more to do and we're committed to doing it, because everyone and every gender matters.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

### PETITIONS

#### Community-Based Brain Injury Services and Supports

**Mr. Speaker:** It is now time for petitions.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

\* (14:30)

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Brain Injury Canada, cited <http://braininjurycanada.ca/acquired-brain-injury/>, estimates that 50,000 Canadians sustain brain injuries each year, over 1 million Canadians live with the effects of an acquired brain injury; 30 per cent of all traumatic brain injuries are sustained by children and youth; and approximately 50 per cent of brain injuries come from falls and motor vehicle collisions.

Studies conducted by Manitoba Health in 2003 and 2006 and the Brandon Regional Health Authority in 2008 identified the need for community-based brain injury services.

These studies recommended that Manitoba adopt the Saskatchewan model on brain injury services.

The treatment and coverage for Manitobans who suffer brain injuries varies greatly, resulting in huge inadequacies depending on whether a person suffers the injury at work, in a motor vehicle accident, through assault or other medical issues such as

stroke, aneurysm or anoxia due to cardiac arrest or other medical reasons.

Although in-patient services including acute care, short- and longer term rehabilitation are available throughout the province, brain injury patients who are discharged from hospital often experience discontinuation or great reduction of services which result in significant financial and emotional burdens being placed on families and friends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to develop and evolve community-based brain injury services that include but are not limited to: case management services, also as navigation; safe and accessible housing in the community; proctor or coach-type assistance for community reintegration programs; improved access to community-based rehabilitation services; and improved transportation, especially for people living in rural locations in Manitoba.

To urge the provincial government to encompass financial and emotional supports for families and other caregivers in the model that is developed.

This petition is signed by R. Mason, B. McEwing, N. Bailey and many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

#### Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

(2) There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles that have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by D. Harper, E. Blackadar, D. Blackadar and many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions?

### **Community-Based Brain Injury Services and Supports**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these—this is the background to this petition:

(1) Brain Injury Canada, cited at <http://braininjurycanada.ca/acquired-brain-injury/>, estimates that 50,000 Canadians sustain brain injuries each year, over 1 million Canadians live with the effects of an acquired brain injury; 30 per cent of all traumatic brain injuries are sustained by children and youth; and approximately 50 per cent of brain injuries come from falls and motor vehicle collisions.

(2) Studies conducted by Manitoba Health in 2003 and 2006, and the Brandon Regional Health Authority in 2008, identified the need for community-based brain injury services.

(3) These studies recommended that Manitoba adopt the Saskatchewan model of brain injury services.

(4) The treatment and coverage for Manitobans who suffer brain injuries varies greatly, resulting in huge inadequacies depending upon whether a person suffers the injury at work, in a motor vehicle accident, through assault or from medical issues such as a stroke, aneurysm or anoxia due to cardiac arrest or other medical reasons.

(5) Although in-patient services including acute care, short- and longer term rehabilitation are available throughout the province, brain injury patients who are discharged from hospital often experience discontinuation or great reduction of services which results in significant financial and emotional burdens being placed on family and friends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to develop and evolve community-based brain injury services that include, but are not limited to: case management services, known also as service navigation; safe and accessible housing in the community; proctor or coach-type assistance for community reintegration programs; improved access to community-based rehabilitation services; and improved transportation, especially for people living in rural Manitoba.

(2) To urge the provincial government to encompass financial and emotional supports for families and other caregivers in the model that is developed.

This petition is signed by K. Newton, T. Seddon, H. Wells and many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions?

Seeing none, we'll move on to grievances.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing no grievances, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, we'd like to call Bill 11 for concurrence and third reading, after that we would like to call report stage amendments and concurrence and then third reading on Bill 33.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been announced we'll be calling bills in the following order starting with concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, to be followed by the report stage amendments of Bill 33, and then third reading of Bill 33.

### **CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS**

#### **Bill 11—The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act**

**Mr. Speaker:** Start first by calling, under concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, the domestic violence and stalking act.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 11, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la violence familiale et



le harcèlement criminel, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Speaker:** Any debate on this matter?

\* (14:40)

**Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to rise for what will likely be the last time in this Chamber and speak to Bill 11. This is a tremendously important piece of legislation so it—I'm honoured to get to put a few words on the record today about it.

I want to thank the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) for bringing this bill forward, and I want to thank him for the way that he included me and included others who have been active in the community on the issue of violence against women, service providers and others for many years.

Equally, I want to thank the Minister of Labour who also was kind enough to allow me to work with her on the bill that we passed last week to create the first paid employment leave in the country for victims of domestic violence. And I want to thank the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross) who has allowed me to continue to be active on issues related to the community of people with disabilities. All of them have been generous with me and I want to thank them sincerely for that.

I want to spend the time that I have this afternoon, for what it's worth, talking about the lessons that I have learned being in this Chamber, and lessons that I hope those of you who will be returning to this Chamber will benefit from and folks who will be new to this Chamber after the next election will benefit from.

You know it is, when you're a parent, I think that you hope to give your children lessons so that they don't make the same mistakes you do. And you very quickly find out that that is impossible, that they are going to make the same mistakes that you did and hopefully you are wise enough to be there with them, to be a soft place for them to land.

So the first thing that I want to reflect on and leave with members is one thing that I am quickly learning in this job is that there's never as much time as you think there is. I have been in this building for 14 of the last 17 years. I first came to work here after we won the election in '99. I worked with caucus. I was one of those people who chased MLAs around

the building, trying to get them their member's statement, find out why they weren't in their seat when they were supposed to be putting a committee report forward, and I have forever after had a deep empathy in my heart for people who are called upon to do that task. I'm probably no better at being where I'm supposed to be when I'm supposed to be there as a result, but that was the first role that I played here. And soon after that I was privileged to go and work with the current Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak) and House leader in Health, which has been a passion of mine for a long time, the health-care system and health policy. And we had some tremendous times together, some of which are best left unspoken for, you know, at least until the veil on Cabinet confidences are lifted. But I learnt from the Minister of Mineral Resources, who was the minister of Health at that time, I learned about compassion, deep compassion.

I will never forget an early experience that we had together when we went to meet with the parents of babies who had died as a result of the errors made in the cardiac surgery program, and we were meeting with them because our government had decided to give them \$100,000—not even a settlement, just give them a payment. They didn't have to say they weren't going to sue us but to recognize their loss. And that was important to those families, many of whom had suffered financially, certainly as a result of the time that they had spent grieving and the time they'd spent with their children. But what was more important to those families that day is they had somebody in front of them who represented the power of the health-care system, who was willing to take responsibility and who was willing to apologize and who was willing to take as much time as it took to hear their pain. And I learned more than any other example in my political career, I learnt that day what it really is to be a politician, what it really is to be a servant of the people.

Even now, as I think about leaving this place, there's still a lot of ideas I have that I wish I had made into law. There's a lot of needs I know in my community that are still unmet and there's a lot of dreams unrealized. And so what I would say to those who will occupy these seats in the future is to make the most of every moment, especially if you're lucky enough to be on this side of the House. But wherever you are in this House, there is opportunity every day to make a difference. We have tremendous power and tremendous privilege to be occupying these chairs, and we should not waste a moment of that.

You know, I'm a great watcher of all things political. I've been watching the primaries in the US, like many of you, and I've been thinking a lot about what Hillary has been saying, that she was taught in her Methodist church growing up that it was the duty in life to do as much good as you can for as many people as you can for as long as you can. And I think those are good words to live by when you get to occupy a seat in this House.

The other thing I've come to learn that I think would be important for all us to remember is that our opponents are not our enemies. I have been very privileged to have many opportunities to work with members of the opposition. Early on, I got to be vice-chair of the Public Accounts Committee, which is not as glorious and glamorous as it sounds—might be one of the worst actual jobs in this place—but in doing that I got to work with Len Derkach who was the chair, and Len and I are different folks. We come from different backgrounds, have different philosophies, but together we worked to change the way that committee functioned.

And this is not probably going to be the No. 1 achievement that anybody ever writes about me, but we worked—we both believed that that committee should be a place where politicians got to hold the government and the civil service to account for the results of the money that we were entrusted with from taxpayers, that we should be able to do it in a non-partisan a way as possible, that we should bring to that committee some kind of modern functioning—the way it did in other places—that members should have information at their fingertips to be able to do their jobs.

And I think Len and I together achieved a great deal because we worked together in good faith, because we trusted each other, we built that trust, and because I think we each had the trust and confidence of our caucuses to do that.

And my experience as House leader also gave me a lot of opportunity, sometimes more than I wished, to sit and talk to members of the opposition. But, honestly, it was an opportunity, again, to realize that the people who sit across from us in this House are folks who come here also to serve their community. They have different ideas of how to do that, different philosophies. But they're driven by many of the same desires, and I wish for future members that we find a way to do more of that. And I know there's talk about changing the way committees are structured. I think that's a great idea,

and I hope that as we do that we find a way to make those committees more collegial, we find a way to use those committees for members from all sides of the House to look at the very real issues that Manitobans send us here to solve that nobody has the market, the corner or market on how to solve.

I think there's great scope for committees to look at issues like poverty, like education, like how we treat children in this province of all stripes. And I think that it would be not only empowering, but for people who are running in this election who are trying to get elected so they can come and make a difference, giving them that role on committees, I think, would satisfy them and give them that opportunity to make a difference.

So I wish those who'll be working on that well and God speed.

Now, I come to the part of the last speech that everybody comes to where I appeal for greater decorum in the House. I—it's almost a rule that you have to do that, but I am going to do it and I'm not going to say we should never heckle; I don't believe that, not to mention it would be somewhat hypocritical of me to call on a no heckling atmosphere. But I think we should remember what heckling was meant to be. It was meant to be clever and funny. It was meant to be a well-timed remark that might slow the person who is speaking down or give some—even make people—even on the other side—chuckle to themselves. It wasn't meant to be just tossing schoolyard insults across the Chamber. That's not what heckling should be in its best tradition.

You know, all of us have people who come to this Chamber and we have schools that come here and watch us, and I'm sure many of us afterwards have gotten that stern lecture from the teacher who brought their class about what they witnessed. And maybe, like some of you, I have said, oh, it's not like that all the time, or that's just politics. But we should be more troubled by that, I think. I think Manitobans deserve better. I think they deserve a Chamber that is passionate, where people argue for their point of view, where people believe in what they believe in and bring those arguments here, and where people do heckle and are clever about it. But it should trouble us that when school children come to witness democracy that their teacher regrets bringing them here. And I think we can do better; I know we can do better and it will change when we decide to make a change.

\* (14:50)

So, after the next election, another opportunity to start again. No doubt there will be historic scores of people who'll want to settle, but I ask you to resist that urge and try to bring to bear a healthier level of debate in this Chamber because Manitobans deserve that of us.

