

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LXIII No. 54A – 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 31, 2011

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	
<i>Vacant</i>	Lac du Bonnet	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 31, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): I wonder if you'd canvass the House to see if there's leave to proceed to Bill 219, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, sponsored by the member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to go directly to 219, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act? *[Agreed]*

Okay, it's been agreed to, so I'm going to call second reading of Bill 219, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 219—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I move, seconded by the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), that Bill 219, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, be now read a second time, and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: A pleasure for me to rise in the House today, and I certainly thank the government for allowing us to debate Bill 219 this morning.

This particular bill is not new to the Legislature here in Manitoba. My colleagues had previously introduced this legislation. Both my colleagues from Springfield and Tuxedo introduced this legislation. Hopefully, this time around, the government will view it in a favourable light. We have a new minister

here, and I know she's interested in making positive changes for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the retired teachers who have made the trip down to the Legislature here this morning from all across Manitoba. Obviously, they have a vested interest in terms of this legislation moving forward, and I do want to thank them on behalf of all Manitobans for their contribution to society over the years.

And, I think what we're dealing with today is really an issue of fairness and equity, in how we deal with our retired teachers across the province. And, you know, a lot of these retired teachers didn't have the same types of salaries and income that teachers enjoy during today's times and, obviously, that's—that can be reflected in their pensions as well. And, obviously, they noticed some issues dealing with their pensions moving forward in terms of their COLA arrangements, and we think this bill will help address some of the issues in terms of fairness and equity.

This bill does just a couple of little things that we think that would send the right signal to Manitobans and to retired teachers. What we're looking at, simply, is reducing—or, pardon me—increasing the number of board members to nine. There'd be an addition of two to members to the TRAF board. We would ask that one of those members have an investment management experience and that one of the members that would be nominated by the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. The premise would be that the Retired Teachers' Association would put forward names to the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan); the Minister of Education then would take one of those nominees put forward and place that particular individual on the teachers' retirement board.

And really, I think, Mr. Speaker, what the essence of it is—that obviously retired teachers have a direct interest in terms of their pensions and the teachers' retirement board. We think this would be a nice conduit to have a direct relationship between the board and the retired teachers. Certainly, we do recognize that there is a retired teacher on the board presently. We just think that if this was enshrined in legislation that that conduit would be there. It would

be there forever, and then there'd be an automatic reporting back to the Retired Teachers' Association.

And in terms of the Retired Teachers' Association, too, I want to just acknowledge the great work that that association does day after day and year after year. The Retired Teachers' Association represents over 8,000 of the 11,000 retired teachers in Manitoba. So, obviously, the retired teachers recognize the good work that the association does on their behalf, and certainly willing to pay their dues annually for the good work that the association does on their behalf.

So I do want to thank the executive of the Retired Teachers' Association for the time that they have given me in terms of providing information and providing the issues that are relevant to their membership. And I appreciate their time and their straightforward discussions we've had over the last couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, it's been pretty clear that the cost-of-living issue has not been a priority for this particular government over the last few years. Certainly, I know the minister will say that their government has looked at the legislation and then opened up the act on a number of occasions. They've certainly—Bill 45—we had considerable discussions a few years ago over that particular legislation. I know the government has actually added some dollars to the funds and, certainly, we commend them for that activity.

But at the bottom of the—at the end of the day, the issue has still not been completely resolved; the COLA issue has still not been completely resolved. And, in fact, if you looked at the numbers, Mr. Speaker, going back since 1999, and you look at the purchasing power of a dollar versus 1999 and today's purchasing power, you know, that purchasing power of the dollar has been reduced to 87 cents, just in that short period of time. So that's why the teachers and the retired teachers recognize that the cost of living on the pension issue is so very important today and, of course, moving forward into the future.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, as we've lost ground over the last few years, it's going to take considerable effort to make up that ground going forward. So what we see is, we see this, you know, a bit of a spiralling decline in terms of our purchasing power for our very important seniors.

And, you know, as we look forward to, hopefully, a positive announcement here later this

morning in Winnipeg and maybe the return of an NHL franchise to Winnipeg, I know retired teachers would be more than happy to go and support the Winnipeg Jets, or whatever they're going to be called. But at the—they do have to have the ability to go down and actually make—purchase those tickets. But we do want to certainly acknowledge the good work they do in society and the different events that they do and, obviously, retired teachers do remain active in our society.

* (10:10)

Mr. Speaker, I do want to make a point here, and this year, in 2011, is a classic example. The cost of living that retired teachers will be receiving actually amounts to 42 per cent of the consumer price index. So, as you can tell, that's, you know, a long way from where a lot of pensioners expect their pensions to be.

In fact, it amounts to about two-thirds of two-thirds of the cost of living. So it's a pretty substantial difference from where a lot of, I would think, teachers—the teachers that are working these days who may be close to retirement probably think that they're going to get full cost of living in their pension.

And, again, the reality can't be further from the truth. They were a long way from being even two-thirds of the cost of living, and this is what we hope this will—this particular legislation will do is will help to get the parties at the table so that we can move forward in positive discussions.

Now, I do applaud the minister's step in terms of the two per cent rate increase from MTS. I think that's a good move and I recognize that MTS view that as a positive move, because I think they can recognize that their current teachers are going to be at risk in terms of their pension if something isn't done in a positive light.

We're not exactly sure how that will work out in terms of cost of living down the road. Obviously, it's going to be several years before that particular increase is fully implemented, and then again, the proof is in the pudding in terms of what that will mean to pensions and the cost of living at the end of the day.