The other thing that I have come to learn and the best advice I think I could give to any aspiring politician is to trust your constituents. Trust Manitobans. Manitobans are generous and fair-minded people. And I believe that they believe, fundamentally, that it is our role in life to care about each other, that it is our role in life to care about the least among us, and they send us here to do that work.

The most rewarding times in my career have been those times that I have sat with groups, organizations, activists in my community and heard from them the issues that they care about, heard from them their ideas to solve those issues and then helped them put those solutions into practice.

And I—you know, when I drive through my constituency, I see the results of that. I'm reminded particularly of the Mayfair Recreation Centre which stands at the corner of Donald and River. When I was running to be nominated in Fort Rouge, I sat and met with some folks who were operating programs in there. And at that time it was called the shack, and it was a name it deserved; it was an old, almost abandoned building that the City of Winnipeg owned. There was no paid staff; there was very little budget for upkeep.

But the residents in that area—many of whom dealt with mental illness and addiction, lived in poverty—they came together to put programs that they knew they needed. They did things like find an old washer and dryer that someone didn't want so they could provide free laundry services for people whose budget didn't stretch that far. They got Harvest to come in and provide a food bank once a week. They had addictions programs run out of that space.

And seeing that, I knew that I wanted to make sure they had a better space to do that in. And so, working with the City Councillor Jenny Gerbasi, we were able—and working with the mayor at the time, Sam Katz—to find the money to build a new community centre. And one of my last acts as MLA was to get to go there and host a skating party with many of the kids that lived in that area. I bring my own son to play and to play basketball and other

things. And I looked around and I know that I made a difference. I know I made a difference to those families. But that came about because the people in that community were involved. They saw a need and it wasn't just enough for them to express that need; they waded in to meet that need.

I also had the great good fortune to, early on, after I was elected, meet with some activists who wanted us to bring in an act for accessibility in Manitoba. And I was skeptical and expressed that skepticism that a legislation could do all the things that they hoped it would, but I was a backbench MLA and I said, okay, we'll find out. And, luckily, the minister at the time, now the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), allowed me that leeway and off we went to Toronto and in one day met with eight people, me with staff from the Disabilities Issues Office.

I learnt more that day about accessibility from the staffperson I was with, John Wyndels, who uses a wheelchair and had to get it in and out of Toronto taxicabs at every interval, probably, than I learned from a lot of other people.

But we did the work. The community came together, was very active. We passed that bill. And I know some day, and many, many years from now when you're passing a condolence motion about me and nobody remembers who the heck I am, hopefully, that act will have lived on and made a tremendous difference in the lives of Manitobans.

The other thing I want to say to members yet to be elected is that when you take your oath, pay attention to the words that you are speaking, because you will find maybe no greater guide to the behaviour that you're called upon to exhibit here. We all take an oath, I think, when we enter Cabinet, to serve without fear or favour. And what I think those words mean is that you speak up for your constituents, and you do that without fear of reprisal and you do that without speaking to get favours for yourself or those people that are close to you. And sometimes that means you speak truth to power, and sometimes there are consequences to doing that.

There are few jobs that give you the opportunity to be tested in the way that this job does. And I have seen tremendous courage from my colleagues and from staff who gave power and prestige and position away for the sake of principle, and I could not be prouder to have witnessed that and to have served with them.

You know, I got to work with Gary Doer. That was—part of my job here was preparing him for question period. And so, really, there's nothing else in life that is ever going to scare me after that job. But I learned some tremendous lessons about leadership sitting around the senior staff table with him and with the other senior staff, and some more colourful than others. But one of the lessons I learned is that when you are in a leadership position, you want people around you who are smart and bright and you respect, and you want them to disagree with you. You want to have rip-roaring debates at that table so that you know that you're making a decision that is sound.

And it was not easy to disagree with Gary. You had to come prepared. You had to have every argument lined up, plus all the paper that backed it up, plus, you know, some arcane notation from the Winnipeg Tribune of 1986 when somebody said something about something or other. But, if you came prepared and you had it out, you did sometimes at least slow him down and sometimes changed his mind. And that, when I was a minister, taught me that when the people who are sitting around my table who were smart and respected disagreed with me, it was time to slow down and listen and maybe be open to changing my mind. And that is a lesson I will take with me forever.

You know, people say that Gary was a hard guy to work for. That is true. But he was hard on us because he believed that Manitobans deserved excellence, not just excellence in their politicians, but excellence in the people who served as politicians.

Another lesson that I want to share with anybody who's thinking of running is that if you're thinking of running you should be wanting to get elected because you want to do something, not because you want to be someone. This is a dangerous business if you put too much of your self-worth in the hands of the voters or the media or the opposition.

One thing that is perhaps good about being a politician is people have low expectations of you. They are delighted when you show up and you can put a full sentence together and you don't have an army of handlers behind you, and you act like a normal person. But that is a sad comment in a way, that the esteem with which the public holds us is not very high. And, I think, in all seriousness it is something we should be concerned about for our own democracy.

There are few careers that having experience in that career is actually not an asset, and politics is one of them. And I think we only have to look to the Republican primary right now in the States to see where denigrating politicians and the business of politics gets you. And that, too, is up to us, I think, to not let—to say with pride, when we're asked what we do, that we are politicians, and it is a noble calling, and to make it a noble calling every day that we get to do it.

You know, most people who run for office lose, and I have lost a few times. And most political careers will end in defeat. That is the truth. So my advice to those who want to enter this world, this life, is that in the busyness of it, that you hold tight those friends who were with you before, those people who love you anyways, no matter what, who tell you what you need to hear when you need to hear it, who read the comment section for you and tell you when you shouldn't.

And I want to thank those folks, Cathy Steven, who's here today, and my good friend Bill Dinsdale, who've been my friends since high school and university, who have been beside me on this journey, and who have loved me no matter what, even when they thought I was wrong—and even volunteered on my campaign which, if there is a truer measure of friendship, I don't know what it is.

\* (15:00)

And I would also say to make sure you don't forget that you have a family, because at the end of the day they will still be there; when all of this fades away, as it will, your family will be waiting for you. When I started this, I was single. I didn't have any children. And I didn't really have the appreciation for members that had kids and families, and now I certainly do. I'm blessed to have two children of my own and a wife. And the fact that I can say that is testament to the power of politics. And I know now the sacrifice that families of politicians make. Few people do know that but we know that in this Chamber.

Every good thing that I've done has been on the advice of my wife, and every mistake that I've made has been because I didn't listen to her. And my children have given me a new perspective, not only on the importance of being here, but a perspective on those days when things aren't great. Because when you go home, and you've had not your best day, there

are still bedtime stories to tell and baths to give, and there—it's very hard to still feel sorry for yourself after the third reading of Fox in Socks, I have learned.

I would advise that you pick a spouse who loves politics as much as you do—it's worked for me—because they understand the life that you are in, and they are as deeply committed to it as you are. And I want to thank my mom, who also is here, who was an early role model for the need to get involved in politics. There was never a question when elections happened, that the first thing you did was order the sign and phone the office and find out when you were needed to come down and help. So I want to thank her for that.

And I'm going to move into the Academy Award portion, where I'm going to say my thank-yous. I want to thank my constituency staff, Sharoo and Andrew are here today. Sharoo has been with me from the beginning and held on, threatened to retire many times, but still here. Andrew is starting his time in this world and he's been such a great help to me, and I hope that he continues. I also was blessed to be served by Jeannine Kebernik and Courtney Maddock, who were also tremendous helps to me.

When I was a minister, I had some of the best civil servants you could ever ask for. My deputy ministers in particular, Jeff Parr and Jim Hrichishen, who were patient and kind and smart and always had my back, but always served the interest of Manitobans before any other interest.

I want to thank all the political staff that I have worked with. I have been honoured to be one of you. And I want to thank particularly the chiefs of staff that gave me a shot, Bob Dewar and Michael Balagus. I'm proud to call these men my friends and mentors. They've taught me much about politics and leadership and about how to be a good boss.

I want to thank both the premiers I worked with. I want to thank the current Premier (Mr. Selinger) for putting me in Cabinet. It was a privilege and an opportunity that I never thought I would have. It has changed my life and I hope it has allowed me to change others.

I want to thank the media, who mostly treated me pretty fairly. And I want to say I know that this is a hard time to be especially a print reporter, but any journalist. But you know, the media, without the media, it's very hard to actually have an accountable democracy. I know first-hand that the light that the

media brings to bear on public policy decisions can change those decisions, and can change them for the better.

But I also want to say to members of the media, you have incredible power and use it well. I think increasingly what passes for good journalism is any story where there are people arguing. And there should be more time and more investment to write the big stories that take longer and a little more digging.

I want to of course thank the clerks and the House staff, both as House leader and vice-chair of PAC and Deputy Speaker, I have been honoured to get to know you, to work with you. You would be amazed how hard clerks and deputy clerks and House staff not only work, but party. It is legendary across this country, actually. So I want to thank them for that.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of this House for helping me, guiding me, inspiring me, arguing with me, putting up with me, celebrating with me the milestones in my own life. You know, I leave this place with fewer illusions than I came in. And I said recently to someone how foolish I felt. I'm about to be 45 years old and I could still be disillusioned. But they let me know that that was actually positive that I still had those illusions and those ideals, and I think that's true. I think I leave with more wisdom. I think I still leave with a lot of hope for what government and politics can do in the lives of people who are most at need.

One of the thoughts I've had frequently as I look around this Chamber, I was really good at this and I will miss it and I will miss you. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there further debate on this matter?

**Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River):** She was really good at this job, and woe be to the person that has to speak after her.

It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to put some words on the record concerning Bill 11.

Before I do that, Mr. Speaker, as this will be my final speech in the Manitoba Legislature, I would be honoured to take a few moments to reflect on my time as MLA.

I want to thank the residents of Seine River for their confidence. It truly has been an honour to represent you and I have learned so much from you. You've shared your concerns and your triumphs with me, and I have always tried to do my best for you

and your families. Like so many of my colleagues, my success has been borne out of the love and support of my friends and family, a number of whom are present with us in the gallery today. Surprisingly, my son is one of them. He should be at school, but his dad did me the great honour of surprising me. So I'm so glad that you're here today, Jack.

My son, you may know, is an historic child, the first child born to a sitting Cabinet minister in Manitoba's history. Many women—or a number of women at the Manitoba Legislature have had children, but have not given birth while in Cabinet for any number of reasons. The star of that story is him.

My husband Sam is here today, and I want to say, first, that I'm thankful for your support over the years. It is customary in these moments to say how wonderful our spouses have been and you have, but if I am being completely honest, I must declare that that your support hasn't always come in the form of hearts and flowers. I found this at times quite frustrating. You were my toughest critic. You never played the yes man and you challenged me to always do a little better. The most important work is away from the camera, you would remind me, and this has made me a better MLA, a better mom and a better partner by forcing me to see things as they really are, not as I sometimes wanted them to be. So I am grateful for that, Sam, truly, and I love you for it.