I do want to make a point about the Pension Task Force, and I know it seems that we haven't had real formal discussions in terms of the Teachers' Pension Task Force. And I think it would be a positive for the retired teachers to be involved in that particular task force; obviously, they have a vested

stake in that. We know teachers want to be at the table, certainly, because they are certainly paying into the pension at this point in time, and they have a vested interest because they will be retiring as well. And the retired teachers obviously have a, you know, interest in it today, because they are retired and they are receiving it. I think that that can be somewhere that we can address the issue moving forward as well in terms of the Pension Task Force.

And I do want to make a point about some of the other provinces that have moved forward in terms of their process in trying to deal with the difficult pension and the COLA issues, and I look to British Columbia who have just gone through or kind of finalizing their process. They recognized that they had issues with their teachers' pension fund, their cost-of-living adjustment, and they took it upon themselves to have a real hard look at it and how they were going to deal with it.

And they came up with a very professional and systematic method where they can involve both active teachers, they would involve the government and they would involve retired teachers in the process. And it really was a real—a meaningful consultation where all stakeholders were at the table, and I think that's very positive.

And I think that's something that we could have a look at here in Manitoba and look to move to implement some kind of a process there, because it is a very important issue for many Manitobans. And I think it's—there's certainly room for improvement in terms of our pension and I think it's a matter of all of us, including us as legislators, to help move the issue forward, getting active teachers and retired teachers at the table. I certainly look forward to the minister's comments this morning, and hopefully, the government will view this legislation favourably. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a privilege to speak to this piece of legislation this morning. I actually had an announcement of a new infrastructure project at the George V School this morning and, of course, I had to give that announcement up this morning, and someone else is doing it on my behalf, because I felt it was important to be here this morning to speak to this piece of legislation, because I believe it's important.

And I also wanted to be here this morning to thank the retired teachers for being here this morning. I'd like to thank Richard Benoit and Anne

Monk, who I've had the opportunity to work with over the last year and a half. And I can guarantee the retired teachers in the gallery that you have strong advocates who know pension legislation very, very well, who advocate on your behalf very, very well in regards to all of the pension issues that have occurred over the last 12 years, certainly since we have been in government. And I just want to thank them for the excellent working relationship that we have had since I've been the Minister of Education.

I'd like to just comment in regards to public education. I would like to say that we believe that public education is the equalizer in our society. We believe that anyone who—anyone, regardless of their prior learning, regardless of their socio-economic status, their upbringing, their personal circumstances, if they have an education they can continue on in society and they can contribute and become a contributing member of our society, and it is because of the work that teachers do and have done for many, many years in this province.

And we have a lot to thank our teachers for in regards to the work that they have done. I call the teaching profession a calling in life. I believe that people do it because—they do it from the heart. We know how challenging those jobs are and we just are so thankful that so many people in our society have chosen to be professional teachers, because our society is better off because of you and, of course, because of you in the gallery today.

I'd just like to chat a little bit about, you know, what we inherited when we got into government in 1999. I think it's important to put on the public record that there was a huge unfunded liability in our teacher pension fund. And that was concerning to us as a government and, you know, we made sure that we had discussions about that unfunded liability, and we had to make contributions to that pension plan to ensure that it was sustainable.

And because of our work, Mr. Speaker, we made a contribution, over the years, of \$1.75 billion to the TRAF fund to ensure that the employer portion of the fund was 75 per cent funded. And it was the first contribution that had been made to the TRAF fund since 1963. And, you know, we felt that this was important because we felt that we didn't want to see teachers retiring and not being able, at some point, to collect a pension if that fund didn't have enough money in it to pay teachers' pensions. We also committed to matching the contributions of new entrant teachers on a go-forward basis as of the year

2000. And we also made the first increase to government and teacher contributions in over 25 years.

With—we also, with our legislation Bill 45 in 2008, we fixed a problem that was created over 25 years. We were the first government to take responsibilities for the decisions of the past and commit to fixing the teachers' pension plan for the future.

So we believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have been a government that has responded to all teachers in the province of Manitoba in regards to making sure that that Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund was sustainable. Regardless of whether you were an active teacher or a retired teacher, it was critical that we work with the community stakeholders in regards to making sure that that fund was sustainable and can pay out teachers' pensions long into the future. If we hadn't have made those contributions, we would have probably been in a very serious situation in a few years in regards to providing teacher pensions for teachers.

* (10:20)

So our government record is very, very clear, and I know members opposite know that we just made another announcement in regards to contributions to the retirement fund. I recently, on the 24th of May, announced that we will be making a further contribution to those—to the pension fund. It will be a 2 per cent contribution rate increase over four years, and it will start in 2012 and it will go to 2015, and it will provide over \$20 million to the fund to ensure that that fund remains sustainable.

This is advice that we took from the Teachers' Retirement Fund board of directors. They said to us that they were concerned about the ongoing valuations in the fund and that it was critical that we continue to make funding increases to teachers' pensions to make sure that they were viable long into the future.

So we will continue to make sure that we have those kinds of discussions with the board and with our stakeholders because, as I said earlier, this is something that we believe is important as a government in regards to providing pensions for teachers.

I'd like to take a moment to just talk about the governance structure of the board. As members in this House know, the board administers The

Teachers' Pension Act and it represents the pension plan for public school teachers. And we believe that we have listened to the retired teachers in regards to having an individual on that board that represents retired teachers. Terry Clifford was appointed to the board on the 15th of December in 2004, and he was appointed to the board after consultation with the retired teachers. And when I became the minister, his appointment was up and I consulted with the leadership on the Retired Teachers' Association and they informed me that they wanted to continue to have Terry Clifford represent them on the Teachers' Retirement Fund board. So we were very pleased to be able to continue with that appointment and he is on the board today. And we're very pleased that he has been able to sit on that board and represent retired teachers. Terry Clifford is also the former president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and of the Winnipeg Teachers' Association and he has worked on the board—my understanding, he has worked on the board very, very well.