My dear friend Colleen is here today, and having arrived this weekend from Toronto to care for her father who is very, very ill. Colleen is married to our former chief of staff, Michael Balagus, and when we lost him—a blow from which I would argue we have never recovered—I had to endure the pain of losing you, too, to another province. But you have worked so hard to ensure that the distance could never erode our friendship and you being here today for these few words means more to me than I can say.

Also among these folks today you will see members of my fantastic book club, but which generally goes by a different name than that. We have been together for over 20 years arguing passionately about the merits of hundreds of books, engaging in culinary competitions, showcasing our signature karaoke stylings and celebrating each other milestones. Thank you for everything. In Hamlet, Polonius would advise: the friends thou hast and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel. And I certainly do with you.

\* (15:10)

Also, present or past members of my staff, though such a word hardly describes what they have meant to me, your loyalty to the cause, your work ethic and dedication is worthy of note.

Sandra has been my loyal executive and constituency assistant from nearly the beginning, and she was a personal support even before that. The kindness and care you have provided to our constituents has been second to none. The loving care you have always afforded me and my whole family has made all the difference for us. We're so grateful for you, and I know we have a bond that shall never be shaken.

Linda, your service as my appointment secretary and chief person in charge of making sure the trains ran on time, was a godsend to me. I am reasonably sure this was not the easiest gig in the building, but you always managed with grace, and I'm so thankful that we were able to share those years of our lives together.

Katie always provided brilliant critical thinking skills and a razor-sharp wit that made working with her every day a privilege and a joy.

Alissa has shown all of us what it means to be resilient, and I'm grateful for her love and support.

Jodee, a great communicator, whom we tend to vilify in this place from time to time, but she certainly was that. She's been tough as nails, and I want to be just like her when I grow up.

And Keir, you have been the friend who quietly kept the list of important things we accomplished. And you would ensure it magically appeared on those days that felt lower than low. Your belief in my ability always exceeded my own, and your fair but firm approach made me do better every single time.

And to Breigh, thanks for being the kind of friend who would tell it to me straight. You had no hesitation, for example, in strolling into my office and taking one look at my occasionally dishevelled self, and saying, hmm, good thing we're not doing on-camera today. Yes, everyone needs a friend like that, I think, and I have been lucky to have that in you.

Clair had the dubious honour of having to fill Breigh's shoes when she moved on to glory. And you have never stumbled. These last two years have been toughest of all in so many ways, and your support every day has been a lifeline. The idea of a woman

for premier—I've always kind of liked it, really, and my vote, my darling, would be for you.

I'm sure that all members of this House might agree that one of the most common questions that we are asked is: Why did you get involved in politics? I can say honestly that I did not begin my professional career with a future in politics in mind. I'm a teacher. I love teaching, and I served in a number of leadership roles within that profession. I was a high-school English teacher and, as such, have always valued those who are able to speak and write well in the Queen's English, and I shall admit I often hold professionals who cannot in medium esteem.

I also taught a credit course in student leadership at Glenlawn Collegiate, and as I stood before my students, sharing pearls of wisdom with them about getting out there and taking some risks and changing the world, one of the most clever among them said, well, pardon me, miss, but what have you done lately that would fit into any of those categories? It was rather jarring, actually. At the same time, I will acknowledge public school funding was under attack. I know it was then and there that I realized I needed to make some changes in my career path, learn some new things and get myself ready for a potential run for office.

I ran in a seat in my home community. It was one that had never been held by our party. It was a seat our party brass euphemistically called a developing riding, which was code for what CJOB's Richard Cloutier later called, at the time, a seat I hadn't a hope in hell of winning. But I do love a challenge. Former Premier Gary Doer's popularity was soaring, and I worked very, very hard to do my job as candidate to secure the seat for the party, and the rest, as they say, is history.

While I have not served in this esteemed House for as long as some of my colleagues, I would submit I have learned many things along the way that I believe could be of some benefit to you in the coming days and years. With humility, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer some advice to those who will come after me. Accept it or reject it as you will, but it is offered with an open heart and with no actual consultation with the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), but you will find some of it hauntingly familiar.

Lesson No. 1: Read everything. This was sage advice given to me by the former member for Wolseley, the sensational Jean Friesen. A scholar and a very thoughtful activist, Jean took the newbies

aside and cautioned us all on this very critical point. The volume of reading will be daunting at times, but never waver from a commitment to reading everything.

If you are blessed with a Cabinet post and you still brag about completing the crossword puzzles every day, you are doing it wrong. There is simply too much to do if you are doing it right. I'll give you an example of what I mean. When I was Minister of Healthy Living, I met with a small group of Manitobans who had been profoundly affected by the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s. They were hemophiliacs and were so dependent on the blood system, and they had been let down in the worst possible way. Infections of HIV and hepatitis caused a physical decline which resulted in these folks not being able to work and maintain their lifestyles. There had been a compensation package provided across the provinces post-scandal, but it had not kept pace with the cost of living. These folks, with dignity and respect, were asking for assistance in an increase in the compensation amount, not to get rich, but to help them not lose their homes.

It was an entirely reasonable request. Very well-meaning members of my department agreed but stated that Justice Krever, in his decision concerning compensation, said that the survivors should never come back again to ask for money. Our hands were tied, they said. It just felt so unfair to me. What was worse, as I did more research, I learned that the cost-of-living issue had never really been addressed across the country because, frankly, it was believed that those affected by the tainted blood would not survive long enough to ever need it. It was sickening.

I pulled the Krever decision and I read it, just me, a girl from St. Vital with never a day of legal training. I had to see it for myself. In fact, the decision said: Never again should the victims of the tainted blood scandal have to ask for compensation. What? That wasn't a warning to these people against ever daring to ask for more. It was a declaration that these folks should never have to face the indignity of having to request what was so rightly owed to them. It was a revelation.

Longish story short, we were able to amend the amount, to create a wave across the country as others made amendments to the amounts allotted to survivors in their provinces. That small group of survivors from Manitoba got to keep their homes and live lives of quiet dignity.

I've been asked, especially in these last few months, about the project or achievement about which I am most proud. I can honestly say that I believe this is it. No headlines or feature stories on the six o'clock news, just finding a way, on the good advice from those who knew the best, to do the right thing.

Lesson No. 2: Develop relationships with your opponents. They will make you better. For those precious few who tune in to question period, I would likely—it would likely seem impossible to believe that members from opposite sides of the House could possibly find common ground. But it isn't true. I've learned plenty from members opposite, and those who have served as my critics in various portfolios, in their own ways, have compelled me to work harder and see things from a different perspective.

The member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has always had a special way of driving his point home, through sometimes confounding but almost always compelling arguments that were intelligent, well-researched and witty. When he served as my critic in Health, I would develop actual sweaty palms as he stood to put his question in question period. The last thing I ever wanted was for him or anyone to see me sweat, but I knew I was in for a rough ride no matter the topic.

And it's in this context that I would offer a quick mini lesson. When you are a minister and you know that your opponent may be the best performer in the House in QP, endeavour to keep your cheekiness in check. Play it straight because when you don't—and I've seen it happen recently, actually—you are setting yourself up to get flattened. Respect your opponent and choose carefully the style you will apply to answer your questions.

The member for Steinbach always kept me on my toes, made me work hard to correct real and perceived injustices and, in the end, when it has mattered to me more than ever, he has been my friend. And I thank you for that.

\* (15:20)

I have also been put through my paces by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), both in Health and in Jobs and the Economy, and I have admired her tenacity and thoughtfulness on both fronts. I've also appreciated the laughs that we have shared across the Chamber, usually in celebration, but often at the expense of colleagues on both sides.

The member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) also served as my critic in Health, and I can say with sincerity that nobody applied the attention to detail that he did. I remember vividly a session in Committee of Supply when the member from Morden-Winkler spent north of two hours on the Health Department's organizational chart. Now, I have to believe this must be an Assembly record. He once spent 10 minutes asking me questions about a semicolon in the department document. I will concede that I had well prepared for questions on the cardiac program and orthopedic wait times and general patient care, but the semicolon; no, that was unexpected.

And, finally, to the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) with whom I've spent the most quality time in a minister-critic relationship; I want to say thank you. I confess these were not always the words running through my head during our years of combat, but they are, indeed, the words that I believe are deserved now. I know we always had an understanding and mutual respect for the volume of work required by both minister and critic in a portfolio that has the depth and breadth of Health. Your line of questioning always held me and the government to account on the issues that mattered most to Manitoba families. Did I always agree with you? No. But I recognize that was a mutually held emotion. Did I always respect that you were trying to make a difference for people? Yes, I really did. So thank you for pushing me to be excellent whenever I could, for—along with the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson)—helping to make our colorectal cancer screening program the best in the country, and several other things too long to mention now. I know you know what they are.

Last lesson on relationships: Consider carefully the tradition and dignity of this House, especially during question period. I have not always succeeded in this regard, so I claim no moral high ground here. But I have learned. I'm asking you to concede the point that our heckling has become, at times, pretty disrespectful. We must constantly check ourselves: is what we're about to say witty or just plain mean? We all have our own barometer that measures who we believe to be the best performers in this Chamber, and this is a matter of personal taste, to be sure. But if you reflect on who you like best and why, I have no doubt that you will discover that it is because they are really, really clever and knowledgeable.

There are lines that ought not be crossed if we truly to honour parliamentary tradition. Just because



you can say something, doesn't mean you should. Even if you have to—if you even have to ask yourself whether or not something you are about to shout is too mean, then you already have your answer. The volume at which you shout something is not a reflection of its quality. It is, in my experience, most often the opposite.

So, before you call out an attack that is too personal, too biting and often too foolish, be aware of the fact that your opponents can and will make you better if you develop a relationship and a respect for them that will create the conditions for that to happen.

Lesson No. 3: Never lose sight of the individual. You will spend time weighing the pros and cons of implementing policies and, inevitably, you will make decisions based on what will do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This is not a bad thing, and shame on you if you do not apply this principle to your decision making. But some of these policies or budget decisions will inevitably leave some people out.

I'll give you an example of where this really came home for me. Some years ago, I was struggling to prepare a budget for Health with the assistance of extremely intelligent and experienced members of the department. Despite receiving only a modest increase that year and facing pressures on the cost side that seemed overwhelming, we worked morning, noon and night to come up with a budget that would be acceptable. In fact, it was excellent.

Then, two or three days before it was to be finalized, the Kristin Millar case came to my attention. At the time, Kristin was a young girl with a failing heart who was in desperate need of an LVAD—that's left ventricular assist device. This device is assigned to do the work for the heart until such time as a heart could be donated for transplant. We hadn't funded them in Manitoba nor did we have the support program in place for same, and Kristin would have to leave to be in another jurisdiction for implantation of the LVAD and until that precious heart would come, if it ever did. She would have to be away from her family when she needed them the most. We just didn't have the resources. The budget was done. We would have to tell the family to make their travel arrangements without delay.

I remember walking down the hallway to Cabinet to submit my numbers, which were due that morning. I was shaking. When it came to be my turn, the world—the words just fell out of my mouth, and

none of them were true: I'm sorry I couldn't get it done; I'll have it for you by Friday.

Just in case you were confused on this point, if you had any sense at all in your head, you never showed up for Gary Doer's Cabinet to say I didn't get my work done on time. This was justifiable homicide in his view. I got in lots of trouble at that meeting, but when it ended, the department came together and we rewrote the entire health budget. We found the roughly \$10 million we needed, but it required a retooling and a reprioritizing of the whole shebang. Kristin Millar got her LVAD and, sometime later, I am beyond delighted to say, she got that heart.

I felt awful that day in Cabinet. It was so embarrassing to be seen as unprepared and incompetent. And I would do it all again tomorrow if given half a chance. She was one daughter to one family, hardly enough to blow up a budget at deadline, right? She is—she was and is more than enough.

Lesson No. 4: Pay close attention to the table officers because they have much to teach you. I am of the belief that Manitoba is blessed with the most talented Clerk's office in the country.

**An Honourable Member:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes. These are—[*interjection*] yes, these are remarkably skilled human beings who work effectively and efficiently to make this House run smoothly. On those days when things aren't quite so smooth, I can guarantee it has everything to do with members not paying attention to the Clerk, who knows, I estimate, absolutely everything.

I want to thank all of you for your good counsel over the years and even more so for your friendship. I have shared a passion for Downton Abbey with Ms. Chaychuk and was able, with the help of the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), to nurture in her an appreciation for the juniper berry. Small compensation for the years of education she provided to me, but, hey, I contributed as I could. And I believe many in the Chamber would agree that we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Yarish for leading many years of post-session non-partisan revelry. I will miss you and all the staff at the Legislature. You truly are the best of people.

Lesson No. 5: Listen. There is a temptation in this job, with all the events to which you will be invited to say a few words, to be talking almost all of the time. Resist this. Just stop. Listen. Listen to your constituents, who have real challenges in their lives

that, sometimes, you have the ability to ease. Listen to your staff because they will have done great work to help you make good, thoughtful decisions. Listen to your deputy minister. I will concede my bias at the outset but still say that I have had the privilege of working alongside the finest deputies this province has ever seen. First—and third, actually, with Milton Sussman, a man whose attention to detail and compassion for others is without peer. Then Arlene Wilgosh, a brilliant leader and role model for how women in positions of power ought to behave. Also, Jan Sanderson, a scholar and an activist for all that is good, just and beautiful for Manitoba's children. And Karen Herd, understated but excellent in her ability to budget for and develop the largest department in government. Finally, Hugh Eliasson, who possesses the broadest institutional memory of all the deputies and is a first-rate gentleman to boot.

People such as these will teach you so much just so long as you give them that chance by really, really listening.

Listen to your critic; see lesson 3. Listen to the families in your neighbourhood. Listen to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. Listen to people from the LGBTQQ community. Listen to people who want to stop to chat in the grocery store. You will learn something from all of them, but only if the lips that are moving during the exchange do not always belong to you.

\* (15:30)

Mastery of these five basic lessons, in addition to basic common sense, should hold you in good stead as you go forward in a new or continuing career as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. But you will also need some really true, good friends. I've been fortunate in this regard. The member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) has been a supporter from the outset and has taught me much about the history of the party, of women in politics and about how to canvass at lightning speed. And I will always be thankful for all of those things.

On the subject of five particular colleagues, I have no adequate words of my own. Shakespeare wrote in his most famous speech in Henry V:

"Proclaim it ... That he which hath no stomach to this fight, / Let him depart; his passport shall be made / And crowns for convoy put in his purse: / We would not die in that man's company / that fears his fellowship to die with us."

It has been a privilege to come to know the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) who has a style and personality all his own. Your bravery in the face of a cancer diagnosis has been an inspiration. Your insight into the recent nomination challenge has been profound. And I will always remember your philosophical reflections, and frequent use of movie metaphors, that saw us through it all.

The former member for Southdale has been a source of much insight and strength through my time in politics. She is thoughtful and hilarious all at the same time, and I can say she is the stuff of true grit, as I've seen it with my own eyes many times.

And to the member from Dauphin, a champion and a true compatriot: You are the Hawkeye to my Trapper John. We have promised each other that our bond shall not be broken by lack of proximity, and you can be sure that I will hold you to that.

I must wish the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) well as she takes on a new challenge in Ottawa, although I am very, very sad to see you go. The Chamber will be less without your wise and witty words, your impassioned speeches that come from very personal triumphs and from well-researched policy initiatives. Our party will miss you because now, more than ever, your intellect, experience and excellence will be needed. An absence of excellence makes a group less, and so we will—and certainly I will—be missing you deeply. I will, however, 'proudly' cowed you—count you as a friend for life. It could not be otherwise.

I save for last the member from Minto, not because I have a hierarchy of meaningful friendships, but because I believe you are the one who has sacrificed the most in this last year and some. I have watched and listened carefully over these years and I have concluded that there is no member of this House who loves being an MLA more than you do.

You know all the darn rules and procedures and the whos and the hows and the whys of everything that goes on here. It can be a bit irritating, actually. But you care about people. You want to help them. You loved being a Cabinet minister and took the responsibility of that office more seriously than anyone I have ever seen. Outside of Tamsin and the girls, the only thing I've seen you love more than being a good Cabinet minister is the law. You love the law and the appropriate observance of same. I believe it pained nobody more than you to resign last year, but I also know well why you were compelled

to do it. I hold you in the highest esteem and I consider it an honour to call you my friend.

So, to all of you, I hold you in my heart's core and say: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; / For he to-day that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother."

On a final note, I want to wish the members who are retiring from politics all the very best, on each side of the House. Enjoy good health and happiness in the coming days. This, of course, includes you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for the decorum you have endeavoured to bring to this House. Let it then be said that I stand in full support of Bill 11.

Thank you very, very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there further debate on this matter?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is two difficult acts to follow. If I thought the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) would give me leave to call it five o'clock, I would ask, but I suspect that I would be unsuccessful in that attempt.

I've said many things already to both the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) and Seine River (Ms. Oswald), and there's a peril to put too many good things on the record, of course, but they both know that I believe that they are both two of the finest parliamentarians that I've ever had the opportunity to serve with, that I'll miss them in this Chamber, and the Chamber will be less of a place with them not here.

I do, while I have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, want, of course, to speak to this particular bill, Bill 11, and the many things that we think are positive with the bill and that are—we are going to be supportive of the bill. It is worth noting that the legislation has come as a result of tragedy, unfortunately, not just recent tragedy, although certainly it is partly because of recent tragedy, but of course also more long-standing tragedies in the province of Manitoba where women in particular have lost their life as a result of domestic violence.

I've had the opportunity to speak to those within the department and to thank them for their good work in putting together this legislation. I know that it came together relatively quickly in terms of how legislation is moved in this Assembly, but I appreciate the fact that they were able to get it to this particular point and to put a number of different provisions within the bill that we certainly support.

The issue of protection orders and ensuring the protection orders are not only available for those who need protection orders, but of course are readily available and also enforceable is important, but they are not the same things. And I propose to speak to them separately, Mr. Speaker.

The issue of the availability of protection orders is critical, Mr. Speaker. Now we know that there were challenges when it comes to the process by which people could quickly obtain protection orders where they thought they were needed, the standard was such that it became a bit of an obstacle, and we saw tragic results as a result of it.

So this particular legislation will modify the standard by which protection orders are given but still puts in place a 'protectures' and ability to respond for those who would be—have those protection orders put against them. And, of course, that is always the issue within law, is that you have the ability to respond to charges against you.

But it's often a difficult balance to find, and I think that was part of the issue when it came to protection orders, is that under the regime that exists currently, that will be modified and amended by this particular legislation, Mr. Speaker, the balance was difficult to strike, in that it was often the case where those who probably should have been granted protection orders weren't able to meet the evidentiary bar to have those protection orders granted. And so I think that it is critical that that change happens, and I know that this particular bill will modify that.

The other issue, of course, is always about enforcement. And this—the bill doesn't speak in great lengths about enforcement, but enforcement is always going to be a critical part of this. And certainly we know that those who are involved with the Winnipeg Police Service and other municipal and national police forces both in Manitoba and across the country take domestic violence and take the issue of protection orders seriously. But it is often difficult for them to have that enforcement ability, to be able to respond not only quickly, but in the right way when it comes to those issues around protection orders.

And so I think that is a piece of the puzzle that is addressed only somewhat in the legislation, but, of course, it has to go further. It needs to go much further in terms of ensuring that we have enforcement units so that the law is in place, but that there are people to actually ensure that the law is enforced. We've seen too many times in this Legislature, and I

suspect it's probably true in legislatures across Canada, where we have laws that are good and they make sense when they are passed, and they make sense in the books, but they're unenforceable, either because it's somehow set up so that it's difficult to enforce, or we don't have the people to enforce them, Mr. Speaker. And so that is a critical part of this legislation that we hope will be addressed in other ways to ensure that there is that enforceability.

\* (15:40)

We have talked about issues around electronic monitoring and the different technologies that exist today to ensure that those individuals who are high risk to reoffend and for whatever reason because the system allows them to be within the community, that they have some sort of a check and a balance through that electronic monitoring.

The government has—I think, have been a resistant participant on the issue of electronic monitoring. There's been discussions about expanding it to other forms of offenders but never in a particularly robust way, Mr. Speaker. There's always been a limited number of ways that electronic monitoring can be used.

Now, of course, we saw it used when it came to young offenders in auto theft. It's something we not only supported but it's something we promoted. It's something that should be used, but it's often forgotten. I think sometimes the members don't like to speak about it.

The issue also about young offenders when it came to auto thieves is that we also promoted and certainly supported the idea of there being strong enforcement. We understood, and I think it was borne out by the results, that there was a relatively small number of young people who were committing the vast majority of auto thieves in the province of Manitoba and that you really needed to have a specific enforcement program against those individuals.

Now, when we talk about immobilizers—and I know that the government has talked about immobilizers—that is certainly a component of it and that has been an important part of technology that has changed, and we certainly see the new vehicles that are much, much harder to steal, Mr. Speaker, but technology could only go so far. You certainly needed, at that point—at an earlier point, the enforcement and the enforcement of a small number of those who are actually committing this crime.

And so, to talk about enforcement when it comes to domestic violence is critical as well, that we have those individuals who are ensuring that the orders against those who have orders against them are actually going to be enforced, and so we would look for that to be considered here as well.

I know there's been some discussion publicly and in this House regarding this bill and whether or not certain things can be considered constitutional and those sort of things. Those questions have come from members of the Liberal Party of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I think that there is, when you have legislation that's important, when you have legislation that is critical to the safety of Manitobans, that sometimes you do have to push the envelope a little bit, and we've seen that in this House before.