We also have had a good meeting with Richard and Anne in regards to representation on the task force and I think that we're going to make progress in that area. We had a good meeting just a couple of months ago in regards to that representation.

And I would also just like to ask—I see my time has come, I can't believe how fast 10 minutes goes. But I would just also like to just comment in regards to the governance structure on the board. It would be nice if we could have agreement. It would be nice if we could have consensus between the Manitoba Teachers' Society and the retired teachers' in regards to any governance structure changes at TRAF.

As members opposite know, I am the kind of person that likes to see consensus decisions. Sometimes they can be difficult, but I believe if you pull stakeholders together, you can get that kind of consensus. So it would be interesting to know if members opposite had any consultation with MTS in regards to the legislation. I'm just wondering, they are, you know, they are active teachers and they also pay into the fund, and I was just wondering if they had any opportunity to consult with them.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): It is indeed a pleasure to put some comments on the record about Bill 219, a bill that is hardly new to this House. I believe it's about the fourth or fifth time it's been here. The member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) has introduced it, the member for Springfield several

times, now the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

And this bill should basically be termed about respect, and what retired teachers are looking for is respect for the time and effort that they put into education over the years.

And that I'm very disappointed in the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). The fact that she leaves this House cold because her comments were basically, if anybody listened, it was about: I this, I here, I there, I this. It was all about the minister.

And I would point out to this House that, actually, Bill 219 is not about the minister and not about what she thinks about what she's done. It's about the retired teachers, and if you read the piece of legislation, not very complicated, very straightforward, it lays out that all that they're asking for is a codified—a permanent position on the TRAF board.

I would like to take this Legislature back a few years, when we had the terrible debates in regards to pensions and COLA and all the rest of it, and I can remember that the government which forced to have committee meetings late into the night, in the darkness of night, in the heat of summer, forcing a retiree, some of them with walkers and with canes, to sit hour after hour and that was the minister's—the NDP government's idea of allowing retired teachers a voice. They were allowed to come out at darkness of night, allowed to come out in the heat of summer and then they could maybe have a voice, and I remember listening to a lot of those presentations. I listened to every one of them actually and they were very moving, and for someone who's in the fullness of life and kids and sports and whatever else, making payments, mortgage payments and bills, you know, I don't think about my pension and I don't think about retirement.

So for a moment, for a few days, we sat there and we listened to retirees who said to us, often a lot of these teachers had a teacher's certificate, which meant they never really got a lot of pay in their life. They worked at less pay than a full degree-granted teacher. And they also pointed out that most of those with a teacher's certificate were women and what was basically going to be done is because of their pension, they were going to be condemned to poverty. And they pointed out the kind of abysmal increases they were going to get with their pension. I believe one pointed out that she was going to get a

\$7 increase a year. That would barely get you two cups of coffee at a Tim Hortons, but that's the kind of conversation that was taking place. That's the kind of debate that was taking place at those committee meetings for those on the government benches who even had the courage to show up for committee. It was very troubling for me because, again, why would I know anything about that. It was not on my radar screen. It was very sobering for myself and moved me and changed me as an individual and as a politician.

And you know, we talk about retired teachers. Who are they? What kind of impact do they have? I'd like to point out Anne Monk, who's here today. Tom Forrest, who, I don't know if he made it today, taught me history and politics, just an amazing teacher who just gripped us. And I can remember when it was the whole Constitution debate, we could challenge him. As high school students, he allowed us to challenge him and he was more of a, you know, a Liberal Party member and myself being more of a Conservative member, he would let me debate him. That's the kind of teacher I had.

And I'd like to point out Peggy Prendergast, who's sitting here in the Chamber. I can remember when she used to walk the hallways of Elmwood High School, a striking woman, and she would walk down the hallways. And she probably doesn't know this but I can remember she'd walk and we'd all, you know, maybe we were a little intimidated by her. And we'd talk a little quieter when she'd walk down the hallway.

And you know what? They made such an impact on us. They had such an impact on our lives and, you know, maybe now when they retire and they reflect back and former students come up and tell them the impact they have, maybe now they appreciate the kind of impact they had on all of our lives.

And what they're doing today is coming back, cap in hand, and saying, could you please show us a little respect? We don't want to dominate the board. We don't want more than what we're deserving, but what we would like is more than a committee in the darkness of night, in the heat of summer, where then maybe we can come and have our say. What we would like is at least one voice, one permanent voice on that board, codified in legislation, where we can channel our voice to the board. Is that an extreme view? Is that asking too much? Hardly.

*(10:30)

That's hardly asking too much, and I'd say to the minister, you give more respect to old buildings than you do to our seniors. Give them what they're asking for. There is no cost involved in this. This isn't going to hurt anybody or take anybody away. This—we're not even asking to take current teachers off the board. We're asking to add one position on.

Is that asking too much? I think not. This is about respect. Retired teachers—and I would say to all current teachers, I have many family members who are teaching today, and they know full well the day will come when they, too, will want to retire. And will they not want one voice on the board? One individual that would come forward and say, you know, these are the difficulties we are having. And one vote will not win the vote on the board, but at least one voice that has the right to come forward and say, you know what? This is what we are facing as retired teachers.

I can remember one woman coming forward and saying she couldn't afford the rent in an apartment, so what she did is she went and got a mortgage and bought a house and has a mortgage till the day she dies because the mortgage payment is less than the rent. She couldn't afford it.

I can remember retired teachers coming forward and saying they gave up the car; they couldn't afford the car anymore. Then they gave up the tickets to the ballet and sports events. And then they gave up this and then they gave up that, so they could actually still have some kind of a living, some kind of a standard. And slowly, slowly they scoped down their life because they can't afford it. Their pension wasn't keeping up with inflation; it wasn't keeping up with the costs. I mean, they talk about—they were—men and women came forward and said, you know, our medicine alone now is \$700 a year, and our cost-of-living increase is \$7 a year. How can you reconcile that? How can you actually make a go of it in life when you're faced with that kind of increase in your expenses? There are more expenses when you get older, different kind of expenses. I sat there. How would I have known? But it was laid out for us: men and women with unbelievable courage came forward and, what was so pathetic, often begging us, ours—us, who are their students. They took the time and effort and educated us, and then they come in front of us and begged us, please help us with our COLA. Give us something.

Today, they're asking for very little. This is not a money bill. This costs the government nothing. This

will give what retired teachers are looking for: respect, a voice on the board that they can actually funnel all those currents.

There were more retired teachers speaking several years ago to committee than there were people speaking on almost any other piece of legislation ever introduced in this House. That's how many retired teachers came, and I can remember they sat at night and were told, sorry, you can't speak today. You have to come tomorrow. And they came again the next day, because they wanted their voice heard. Well, you know what? There is an easier process to give retired teachers a voice. There is an easier way to give their concerns and their worries and their needs a voice at the table. That's all they're asking for.

And I would say to the minister and the government, you have the majority right now. This is not a piece of legislation that's going to cost anything. It's not going to hurt the Treasury. It's going to give those amongst us who stood tall, who put a lot of time and effort into myself and all other 56 members in this Legislature. They are the ones who put everything into it, put their life into it. Today they're asking for—us for once, would you please stand up for retired teachers and give us a permanent seat on the RTAM board. I don't think that's asking too much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's always great to be entertained so well so early in the morning. The theatrics of the member from Springfield, I always enjoy his performances in the House, although not the demagoguery that creeps into it from time to time. But the theatrics are very good, and I thank the member for keeping us entertained this morning here with his ebullient and theatrical presentation to the House and to the retired teachers in the gallery, who I also welcome here, both—on both sides of the Chamber in the House here.

The retired teachers in this province have been very strong advocates for their interests over the years. They have been very, I think, thoughtful in their approach to working through what is a very significant challenge to the government, and I'll get into some of the history of this as we—as I continue my presentation. But the retired teachers themselves have been instrumental in guiding the policy and the evolution of this particular issue over the last number of years, and it has created, as we all know in this House, a very substantial movement on what is a

very expensive and long-standing historical issue, Mr. Speaker, the teacher pensions and the ability to continue to deliver these pensionable benefits to retired teachers in the province of Manitoba.

I know that all of us—I expect all of us, certainly I can speak for myself, maybe only myself. In my office are regularly—I am, in my office, regularly engaged by retired teachers in Brandon. Folks will know—in the gallery, folks will know personally, you know—June Lawrence [*phonetic*] and Pat Bowslaugh, Brian Paterson, Rick Oakden, who's joined the ranks of the executive in Brandon right now; Ray Sitter, over the years, who's been advocating; and, of course, it's already been mentioned, Peggy Prendergast, who's in the gallery, folks that engage me as an elected representative and as friends, Mr. Speaker, on this issue and try and guide it to a more satisfactory conclusion for all Manitobans and all retired teachers and all taxpayers in a fair and equitable manner that does respect, as the member suggests, retired teachers and the Manitoba taxpayer and fairness in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I just—you know, apropos of the member's theatrics—Peggy will remember this, others who were at those long committee hearings back in the earlier part of our mandate, those hot nights, will remember Pat Bowslaugh, a good friend of mine and a teacher—retired teacher in Brandon, appearing before the committee, the legislative committee—who, incidentally, meet by agreement all night long and decide by agreement when people are heard and when people are not heard. It's not a fiat by one party or another in this House. It's a agreed-upon protocol by everyone at the committee table, Liberal, Tory or New Democrat, which is worth bearing note of—but Pat coming into the Legislature in a hobo attire and portraying her interest in a theatrical manner, much like my friend from Springfield, a very theatrical manner, to the members of the Legislature that—who were sitting on committee that night about her plight as a retired teacher and representing the plight of others in a theatrical way, with hyperbole, but in an educational way, because it did make a point.

I mean, obviously, when you're a classroom teacher, which many of us are—there's a joke about the New Democrats being a party of teachers and preachers, and, really, there's truth in that. Tommy Douglas, Stanley Knowles, J.S. Woodsworth, the founders of the social democratic movement that we belong to, with a philosophy of caring for all of us as a whole, and that inspires and moves our movements on this side of the House always in our deliberations,

through those three great men who were part of a great movement in this country to provide for a more caring society for all of us.

And the teachers in our caucus, Mr. Speaker, who labour and have laboured and will labour again in the future in the classroom, we are, in fact, a party of teachers and preachers, and it does provide a greater resilience or greater—[*interjection*] Excuse me?

* (10:40)

Well, Mr. Speaker, so, as I said, our party philosophically is moved by a underlying and underpinnings of a brotherhood and sisterhood amongst us all in this community, and the teachers amongst us are moved by the—as the minister suggested in her remarks—the desire to make education the foundation of all who we are and all that we can aspire to as a society and as a civilization. And that provides, from my perspective in this House, a forum for respect of a thoroughly reflective and knowledgeable base from which to have a discussion on issues like teacher pensions, on issues like health care, on issues like investing in education for today's children so that they could have a future, and being fair, as we have been over the years, on working with educators in the field and educators that are retired to resolve, as I said, what was, and it remains, a very important question of finance and fairness in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, some of the history here, as the minister again suggested, goes back to 1963. The member throughout—one point in his remarks—the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), at one point in his remarks, reflected that he had this—as I quote, I wrote it down when he said it—this issue, quote, wasn't on his radar screen until retired teachers made interventions some time into our mandate.