I remember in the late 1990s, when I believe it was then Justice Minister Vic Toews was bringing forward legislation on the seizure of vehicles for drinking and driving and bringing different sorts of things forward when it comes to trying to reduce the number of instances of drinking and driving, there were certainly those who considered those sort of things to be unconstitutional, thought that they wouldn't stand the test of time. Some of them may have been, in fact, members opposite within the NDP, Mr. Speaker. But ultimately, I believe that they—it's gone—it went to the courts, it went to different levels of courts. It was tested, and it was shown that, of course, Manitobans have, and all provinces have, of the jurisdiction over property in the enactment on issues that relate to property, and so, that—but that was considered pushing the envelope and that was considered to be something that was new and revolutionary, and, of course, the courts have a right and a responsibility to test legislation.

I don't—and I don't believe that I've ever been critical of courts that decide, through those who bring actions to those courts, to test legislation. That is the rightful purpose of the courts, to ensure the legislation that is passed in any provincial Legislature and in any federal Legislature that it, in fact, passes the constitutional tests that we have laid out for us within our system. That is a natural check, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly support that.

So, insofar as members of the Manitoba Liberals might consider portions of this bill to be a concern when it comes to legality, there is, of course, a mechanism for that to be tested, but we believe that it's an appropriate step to take to try to ensure that we

are reducing the instances of domestic violence in the province of Manitoba.

I know that there are others who engage in trying to reduce domestic violence through other means. I want to cite in particular the Winnipeg Blue Bombers who have an initiative under way, and it's been under way for more than a year now, I believe, to try to bring awareness to Manitobans, but in particular to men, Mr. Speaker, that they have a responsibility not only, of course, not to be involved in issues of domestic violence but also to help those and to report and to mentor other individuals and try to be an example, because ultimately, when we're speaking of men, if they can be an example to others, that has a great effect as well and I think that that is considered a deterrent.

So I appreciate the fact that the Winnipeg Blue Bombers are taking on that particular aspect of this issue, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to other initiatives that could come forward, because there are always more and greater things that we can do to not only bring awareness, but to ensure that those who might be at a risk for being victims or for those who might be at a risk for being somebody who's an offender in this particular crime, that that risk is reduced. So we are appreciative of that.

At committee, there were not a great number of presenters that came forward on this particular bill—on this particular piece of legislation, but I made mention at it at committee that those who did come forward—and there were a couple who came forward and talked about very personal and emotional stories about being victims of domestic violence, and I particularly appreciated them coming to committee. Because on a bill like this, when you're talking about domestic violence, it's often very, very difficult for people to come forward and talk about it, even if that experience is no longer present. Even if they are no longer particularly at risk for domestic violence, having to relive that—and to relive it in a public forum, such as a public committee is—can be a very, very difficult thing.

So the individuals who came forward at committee and spoke to the issue of domestic violence and shared their own personal stories, I thought were particularly brave, I thought they were particularly poignant, and their comments, I thought, were well-received by all members of the committee. And we know that they spoke for many, many other individuals, Mr. Speaker, when they came and they talk about their own individual and their own

personal stories. So we appreciated them coming forward.

Now, the issue of protection orders and how it's going to change within this particular bill, I think, is going to continue to be something that needs to be looked at, and I—in talking to the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh) and his staff as part of just discussions that we have, or briefings that have happened with the Department of Justice's staff, I think, it's always something we need to look at and see how it's evolving and how it's working. Like with any piece of legislation you want to be able to review and to check back to see if something is working the way it was intended to work.

We know that there are often what we would consider to be unintended consequences of legislation. Not that anybody plans for something to happen that they would not necessarily be supportive of, Mr. Speaker, but we understand that there are often things that aren't foreseen, and that can't be foreseen when legislation is passed.

We also know that circumstances change within the context of what you're dealing with. And so I would expect that this particular piece of legislation, and any issues around protection orders, will continue to be reviewed in the future, and will continue to be looked at, and continue to be approved.

But I do appreciate that the Attorney General, the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) brought this forward and, I think, did so relatively quickly. I understand, and I know that he has indicated he is not going to be running again for re-election. I have not had the opportunity to thank him for the time that we've spent in this Chamber. There's been a couple iterations where he's been the minister and I've been his critic, and he also served as House leader at a time that I served as House leader as well, and we had the opportunity to interact that way. And I very much appreciated his historical knowledge of this place and how it works. I know he served at the Clerk's table for years prior to my being elected, but him, along with the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), and, of course, the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), and now the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak)—we often had discussions about how this place would work, either when they were House leaders or just more generally, and I appreciated relying on some of his historical knowledge.

We didn't always agree on the issues of justice, and there were different times when it was debated very strongly in this House, and we often had significant debates within question period. But it's a skill to be able to have a strong debate in this House in a question period and, often, when it becomes very emotional, and then, as House leaders, to be able to sit down and discuss what's going to happen in the afternoon.

It's hard sometimes to separate those emotions coming from question period and then to deal with the House. And he did that well, and I think I learned in my first time with House leader, I learned from him in his ability to do that. And I appreciated that opportunity to see how he was able to do that, and I think it's helped me on my second go-round as House leader, so I appreciate that. And I certainly wish him and his family—well, I won't say retirement, I'm sure he has many other things that he likes—wants to do when he leaves this Legislature, but I wish him well as he does leave the Legislature.

When it comes to this particular bill, we will allow it, of course, to pass third reading. We have made a pretty clear commitment to this bill. I made that commitment at second reading; we made the commitment at committee; and we will fulfill that commitment this afternoon by allowing the bill to pass, Mr. Speaker.

\*(15:50)

I do know that there are many, I think, who will hope that it will make a difference and, when we look back to the last two instances of domestic violence—and, in particular, I mentioned at committee, when it comes to Camille Runke, I did have the opportunity to speak to a member of her family. And I've had, you know, regular contact with this individual just to ensure that they know that this bill is proceeding. They—we don't know if this kind of a bill will have—would have made a difference in that kind of environment. We do know that Camille did everything right and that there was nothing that she could have done different, I don't think, that, really, it's a situation where she did everything that she could, and it was a tragic outcome, unfortunately.

But whether or not, and we'll never know, this kind of legislation would have changed the outcome for her, it is important to make the change, to hope that it will change the outcome for someone else. And it is one of those things about legislation that we'll pass this legislation. It may ultimately save the life of someone, but we don't—we won't necessarily

know that it had saved the life of someone. But I do believe that it has the potential to do that. It does have the potential to save the life of somebody who is the victim of domestic violence or other violence.

So I'm glad that it's come to this particular point. I do hope that there will be more consideration around issues of enforcement. But I also hope that there is going to be further discussion about this legislation as different things tend to come forward and continue to be debated.

I'm glad that this bill was prioritized by the government today. You know, it's a difficult environment right now because we only have—in terms of sitting days here in the Legislature we only have five more sitting days after today, and there are other things that are scheduled. I know the government is planning their economic statement. I'll reserve my comment on how I feel about that as opposed to a budget, Mr. Speaker, but our—there are opposition days that need to be scheduled as our rules would indicate, and those will come forward.

And so we really only have two or perhaps three more days to debate legislation here in the Assembly, and by necessity not all of the pieces of legislation will pass. We've been pretty clear in saying that when we have bills that are significant—and, really, I would say that all bills are significant even if they aren't hugely substantive in terms of what they amend or how they change things. Every bill is there because it needed to be there and because somebody thought that something should be changed and that there is an impact on somebody.

Whether we agree with the legislation or not, every bill has an impact on somebody, and we certainly think it's reasonable and respectful to spend a couple of hours—and normally that's all we have in an afternoon after question period and after the other issues have happened around routine proceedings. We only have a couple of hours to debate bills in this Assembly, and so spending two hours to debate and to discuss a bill that is going to last for a lifetime, I believe Manitobans—not only would they consider that to be a reasonable amount of time, but I actually think they would consider it to be a pretty short amount of time and might very well expect that the things are being moved quickly with debate only happening for two hours.

And so there are a number of pieces of bills, and I know the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) had brought forward a couple, and even today I believe he introduced a bill. And I look at some of

them and I go, well, they're worth supporting. They're good bills and they're appropriate bills, and with only five days left they won't all pass, of course. It's simply because of the rules that we have in this Assembly and the need for bills to go to committee and the need for bills to be debated. But that certainly isn't a reflection on the substance or the quality of some of the bills. There are always things that we might want to improve and that we might want to do somewhat differently. That's the nature of legislation.

I remember in 1999 when the Filmon government lost government. Prior to the election, there was a bill brought forward on community safety and the ability to have an order brought forward on a home where there was suspected drug activity, for example—I believe it was—I'll get the names mixed up, but I believe that the variation under the Gary Filmon government was The Safer Communities Act or something like that. The NDP, and I believe it was probably the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) brought that.

When they won government, they changed the bill. They brought it back in a different form. They made it so that the order wouldn't be requested from the individual and the community; it would be made through the department. I actually think that that was probably a good change and one that I would consider to be a positive change. But it didn't change the general substance of the bill, but it made it better, I would argue, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad that the government did that.

But so we know that there's pieces of legislation that won't necessarily pass here in this particular sitting, but could find their way back either under the current government if they are re-elected, or under a different government depending on how the composition of the House comes back after the election. They just might be brought forward in a way that, hopefully, will improve legislation.

So that is the reality of the fact that we are only left with five days or so of sitting after this particular Assembly and the fact that we have been here for four and a half years. I know that members will be going out and speaking to people, and people will be saying, oh, we have another election? I can't believe there's another election so soon.

But that happens, of course, because the federal election just happened in October. But the reality is that we are at four and a half years, that this is a bit override in terms of our timing for an election. And

so the government's been provided another additional six months over the last—over this last term because of the federal election which impeded and collided with our scheduled date for a provincial election.

Now, we were not in agreement when it came forward in terms of extending the date of the provincial election from last fall to this spring. But, certainly, you know, there's an argument to be made that—why it was done, Mr. Speaker, but it is high time that we had an election now.

So even though some of the bills won't necessarily pass because we are on short time now and we have certain steps that bills have to complete before they become law, that isn't because the government hasn't had time. The government has had more time than almost any government in recent Manitoba memory. I can't remember other governments that have gone any longer than this particular government has in terms of the time that they've had to govern as a result of the extension of six months, Mr. Speaker.

So we do look forward to this bill finishing third reading today and being passed on, and we hope that the families who've been impacted, and I don't just refer to those who have been impacted recently, but those who've unfortunately have seen loved ones become the victims of domestic violence, that they'll be able to look at this bill and feel that they've had some sort of an input into it. That they'll be able to look at this bill and feel that the loss that they suffered through their loved one resulted in something that is at least positive, that resulted in something that is meaningful, and the—resulted in something that hopefully will save the life of somebody going forward.

There's not a lot else that we can do as legislators, of course. We cannot bring somebody back who's been a victim of a crime where they've lost their life. We cannot undo the damage to a victim that has happened for somebody in a domestic violence or another situation. But there are things that we can do as MLAs, and there are things that we can do as a Legislature. We can try to ensure that it doesn't happen again or that it is minimized and that it doesn't—we can do everything within law that'll prevent it.

But, of course, we know the law only goes so far, and the law can only go so far, that there are always going to be individuals who are not concerned about what happens in the Legislature, are not concerned about what laws we pass, and are not

concerned about the law courts across the street and what consequences they could face if they are charged. That is the nature of it, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate nature of life in the world that we live in. But that is why I am particularly glad that we have individuals and we have organizations who are willing to come forward and who are willing to speak and who are willing to be mentors for different issues and to try to bring light onto what is otherwise a very, very dark situation.

So we appreciate the fact that this bill has had the discussion that it's had today. We appreciate the fact that it's gone to committee and had the presenters that it did. I believe that there are many, many more people who would be impacted by this bill and who would have come and spoke in favour and favourably of this particular piece of legislation, but they either felt that they were unable or it was, perhaps, intimidating or difficult for them to be able to do that. But, for them, this bill is as meaningful as those who were able to come to committee and make those presentations, and I hope that they know that their voices may not have been heard at committee in a verbal way but they certainly have been heard by this Legislature and that all of us, I believe, have a common goal to try to reduce and eliminate a possible domestic violence.

There isn't a person in this Chamber, and it was echoed, I think, by the members who spoke previously giving what might be their final addresses, that people who run for election in this place do it for the right reasons and do it for the appropriate reasons. And I believe that almost everyone—I believe everyone, Mr. Speaker, let me correct myself, not almost everyone—I believe everyone who runs for office does so because they want to make a difference either in their communities or in their province or, more generally, in Canada, that people do it for that reason.

This is the kind of bill I think all of us can get behind and can support. All of us can say that it's something that's worth supporting. All of us can say that it's something that probably could have been done even before and something that we need to continue to monitor to ensure that if it needs to be improved, that it will be improved.

\* (16:00)

And so I believe that this bill will pass unanimously this afternoon. I think that everyone will support it. I won't speak on behalf of my friend for the—for River Heights. I might be proven to be

wrong, but whether he supports the bill or not, I know that he also has—his heart is in the right place when it comes to this particular issue.

So I look forward to seeing this bill pass into law. More importantly, I look forward to seeing what it'll do for individuals. I look forward to seeing how protection orders will be used in the future going forward now that the standard by which they are provided is changed somewhat.

I look forward to seeing what police are able to do with this particular legislation. It's probably—you know, I think that almost every call that our police are brought to are difficult in their own way. But there may not be any more difficult situations than going to domestic violence situations where they involve family members, where they involve relationships that have been torn apart and when they involve tremendous amount of emotion and uncertainty. And so I hope that those individuals who are within our law enforcement will find this to be a useful tool.

I hope that they'll report back to us as an assembly, as a general assembly and say whether or not they think this is helping and whether or not it is being used. I know that there isn't a particularly—review clause within this bill that will require a review necessarily. But I do think that we will hear either formally or anecdotally from those who are involved in law enforcement how it's impacting them, how it's helping them, and I look forward to hearing those reports.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we may have other members of the Assembly who wish to speak to this bill, but we certainly hope that it will be passed through third reading by the end of today.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words on this piece of legislation which is designed to make it easier in many respects to get protection orders, but particularly to enable protection orders to occur where there is danger or risk of violence and somebody being hurt.

First of all, I want to say that I'm a very strong supporter of reducing and—to the extent that we can—eliminating domestic violence.

Second, after looking at this bill, I think it's important to note it's based on some very sad circumstances, where in retrospect protection orders



should have been granted but were not, with disastrous results. This, of course, raised the issue of reviewing when protection orders are issued, why these mistakes were made and how the mistakes could have been prevented.

I'm satisfied that from the presentations and from a pile of material that Jane—Dr. Jane Ursel has sent to me, that the steps being taken here are reasonable and it's appropriate and we should be moving forward with this legislation.

But I do want to make some comments here. First of all, it's quite apparent that what was happening was a problem in that protection orders have not always been used when they should have been, and perhaps there may also—from time to time—have been a problem in the protection order were used when, in fact, there may have been other approaches that would have actually been better.

As I stressed in the second reading when I talked, it's important that we use the best possible science. And it was good in this respect that we had input from Dr. Jane Ursel, who's a highly respected researcher in this area. My understanding of the science is that the past history of violence is one of the most important indicators of the likelihood of future violence. And it was therefore disturbing to find that there wasn't consistency among justices, there wasn't consistency in ensuring that the history of domestic violence was taken into account when a protection order was issued or not issued.

And, clearly, that is one very positive addition in this legislation, because clearly if the science is telling us that the history of violence is important, we need to be taking that into account. And certainly from the history of the women who were so sadly victims and who has given rise to this legislation, that it is clear that in their stories that the history of past violence, if it had been listened to and listened to carefully and the protection orders had been granted, it might have made a very significant difference.

In the committee, I had asked Dr. Jane Ursel about the concern that mental health was included broadly as a risk factor. Now, the answer that Dr. Ursel provided, which was that what is important is to be looking at is the pattern of behaviour, the past history of violence, and not just whether somebody has a mental health issue or not. I am concerned, particularly, having read something about history of violence and who is likely to cause violence, that if we are not careful we could be

stigmatizing people who have mental health issues, people who have, I will say, brain health issues, conditions like Asperger syndrome where it's easy to misinterpret the nature of people and their perhaps tendency to violence because of the nature of the way that their brain works. And I would continue to offer this caution, that in looking and making judgments in these matters in the future, that it will be important to, yes, take into account the history of past violence, because that's tremendously important in predicting future violence, but be more careful in the judgment and applying a broad judgment to anybody with a past history of mental or brain health.

We need to be cautious in this respect because some of the studies suggest that certain types of mental health, and particularly perhaps psychopathy, people who are psychopaths, needs to be looked at very carefully because these are individuals who can be very persuasive at times, and very deceptive, in a sense, in being seen to be not a problem, in being able to persuade and talk very nicely but may underneath be real, real concerns, based on some of the studies that have been done in the past. And detecting and understanding whether somebody is a psychopath is not always easy. And so I think it is important that this is a consideration, a judgment that needs to be taken into account.

I notice that the importance of having mental health professionals ask clear questions, the—one of the references, a master's thesis that Dr. Ursel sent me, had some great references with regard to the issue of violence and mental health. And in it, it was pointed out that mental health professionals tend to ask about suicide but, on the other hand, very infrequently ask about homicide ideation. And clearly that is something that mental health professionals should be asking much more, and this should be a part of what is asked in a court of law, whether there is homicidal ideation, whether it has been looked for, whether it has been evaluated.

\*(16:10)

So, in this legislation, which I think is important legislation, it is very significant legislation, and hopefully it will be effective in preventing harm, deaths, violence towards people in the future. But I believe that it is important that we have ongoing research, and that that ongoing research relates to the application of this legislation in the court of law. How well it is doing, how effective it is, whether there are some changes that need to be made in terms

of how we assess risk of violence, I would suggest that legislation should—and that research should look at, not just at where instances where protection orders should have been given but weren't, but should also look at instances where protection orders may have been granted, but probably should not have been.

I was aware of a curious situation where a male partner was one who was the more stable and was helping the female partner in this instance when she got into trouble and, because female partner had requested a protection order, it created a situation where he was no longer able to do that help when she called for help. And so they—there is an important judgment here in terms of when a protection order is granted, where it is granted, who it is granted against, and we need to look at both sides of this, always remembering that we need to be careful and make sure that we don't have the kind of violence that has occurred in Manitoba in recent years.

Certainly, anything that we can do to reduce domestic violence, intimate partner violence, is vital. And that, of course, is the reason that I brought forward Bill 215 to help to address and reduce domestic violence through better education in our public education system. And that measure was, of course, supported in principle by all members of this House, but certainly it could have been supported in a way that would have enabled it to move further and faster, and to become law sooner so that, in fact, we can build that protection from—for the sooner that prevention, sooner and quicker for the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is—society at the moment in Manitoba with—that we have has one of the highest rates of domestic violence—intimate partner violence in all of Canada. It's imperative that we act, it is imperative that we act wisely, and it's imperative that we not only strengthen the protection order system and make it better, but it is also imperative that we do much broader prevention measures as would have been in Bill 215.

I also believe that, as we heard from one of the presenters, actually not on this bill but on another bill, the concern was raised that, on occasion, one of the partners was being put in a box. That they were being put in a situation where it was a—increasingly more and more difficult for them, and that, out of that difficult situation, individual felt increasingly frustrated and that this was an important contributor, perhaps, to violence as well as other problems in the domestic scene.

And I think that as we move forward, it will be important not only in how we help and protect the victim, but, clearly, it is also important to look at what help can be given to the individual who is or may be a perpetrator. Because, clearly, if we want to reduce and eliminate domestic violence, it is addressing what can be changed, what can be helped, what can be improved for the perpetrator which may have a large effect. And we don't always consider this. We want to reach out; we want to help; we want to protect the victim; that's a natural inclination. But on the other hand, we want to, you know, throw the book at the perpetrator or at the person who may be involved in administering violence or causing violence, but we also need to consider how we address that tendency or the factors which cause that tendency to violence in the perpetrator.

And when and where—this was an important question that has been asked. If somebody is in jail, for example, when and where should individuals be released? And, clearly, one of the studies that I saw suggested that too often people who are being released were not always the right ones. They were sometimes the people who had the greater tendency toward violence. And the people who were unlikely to cause violence were sometimes the people who were kept in jail longer.

And, clearly, the better that we can understand the factors which cause the violence, the better that we can look at ways in which we can prevent violence not just through the justice system, but through the application of the health-care system, better supports in mental health—improved access to psychologists is an example—the better we may be able to get at some of the underlying factors. And the earlier we can do this in an individual's life, the earlier we can help children to grow and develop in a healthy way, the better chance we have of reducing violence in our—by adolescents, by adults.

And, surely, there is a path ahead in which we can achieve the right balance and a—approach which chooses the best way forward and protects individuals who are at risk, but also looks at the other side of the equation in how you can work with those individuals who are potential perpetrators and help—confine sometimes—ensure that they are not a continuing cause of problems. And only when we look at both sides, and only when we remember that when we're talking about intimate partner violence, the—this is clearly a problem that is primarily a situation where women are the victims about 80 per cent of the time.

But we also need to recognize that there is 20 per cent where men are victims of domestic violence, and that when we're looking at protection orders, one needs to have the right balance in terms of who's being protected from whom and how those protection orders are being applied. And remember that there are two sides to this story and that—let us make sure that we are protecting the right partner, that we are ensuring, to begin with, who is really the victim and who is the perpetrator of the problem—sometimes not always as easy as it might seem.