Well, it's not surprising, broadly speaking, Mr. Speaker, that it wouldn't be on the radar screen of the member opposite, because it was not on the radar screen of his party during the 12 years they were in office. [*interjection*] In fact, we've hit a bit of a rock—or my rock has hit a bit of a carcass over there that's rising up. The fact that we came into office with the pension—unfunded pension liability of \$1.75 billion—in fact, it was larger than \$1.75 billion—pension liability of \$1.75 billion that we backfilled to recover the viability of the pension plan that was ready to collapse because it had not had any investment in it during the time of the members

opposite. *[interjection]* And, to be fair, although the members are heckling and the members are a little bit, you know, touchy about this point, the members did not put a penny into the unfunded pension liability, allowing that pension liability to—by the time we came into office—balloon to a figure where that pension plan was on the verge of being an unviable financial proposition. The collapse of that pension plan would have meant no pensions for teachers, none. That is what we were bequeathed with.

And the members talk about providing COLA. And I know, Mr. Speaker, during my time as minister, I also provided COLA as we began to grapple with this problem, because this problem was monumental in terms of its financial mismanagement. So members ought not to crow about the COLA that they delivered against actuarial advice, further contributing to the liability that the people of Manitoba had by ignoring the actuarial advice and, in fact, digging a bigger hole by providing further divestment or expenditures from that particular pension fund. So members ought not to be too holier than thou on this or, frankly, any issue pertaining to health care, education, infrastructure renewal or community development in this province.

I'm proud to be part of a government—today we're putting the puck in the net today, later this morning with the rest of the people of Manitoba in building this province. Mr. Speaker, we've just come through, in my part of the world, a one-in-300-year flood event, a flood event larger than any in the history of the province. During that time, we worked with people in the province to build permanent dikes to save the city of Brandon, to save thousands of homes and tens of thousands of citizens from being devastated by a one-in-300 flood event.

Mr. Speaker, it's worth bearing in mind that members opposite consistently in this House have voted against every penny of investment in pension funds, in health care, in education, in infrastructure and in building this province. Thank you.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, and I just rise to put a few comments on the record and indicate that I think, rather than the kind of debate that we've just heard, we should move forward and pass this bill today.

But I want to indicate when my colleague from Springfield was speaking and he talked about retired teachers getting \$7 a year additional in their pension

as the result of what this government has provided, I was looking across the way and I saw the member for Brandon East reach out to the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). When the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) said that \$7 can only buy two cups of coffee, the member for Brandon East laughed, Mr. Speaker, and he said at Tim Hortons you could buy four cups of coffee, and it was a joke to him. And I think that is extremely disrespectful to those that have come here today to ensure that their voices are heard, and they're not asking for very much.

So I would ask the government to show some respect to stand up today and vote with us to ensure that this legislation passes and that retired teachers have one small voice—just one voice, Mr. Speaker, on the pension—on the TRAF board. Thank you.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think one of the ways we can show respect to each other in this House, and also to the people who come down to hear us speak, is to engage in serious debate about a serious issue.

And I also want to greet and thank the teachers in attendance today. It's true that none of us would be in these seats if we hadn't had good teachers, teachers that cared not only about us being able to read and write, but also inspiring us to do things maybe we didn't think would be possible.

And I know, this maybe be a bit of a pop culture reference, but earlier this month, probably like many people here, I watched the final shows, the final Oprah Winfrey shows. And I was touched by her bringing her grade 5 teacher to her final show, and talking about it was that teacher that gave her some responsibilities in the classroom, small things that probably teachers do every day to serve others in that class. It was that experience of being valued that set her on a path that now she is a world-renowned person who inspires others. And so it's tremendous, the difference that a teacher can make in the lives of others, and so we want to say thank you very much to you here today.

I'd like to perhaps broaden the debate a bit, Mr. Speaker, and talk about pensions. Certainly, pensions are something that in my time in office has been something that I've learned a lot—a great deal more about than I ever knew coming in. I think pensions, truthfully, I think, as the member for Springfield was saying, is not something that we tend to think a lot about until they start to affect us. And so we have strived within the pension superintendent's office to

do some more education about pensions, to try to put together, as plain language as possible, documents and a website for people to access to learn about what kind of pension plans they may be involved in and what that could mean to their retirement.

And certainly since coming into office, pensions are something that this government has taken seriously and worked hard on. And the member for Brandon East was talking a bit about the unfunded pension liability that we faced when we came into office. And I think it's worth reflecting on some of that history.

In the 1960s the Manitoba government stopped funding its pension liability, stopped funding its pensions for its workers. And that unfunded pension liability grew steadily over those 30 years to \$2.7 billion when the government changed in 1999. And, in fact, that pension liability was on track to reach \$8.4 billion by 2028, the very year that the opposition had claimed Manitoba would be debt free, because they never considered that liability as part of the debt of the Province. The debt that the Province owed those pensioners was never considered as part of the debt of this Province.

And, in fact, the government had been warned repeatedly by the provincial auditor that there was a risk associated with a growing unfunded pension liability but didn't take any action. And so in the first budget that, when we came in to office, the current Premier (Mr. Selinger), who was then Finance minister, announced a long-term plan to deal with that pension liability. From that point on, the government would fully fund its pension liability for new government workers. And it's not something that, you know, perhaps is going to go down in the history books, but it is critical to remember that that pension liability, which was on track to grow to almost \$10 billion, has steadily, steadily been paid down.

So that by Budget 2008 the Province was now in a position to fund its full share of current service pension contributions for all government employees. And that's the kind of achievement, I think, that only happens when you tackle a problem. You make a plan over a long term and you make steady progress towards it.

* (10:50)

The other thing that we've taken seriously and worked hard on during our time in government is modernizing The Pension Benefits Act, and this, too,

has been a long process. It's involved a great deal of consultation. It's a very complicated piece of legislation, but, certainly, successive ministers of Labour, starting with the former minister of Labour, Becky Barrett, continuing with the current Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) and finally myself, who worked on modernizing those provisions of the pension act.

And I want to talk about some of the things that are in that new act that are allowing, I think, for pension plans now to adapt to the realities of today's workforce. One of the things we did was to ensure that people were vesting in their pension plans immediately upon being hired. So from the day employees join their plan, they're entitled to the pension benefits they earn under that plan rather than having to wait up to two years.

In a work culture today where people change jobs probably more frequently than they used to, this is very important, especially for young workers, that they are accumulating pension benefits as from the moment that they start their career.

We also brought in rules to allow for older workers to stay in the workforce longer, if they choose to, to provide that important role that they provide in mentoring newer workers, but also in creating some stability in the workforce, and this was a move that is quite popular when I speak to employers. In fact, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce is engaged in a project to try to figure out what it takes to recruit and retain older workers in the workforce.

So some of the things that we did to try to help with that is to allow workers to stay in their jobs past the age of 65, if they choose, and choosing to defer their pension, that they would see their benefits increase when they do retire—that they wouldn't be penalized for making that choice. And also that people who are getting close to retirement could be able to choose to work reduced hours, continue pension contributions and collect partial pension benefits. We also allowed—we also made provisions so that plans would no longer be able to apply excessive pension reductions when workers retire early.

Another, I think, important feature to many of the changes that we've been making to pension legislation and some of the changes that were announced yesterday is to try to bring some greater security to pension benefits, not only for people who

are needing them today, but for people like myself, who hope some day to be able to collect a pension.

There's a number of these provisions that are going to help bring some clarity, some greater equity, to the way pension benefits are calculated as they're available to spouses or common-law partners after a relationship breakdown and allowing Manitoba to now recognize court orders from other provinces. Certainly, we've heard something today about the position of older women who tend to have smaller pensions because they spent less time in the workforce, but also because women tend to not be the beneficiaries when a relationship breaks down. So we've tried to make it easier for those pension benefits and more clear for them to be split between partners when a relationship breaks down.

We're also requiring employer contributions to be made monthly instead of quarterly and we hope that will improve the financial position of the plans.

I would say, you know, the other thing that's happened with regards to pensions in the last few years—of course, all pension plans faced some difficult choices after the global financial and market downturn that happened, and we tried to deal with that here by allowing some increased flexibility to those pension plans, allowing them to spread out their payments to make sure that they were solvent over more years. And we've also worked with public sector pension plans, who elect to not have to use those solvency requirements that are more tailored to private pension plans, but to meet other tests that are more tailored to public pension plans and aren't going to unfairly penalize those employers and those employees.

Yesterday, we talked a bit about new pension rules that are coming in, and I want to spend a little bit of time putting some words on the record with regards to strengthened enforcement. As I said, I've learned a great deal about pensions; I've a lot more to learn. And we benefit, I think, in this province from exceptionally good staff in the pension superintendent's office and the Pension Commission, which, of course, is made up of equal members of employer reps and employee reps as well as folks who are retired on that Pension Commission—brought forward some suggestions that we strengthen the enforcement for pension plans.

Before those changes came in, the only way to enforce an order that the pension superintendent made would either be to go to court or cancel the plan's registration. In many cases, neither of those

provisions actually helped the people who were depending on that pension.

So we've brought in some new rules and I'm sure we'll have a chance to debate that at greater length, and I'm sure, you know, with the interest of the opposition in pensions, that that bill will move swiftly to committee and will be passed.

Some of the rules that we have brought in to ensure greater compliance for pensions is bringing in, for example, the ability to register a lien on personal property of employers who don't make their contributions, more capability to order directors of corporations to pay pension contributions that the corporation itself has failed to pay into a pension plan, and the ability to file orders for the payment of outstanding pension contributions in the Court of Queen's Bench, as well as the ability for the pension superintendent to issue administrative penalties up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't put a few words on the record about the work that our Finance Minister has been doing with her colleagues to strengthen the Canada Pension Plan. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, for most Manitobans the Canada Pension Plan is their pension plan. That's the pension plan that they depend on, and I'm very proud of the leadership role that the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) has taken to try to make that as strong as possible for all Manitobans and all Canadians. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this bill and to support the importance of making sure that there is always a representative from the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba on the board of the pension fund.

I want to salute the retired teachers who are here today. Teachers have played an extraordinary role in Manitoba. Education is vital in terms of what happens in our whole society. Certainly from my perspective my teachers were enormously important. My children's teachers were enormously important for them, and the same applies time and time again for children in Manitoba, the children of the last few decades who have been taught by retired teachers who are now retired, and the children of today who are being taught by the teachers of today.

And certainly one of the most important things is recognizing the contributions that teachers have made and ensuring that teachers each year get a fair

and appropriate cost-of-living adjustment to their pensions. This is absolutely vital. I have stood up and talked about this on many occasions and I'm convinced that it needs to be done and I'm committed to continuing in this effort until it is achieved. Certainly the progress that has been made has not been adequate, and there's been too many years when teachers have not got the COLAs that they should've got. It's time to change that and it's time to recognize with respect the efforts that teachers have made and the important contributions that retired teachers have made. Supporting those who are our elders and seniors in our province with dignity and with respect for their contributions is vital. I urge the members to pass this bill today, and I will sit down now so there can be a vote.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Morris, on a point of order?