\*(16:20)

And, certainly, there will need to be a lot of wisdom in the application of this, and I look forward to a situation in Manitoba where we are better able to prevent problems, where we are better able to look at—through this legislation, not only better situation in terms of how we get—have protection orders granted, but also, I would hope, a better—moving toward a better scientific base, a better research base so that the law can incrementally improve and evolve. And not just the law, but our mental health-care system and other aspects of our society can improve.

So, with those comments, I want to say thank you to Dr. Ursel who was presenting. I also want to thank Ms. Storeshaw who presented because I think her comments, too, were very valuable.

And I want in closing, to recognize that this bill is really trying to reach out to those who have been affected by domestic violence and to say to those who have been affected by it: We in this Chamber are trying to do something about it, to improve this, to prevent violence toward victims, to improve the domestic situation in the lives of families in Manitoba. And, hopefully, it will be a significant step in that direction. That, we will have to wait and see. But I think that, in this endeavour, we are doing our best at the moment and I sure hope it makes the difference that we all want to see.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 11, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

It is indeed unfortunate that a bill of this type came forward as a result of the death of an individual, or perhaps, more. We've seen the impact domestic violence has on society, and sometimes there is—things happen too late for those victims.

Interesting to see the approach taken here and, you know, a change in the process for obtaining

protection orders. But just obtaining the protection order is not the only thing that needs to make sure—we make sure it happens, but also the enforcement of that protection order. A piece of paper is not necessarily going to protect the individuals who are at risk; that is up to the legal and the enforcement organizations that need to make sure that those individuals still are protected.

And there's many, many different forms now, of course, of domestic violence. And, as we move into different areas with our digital world, all those areas—emails, texts, blogs, attacks online of individuals or on particular web pages—all of those things need to be taken into account and understood that you can—now, people can reach out from far away to impact an individual. So it's not necessarily in person that domestic violence may happen, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously we looked, and there's lots of different reasons that we hear all the time. You look at many different studies. People are looking for easy solutions and there is no easy solution, Mr. Speaker. Obviously fear is a big part of it.

As we see downturns in the economy, we also see spikes in domestic violence as people see that there is no way out and may take out their frustrations on their spouse or others in the household. Those are all things that we do see increasing as we see downturns in our economy. And I know from speaking to the law enforcement community in western Manitoba, as we've seen a downturn in the oil patch out there, and in the economy of the local areas, they have been very busy is what they've told me. They don't need to go into more detail and I don't want necessarily more detail, Mr. Speaker, because the law enforcement community sees things on the front line that they're able to protect us from. And they see things daily that, maybe, those of us that are not in their form of work don't need to see.

Breaking the cycling—cycle of violence is obviously an important part, and I think act may go a step towards that. To protecting an individual who may be at risk, allowing them to escape that cycle of violence, and, if there are children involved, taking them away from the individual that may be creating that violence, so that they can move into a world where that is not their role model and, indeed, move into a role that they can seek more positive role models and see that there are ways of dealing with conflict that do not require violence.

So other areas, of course, are addictions. And we see various forms of addictions, whether it be alcohol

or drugs or gambling, and many of those areas we see an impact on the individual sometimes can lead to domestic violence from the addictions themselves. How you break those cycles, again, is another area that resources are sometimes stretched, Mr. Speaker. I have had individuals that have called me, that they know that when they do seek help from addictions, they have a very small window of when they recognize that they need help and that they can seek help. And that window could be anywhere from a few hours to a few days to a few weeks where they can hold their lives together, stay away from that particular addiction until they do get access to a treatment facility in Manitoba here—or if they're able to be well enough off to go to another treatment facility. But in Manitoba here I know we have had restrictions on the availability of spots in those addictions facilities and sometimes those individuals are told to come back months out into the future. Well, they can't hold it together for that long. So resources in addictions facilities are an area that will help in breaking the cycle of addictions and violence, but those are things that need to be available to people.

And I know, from speaking to the ministers in the Brandon community, how they deal with individuals in the Brandon correctional institute in—and deal with issues of violence and addictions. And we do see those people that not always in—when you're in remand in a place like Brandon or if you're in the Remand Centre in Winnipeg, you may not have access to those types of counselling, Mr. Speaker, and that is often the type of counselling that is necessary in those early interventions to break the cycle.

So we've talked a bit about the power and control that we see in domestic violence. And I think that this particular legislation may go a small distance to breaking that cycle of power control, removing the individual that's at risk from some of it. And often we hear the individuals that are perpetrators of domestic violence will seek to blame others other than their own actions. They cannot take responsibility for their own actions often, Mr. Speaker, and we see that they will blame anyone and everyone else for things that they have indeed caused.

I do have some experience in this regard, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that I'm well aware of an individual that was in a very uncomfortable situation, a very dangerous situation. And, you know, it's difficult to watch someone that you love that is in

that particular situation, that is not looking for help or intervention, sometimes has the strength to build up the ability and the self-esteem enough to remove themselves from that situation, and you see them, hopefully, going down a new path in their life, but then often they do return to that unfortunate situation and the cycle starts again.

And as people that we love, there is often little we can do. I know in this circumstance there are some changes with this particular legislation that will allow loved ones to intervene with a protection order if the individual does seek that. So I think that's a good step in the right direction. In this particular case that I'm aware of, the—finally, the cycle was broken. The individual had to change their cellphone number several times in—and—in order to get away from the individual that was perpetrating this type of thing and, as I said, very difficult to watch, difficult to know what you can and can't do, most of the time the individuals that I've come to know in this situation. They don't want to admit that it's happening to them. They don't want to admit that this happens in families like theirs. So they tend to blame themselves.

\*(16:30)

And I know there are studies out there about learned helplessness and individuals that are the perpetrators of the violence are often seen as very powerful individuals and charismatic and they can explain many, many things away, Mr. Speaker.

A little while ago, I was struck by an individual that I've heard speak several times; Mr. Frank Tacan, who's an elder with Sioux Valley and has spoken several times while I've been present about cycles of violence, and, taking on the responsibility as an elder in the community, to say that elders in his community need to take a responsibility to teach their young men how to treat the young women. And he has taken on some of those tasks, Mr. Speaker, and—as only he could. But it is something, in all of our communities, that we can learn from others and learn how we can step in to teach our young people and help them break these cycles of violence so that they see how normal families behave, as opposed to dysfunctional families.

And, as I look at alcoholic families or things of that nature, it's all very well documented, the decline of individuals in those particular addictions or those families and the relationships of individuals in those particular families and how dependent they are on each other—how codependence, indeed—to not

necessarily promote, but how that—they are enable to—how they are enablers of the alcoholic's dependency, and often we see violence swung into that—comes into that whole mix, Mr. Speaker.

So individuals that are in these environments may not know what normal is, and that is the step that we need to take here. And I think that this opportunity will allow people to be removed from that abnormal situation and, perhaps, to learn how normal people treat each other, how normal people look at each other for help and assistance day-to-day, as opposed to creating victims and making—and the perpetrators of the violence, whether it be physical or psychological, have that huge impact on those families, Mr. Speaker. So, not just the immediate loved one, but the families as well, and the children to become subject to this and, of course, we see that cycle repeating itself time and time again.

So intervention is often necessary. The question is of what we can do, how we can, indeed, intervene. And I spoke last week about the bill that was before the House, talking about the employer's responsibilities, perhaps, or the required leave for individuals who were subject to violence. And, as an employer, I was speaking to the Chamber of Commerce last week about this saying that, you know, I think there is a role for organizations like that to move out and educate employers on what their roles and responsibilities are when they see signs of domestic violence coming to the workplace. Because most of those—or, all of those individuals—are valued members of your workplace, valued members of your staff. They're important for—it's important for them, not only to be there to earn income but, also, for your business to survive and thrive, because the staff are the ones that make it work.

But, as an employer, to recognize signs of domestic violence and know what you are able to do, what can you do to intervene, who can you call, where are resources available, Mr. Speaker. And I think those are all important things that we need to make sure that people are educated on in the workforce and in families in terms of what can they do in order to change this and make sure that individuals that are at risk are protected and removed from situations, if that be the case, because I think, when we look at studies, removing the individuals from these particular environments is the best success. The individual that is the perpetrator of the violence is the one that needs to find a way to deal with their own situation and find a way to change

their behaviour, but is not—that changed behaviour is not something that you can force on people, nor is the behaviour of people going back that return—often return to areas or—of violence.

We see that—often we see, as was the case in my experience or my knowledge of this individual that had left and gone back and left and gone back, often for a good length of time when we thought the individual was safe. And then, to our dismay, saw that that individual was back with the person who was causing her harm.

So there was, you know, little that you can do because you can't tell them they're wrong. They won't listen to you. They're listening to the individual that has drawn them back into the web of violence, and everybody else in the world is apparently wrong according to that. So all we can do is be there for them.

But I think this particular act will give us another tool in dealing with those types of things, and, hopefully, we can reduce the risk to those individuals and the threat of not only violence, but, obviously, death and other things that may be damaging to the individuals. And, hopefully, we will—I can't say that we'll never see those types of circumstances again. It'll take a long time, but little steps on how we move things forward like this bill here will go a way into protecting some of those individuals.

So I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, there are others that may wish to speak to this, so thank you for the opportunity.

I listened to the members for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) and Seine River (Ms. Oswald) a little bit in the House, and back in my office when I was there, heard some good advice from both. They have both been long-term members of this House and, obviously, have a great deal more experience here than I have. So I always do take advice for what it is and the—most of their words, I thought, had to deal with relationships with people and how you deal with those relationships, and that's partly what we're speaking about in this particular act. But they had some very good words on how to improve those relationships. So we'll listen to them and we'll listen to others.

Thank you.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon and speak to Bill 11, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, as legislators, I think we all desire to have an impact not only on our own local community, but on the large community, that being Manitoba. And I think those opportunities, unfortunately, aren't always present for us in that as we get wrapped up in some of the partisan activities that can threaten to engulf us legislators and as a legislator office.

That being said, though, Mr. Speaker, there are those pieces of legislation like Bill 11, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act, that clearly cross all political boundaries, as you heard the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) speak in favour this legislation, as a number of my colleagues have spoken in favour of this legislation and, obviously, as members of the government have also spoken in favour of this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, the idea that we collectively are able to put forward additional protection orders against somebody who's engaged in a victim of domestic violence or stalking, I think, is a worthy goal. Unfortunately, and too often these actions by government—and I'm not laying blame at the feet of government. It's an unfortunate situation that we live in that too often important pieces of the legislation that are before us for debate are the result of horrific tragedies.

As noted, that this bill, in fact, took the murder of two women in the past year to make it to the floor of the Legislature, which obviously spurred on the need of this bill. And, really, I mean, it was those two senseless acts of violence, Mr. Speaker, that's really galvanized the community in all aspects of the community, obviously, those individuals that—who work in the front lines in terms of police services, that work at the court system and that work behind the scenes in terms of counselling and the shelters and such. And I think all of us and all of them share a frustration with individuals who continue to flaunt and ignore the orders of the court to stay away from a certain individual whom they were menacing or stalking or violently engaged with.