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the tactic that is going to be taken by this government is they're going to speak this out. They're going to go past 11 o'clock, which is just a tactic to disallow this bill to go to committee. So there's only a few moments left so I'm going to ask for leave, first of all, not to see the clock so we can actually have a vote here because this is very important—a piece of legislation.

It's a matter of respect for the teachers—the retired teachers that are here in the gallery. We've heard the comments made today, Mr. Speaker. It's important that we actually pass this bill on to committee so that the public can come, have their say about it and hear what the retired teachers have to say as well.

I know that the tactic by the members opposite will be to stand up and say, well, other people want to speak on this bill, and that is also a tactic to go past 11 o'clock so that this doesn't get allowed to go to committee.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's plenty of time in third reading for members to have more opportunity to speak and I think it's important that the members of the public are allowed to speak on it. I'm going to ask

for leave to go past 11 so we can vote on this bill and pass it on to committee.

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, on the same point of order.

I think what the member refers to as tactics are actually the rules of the House and the process of the House that are agreed to by the House leaders.

The next thing on the agenda is a very important resolution about sexual exploitation of children. I'm sure their members don't see that as any less important and I'm sure they would also like to get to the debate on that resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

On a point of order raised by the honourable member for Morris, I want to remind members that the rules in any legislative—or any parliament is the right for members to speak. And that is what a Speaker's responsibility is, is to protect the rights of minorities. And that includes the ability to speak on any issue that they wish to, unless—if it's done by leave, which she has asked for, okay. And then, if the House agrees, then you can waive that. But always keep in mind, the Speaker's responsibility is to protect the rights of minorities and every member that is elected by the constituents have a right to speak on any bill and any issue that is brought before the House. Whether you have 50 members or if you're an individual member, the Speaker's role is to protect the rights of minorities' ability to participate in all debate. Just keep that in mind.

But the honourable Official Opposition House Leader has asked for leave, and as all members know, that when you change a procedure or a rule, it can be done by leave and it has to be unanimous consent of the House. So she has asked for that, so now I'm putting it to the House.

Is there leave for the debate to continue until all members that wish to speak have spoken or—is there leave or not? So I'm asking the House. Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I heard a no. And that is our process, and so the leave has been denied.

And now that the hour is—and the honourable member does not have a point of order. I just made clarification on the procedures because I, as Speakers across all Commonwealth countries, we have a responsibility too. And our responsibility is to you, the members. Okay, I just want to make that very, very clear.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will now, because it's after 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions.

The honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was recognized. Okay. For—so when the matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have 10 minutes remaining.

And the hour now being 11 a.m., we will move on to resolutions and we will deal with Resolution No. 14, Sexually Exploited Youth.

RESOLUTION

Res. 14—Sexually Exploited Youth

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), that:

WHEREAS the sexual exploitation of children and youth is a grave form of child abuse and a serious concern for the government of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS girls and Aboriginal children are disproportionately victimized by sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS community groups such the Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition are at the forefront of addressing this problem through various prevention and intervention initiatives; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is proud to partner with these groups to address this problem, through initiatives such as Tracia's Trust and Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is also taking action by expanding endeavours such as the Outreach Project aimed at reducing the number of runaway youth that are at increased risk of exploitation, by engaging in training and specialized foster care support for foster parents of sexually exploited youth, and by co-ordinating the work of 22 organizations which combat the sexual exploitation of children.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to recognize the significant work being done by community members across Manitoba who have partnered with the provincial government in the fight against the sexual exploitation of youth.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Burrows, seconded by the honourable member for The Maples:

WHEREAS sexual—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Martindale: I'm pleased to speak on this resolution for a number of reasons. And the first one would be that this is an issue that affects my constituents. Almost every day when I walk on Parr Street from my home to Selkirk Avenue to my constituency office, or ride my bicycle, I pass these sexually exploited youth standing on the street. And really they are victims. They have been victimized, not only by those who are abusing children, because really that's what this is, but they have also been victimized in their families, often by being sexually abused. They're victims of poverty and unemployment. They are victims of dysfunctional families. They are victims of addictions. They are victims of a legacy of colonialism and racism and residential schools in Canada, because we know that some of the effects of these things go on from generation to generation.

I am also wanting to address this issue because I want to pay tribute to the Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition. It's a coalition that meets monthly in Winnipeg and it's made up of people who are working with sexually exploited youth, front-line staff from non-government organizations. There are representatives of government departments, specifically the Department of Justice and the Department of Family Services on the committee. There are church representatives on the committee, and I am a member of the committee and have been for a number of years. And before he was appointed to Cabinet, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) was—attended the meetings.

So I know from being at these meetings that these people are very passionate about this issue. They're very dedicated and they're very committed and are working very hard to not only get children off the street, but to advocate with government for more resources and for better policies. And they've

done a very good job of that. I know that the government has responded very positively as well because there are many things that we have done to put more resources into agencies so that front-line staff can be involved.

In fact, one of the things that happens is quite visible. The—in a positive way—staff at Mount Carmel Clinic have a program whereby they try to make it safe for children to attend elementary schools so that they're not harassed by johns on the street. And so, they have a—what they call a safer corridors program, and it's—I think it's interesting that these young girls—mostly girls on the street—actually listen to the message that is being given to them. That is, please don't stand on the street where children are going to school. Please stay at the back lanes. And they do, because I know, I walk past them. Sometimes I talk to them, and they are at the back lanes. So, they not only are learning about resources to get off the street, which, of course, is the goal of many of the people working on the front lines, but they're also heeding the advice that they're given so that young girls on their way to elementary schools and junior high schools and high school are not harassed by those people who are driving around and around the block in cars.

And, you know, it's interesting that if you talk to people who live in the North End, they will say, well, we know who the johns are. You can tell because they're driving vehicles that normally wouldn't be seen in the North End. Often they're driving much more expensive vehicles than would be seen in the North End, and they are involved in child abuse.