\*(16:40)

So putting additional measures—in particular a measure to take away any firearms, is it a guarantee that they will not continue to flaunt that order? Absolutely not. But at least it's one more tool. It's one more avenue and one more option for the courts and our legal system to be engaged in to at least—in a lot of instances, it comes down to peace of mind. And, if you're able to at least mitigate one small

stress on a victim, that their former spouse no longer has access to a firearm, Mr. Speaker, in which to potentially harm them, I think that's a good thing. But by no means am I going to suggest that this bill or probably any bill that we put forward will be the be-all and end-all when it comes to the issue of domestic violence.

You've heard many of my colleagues across all aspects of this Legislature talk about that cycle, the cycle of violence and how we break that cycle. Previously, last week I spoke on the government's legislation to allow leaves of absence for victims of domestic violence, something I spoke in favour of, and, as I said something, obviously, I'm speaking of in favour today with Bill 11. And I talked about my own instance, Mr. Speaker, when I'd just gone to Brandon University and I was renting an apartment just off from the university, and my girlfriend and I, one evening—I mean, it was pretty clear that the landlady and her boyfriend, who were living together, were engaged in a very 'tumultuous' relationship, and that is obviously being very generous with that term. But I had no concept that it would degenerate so quickly into the out-and-out violence that we were witness to through the floor and walls of our building as this victim, the landlady, was literally thrown around in her own home, thrown up against walls and brutalized.

And I remember calling 911, and Brandon Police Service, to their credit, quickly engaged, Mr. Speaker, and at that time the previous government had brought in legislation, again, along that path to help provide those additional opportunities for protection. But those protections obviously aren't enough.

I remember engaging and speaking with my landlady the next day, Mr. Speaker, after the boyfriend had obviously been physically removed from the house. And she was, physically, a mess. I mean, it was clear that she was at the receiving end of physical violence as her face was swollen and bruised and bloodied. And yet, despite that, her thoughts were with the perpetrator of the violence that had been directed towards herself, that, you know, if only she hadn't set him off on—in something that she had said or done, that, you know, she was aware that he had a temper, and, you know, it was really her doing that led to his eruption of verbal and physical violence towards her.

And I remember at the time, Mr. Speaker, having quite—being quite shocked that anyone could

feel that way, that—feel that somehow that they deserved what they received, especially when it was violence and degrading. But now, you know, as you get older and you're more involved in learning about behaviour and you learn about a whole host of issues that can perpetuate that cycle of violence, whether it's self-esteem issues and feelings of self-worth, that can only contribute—or that can contribute to the continuation and that ongoing cycle.

Mr. Speaker, I'd love to be able to stand here today and say that there was a happy ending with this particular story, that my landlady recognized the danger and the long-term risks of her relationship with her boyfriend and had left him and went on to live a long and fruitful life, but I can't. She—the boyfriend was back within days with platitudes of forgiveness and requests of forgiveness and flowers. And the cycle continued on. And, ultimately, I found another residence to live. I don't—to this day I'm not sure what ultimately happened there. Part of me obviously hopes that at some point my former landlady found the resources that exist within the community to allow her to break that cycle, to look inward and to realize that no individual, male or female, in a relationship is—deserves that kind of treatment.

So obviously when we have an opportunity to bring forward legislations—legislation like Bill 11, Mr. Speaker, where we can extend protection orders so that if there is a registered firearm with that individual that firearm can be seized, that we can expand the definition of stalking to make sure that it includes some of the modern tools that are available, whether they're online tools that simply—that previous legislators—they didn't exist. And obviously it's hard to legislate for things that are literally science fiction at one point but become science fact. And now with social media, with the Internet, with the Twitter and Facebook and just email, suddenly you become—potentially become open to 24 hours of victimization by your stalker, by your abuser, which makes it that much harder to escape because it follows you and virtually follows you, which can be just as debilitating and crippling psychologically as if they were physically following you and stalking you.

So I am pleased that this—the expansion, the definition to include electronic media is part of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. So again so that no longer will a victim have to go to the courts and have to argue that stalking through social media, that stalking through electronic means, whether it's text

and that, is a form of harassment. Of course, we'll see it and simply be provided with the evidence that it is occurring and then they will know that based on the legislation that we debate and pass here today to go on that it is indeed illegal and that there are consequences for continuing to break that law.

Mr. Speaker, it is part of our role too as legislators to, again, while we can bring forward legislation and very sound legislation, as it is in this case, I think we have to be—we have to recognize again, as I pointed out, that it is more than just simply Bill 11 that is going to make our communities safer for victims of domestic violence and of stalking. We need to make sure that there's resources out there so that when an individual is prepared to reach out and make that decision to leave their partner or their situation that the resources exist for them to go to, and whether that resource is a shelter where they can physically go, where they can physically go with their family, with their children, and seek that physical help that they need to be physically removed from the situation, whether it's a matter of counselling services so that they can understand why they find themselves in that cycle. And that's really I think as important a component of this—of breaking that cycle as anything else, as any piece of legislation we can debate.

I mentioned the other week, Mr. Speaker, when I was talking to the absence—the leave of absence for victims of domestic violence, of a friend of mine from high school that recently reached out to me in some postings I had made on social media about a young man and the fact that he was a suicide survivor. And she had reached out to talk about her own struggles with mental illness and her own realization of—and here she is, you know, a woman of 45, that she has spent a lifetime engaged in relationships with individuals that were violent towards her and how that a previous partner had choked her into unconsciousness just last January or the previous year, and that court case was just coming up and she was going to be testifying in that.

\* (16:50)

And, despite the realization that, you know, almost impartially, she could see throughout her life that cycle that she found herself trapped in, that she kept going back to the so-called—you know, what is—the colloquial euphemism that's often used is the bad boy, and I think that, unfortunately, just fails to really encapsulate, actually, the true evil that is occurring.

And, despite all that, despite her ability to be aware that she has perpetuated and been a victim of the cycle throughout her entire life, throughout every relationship she found herself in, Mr. Speaker, and, obviously to the point where, you know, in her instance, choked unconsciousness and it may have been much, much worse based on a whole number of other incidents or situations in that particular incident.

But, despite all that, it was very clear that this was not a Kumbaya moment, Mr. Speaker, where she had seen the light and that she suddenly, you know, found herself and she was able to report she was in a healthy and happy loving and respectful relationship. Maybe, and I hope that my dear friend is—an old friend is on that path out there on the west coast, but—and I will—I'll keep in contact with her and I will hope that she does find those resources in the community to help her break that cycle.

But it is an eye opener when you realize that an individual from—somebody that you've known literally probably for 30 solid years has been in a never-ending cycle of violence, and they simply have swapped out one abuser for the next abuser for the next abuser. And so, when we as members of the Assembly stand united and support legislation like Bill 11, I think we are sending an important message to the community, to the law enforcement community, to the justice community, to the counselling community, that we are behind you, that we support you, and that we are going to try to make sure that you have additional tools and resources to follow through on what you're seeing out there in terms of protections of individuals for domestic violence and stalking.

And so I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that there are other individuals that would like to make comment on Bill 11, but I'll add a few more comments about The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

One of the other comments, Mr. Speaker, again, into my own personal education about the impact of violence, is I've noted on the record that I used to work for Community and Youth Correctional Services in the Westman region, and it was there that I had the opportunity to work under a terrific mentor who is no longer with us, Mr. Bob Hunter. He was a probation officer who specialized and dealt almost exclusively with domestic violence and held the counselling sessions with the perpetrators of the violence. And we often forget that there is a role for

the system in helping these individuals as well, and so we can't forget that we need to make sure that they have the resources that, should they be aware of the need of their own negative consequences of behaviour and they want to make those changes, whether it's court mandated, in some instances, or whether it's their own ability to change the path that they're on, that negative path, that we are there to support them.

But, in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say those few words on The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act, and I look forward to speedy passage of the legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there further debate on this matter?

The honourable Minister of Justice, to close debates.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I'll close debate on this one very briefly. In the last few days, we heard from Judge Martin of the Provincial Court of Manitoba calling for more supports for women who are in danger in this province, and that was based on the fact that he had witnessed, I believe, about five domestic violence homicides against women in the last number—the last short period of time. I think that was a plea to all of us in here to do what we're doing right now, and that is, in fact, to bring in greater supports for women who are exposed to this terror, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I was raised in a family—I was raised by a single mom, my dad died when I was two. I never had any exposure to domestic violence in my upbringing, but when I came into this Assembly in opposition, the NDP caucus of the day, in 1995, went around the province with what we called the NDP Caucus Task Force on Violence Against Women. It changed my life, Mr. Speaker.

It was amazing and extraordinary what women were suffering. I heard messages from women up north in particular who had been terrorized in their communities—young women. I remember one woman came and said, I was the only one of my friends that hadn't been raped, and I was told by a leader in the community, just get used to it.

But, Mr. Speaker, all across this province we heard about the need for greater protections. And we had many hearings that were in private, as well, to enable women to come forward. And it brought me



to the standing committee of the day, when we had women that came to the standing committee, a most public of places, talking about their most private and painful episodes of their life, that, indeed, could have ended their lives, and they were so strong, those leaders, and many from the labour movement.

I think, for example, of the leader of the MGEU who came and spoke with such eloquence and strength. And I say this bill is for them, Mr. Speaker. But it also, of course, is for Selena Keeper and Camille Runke and too many other Manitoba women who deserve long lives and who deserve lives in peace.

I'll just conclude by saying that one of the more notable aspects of this bill is the prohibition on having firearms when there is evidence of firearms in the home of someone who is the subject of the protection order. And I listened very carefully, and I'll say this, Mr. Speaker, with an open heart, but I listened very carefully to the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and he did not say that his candidate in Radisson and his opposition to that provision, the first of its kind in Canada, was misplaced. And we should all be standing up to get firearms away from wife beaters.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this legislation is as strong as it can be with regard to the Constitution. And I would ask Manitoba Liberals to stand up for the women who need someone on their side, who need their lives protected, rather than the liberties, the supposed liberties, an argument about liberties, for wife beaters. This legislation moves the dial to where it has to be.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know we'll continue to look for improvements and find improvements, because

that is always necessary. But I am pleased, though, that members are prepared to pass this legislation and I'm honoured to be in the place where I have been and to hear from so many out there that have given their advice to make this bill work.

And I ask, Mr. Speaker, for the House, as well, to just give a round of applause to a department that went way beyond the call of duty.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any—we'll now turn our attention to the concurrence and third reading, and I'm going to see if the House is ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

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

Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning—I'm sorry, did I misunderstand the House?

I'll put the question again: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock?

**An Honourable Member:** It is 5 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, it is 5 o'clock now.

The hour being past 5 p.m. now, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, March 7, 2016**

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