So the co-ordination of the work that's being carried on is important, and there are 22 organizations which are working to combat sexual exploitation of children. And the work that they're doing is very important. And I wish I could say that they had more success, but, you know, the—those people who want to exploit these youth are also out there, and although we don't have a big problem of trafficking in women in Manitoba from other countries or other cities, some of that does go on. And, unfortunately, there is a movement of exploited youth from northern Manitoba to Winnipeg, and it's sad to see that taking place.

* (11:10)

But, you know, they are victims too, and some of the reasons why people get into this are certainly understandable. Some of them are forced into it. There are pimps out there that are putting children

out on the street. From time to time, we hear of family members that are putting children on the street, and—because they are vulnerable or because they get beat up and told to go on the street, or because they are sold drugs or alcohol or have their own abuse problems. And I suspect that a lot of them develop these addictions after they start working on the street, as a way of coping with the pain of what they are doing, to deaden the pain. I think this is true in many cases.

So I would like to commend not only the Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition, but also the government of Manitoba because our minister of Family Services, a number of years ago, announced Tracia's Trust. And I believe the amount of money was \$42 million. It's a huge investment in front-line services, and I think that some of the things that are happening are quite creative and quite helpful.

I know that there are experiential women, as they are called, people who have left being exploited or left the sex trade as adults, are now being hired to reach out to sexually exploited and vulnerable youth. And I think they have a kind of experience and history that is valuable in reaching out to youth in ways that other people couldn't. They have been on the street, they know what it's like, and I think they are probably amongst the best equipped to encourage these young people to get off the street, which is, of course, what all of us want to do.

Now, part of the government's action plan is to expand the outreach project aimed at reducing the number of runaway youth that are—increased use of exploitation. We've engaged in training and specialized foster care for foster parents of sexually exploited youth. And, certainly, if children are going to end up in foster care and they have been on the street, it's appropriate and necessary to provide training for these foster parents. And also, as I mentioned, the co-ordination of the 22 organizations.

One of the sadder things about being familiar with this issue is to walk down the street and see the very young age of these youth. We know that some of them start as young as nine years old. We know from research studies that the average age is often 13 or 14 years of entering—being sexually exploited as youth, and what's also very visible is the very high number of Aboriginal youth. And, you know, it correlates with poverty and unemployment and parents in receipt of employment income assistance and parents who might have been involved as sexually exploited youth in the past.

And so the problem continues, and it's very obvious who the victims are, and we know a lot about why they're there. But the important thing, of course, is to provide resources to get them off the street, and I look forward to hearing the speeches of other members, particularly, well, perhaps the former minister of Family Services. But I'm hopeful that opposition members will support this resolution. I don't think it's a partisan resolution in any way. I think all of us can be and should be concerned about this issue, and all of us can be supportive of the organizations that are working on the front lines.

And if you're unwilling to commend the government, then at least you can commend the Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition of Winnipeg. And—I don't know if there's a coalition in northern Manitoba; I know there's staff working on this issue in Thompson. Because all of us need to be concerned about this, and some very good, new initiatives are taking place, including regarding men and businesses and getting people who are in a position of influence to stop what is going on, to take the initiative and do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I want to, at the outset, thank the member for Burrows for raising this issue as a resolution in the Legislature, because regardless of political stripe or who you are in the province of Manitoba, none of us, Mr. Speaker, want to see children exploited and used sexually, or children abused in any way. It's something that shouldn't be tolerated in our society, and we do have laws and we do have opportunities to try to ensure that those that are being abused in whatever way are moved out of harm's way. We have legislation, we have rules and regulations, and yet we continue to see on an ongoing basis the issue of child abuse and sexual exploitation of children of our youth, and it is unacceptable.

And I would applaud this resolution if it wasn't a resolution that patted government on the back for the job that it is doing. We know that there are many organizations and many individuals out there that are working very hard and tirelessly on a day-to-day basis to try to ensure that supports and services and outreach is there for those that are sexually exploited within our Manitoba community. And, Mr. Speaker, we applaud them for the job that they do.

But we feel that the government falls short when it comes to protecting children and youth in our province, and, Mr. Speaker, there are some very concrete initiatives that we have put forward to

government in a very non-partisan way to try to ensure that children are somewhat more protected. We, in 2007, put forth a resolution calling on the government to raise the age of consent from 14 to 16. It's not the be-all and the end-all, just like no program within government is the be-all or the end-all, but it's one step in the right direction, and that resolution fell on deaf ears with the government.

We also called upon them to strengthen section 52 of The Child and Family Services Act to allow for greater protection of children in care who are at risk of being targeted by those that would exploit them. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's another initiative that we put forward in a very non-partisan way to try to see whether there couldn't be a difference as a result of this, but again it fell on deaf ears.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the resolution that was put forward today that congratulates government for the job that they have done is the right way to go. If this was a resolution that spoke to the community and those out in the community that really want to make a difference and are working to make a difference on a day-to-day basis, we could certainly support that.

We know that when it comes to government spending and real programs that help—or are aimed at helping children fall by the wayside at the expense of feel-good advertising and millions of dollars that are spent on ad campaigns that give a lot of lip service to programs without any measured outcomes or results, we have significant difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, only one example of that was what we found out in Estimates in the Department of Family Services this year, where we had \$250,000 buried in a line in the minister's department under child care that is for a new website supposedly going to be called Parent Zone that is in stages of development. When we know that a website called Parent Zone is going to do absolutely nothing to bring children that might be looking and searching for the kind of help they need if they're being sexually exploited; it's going to do nothing for those children. That money, instead of going to another website to highlight all of the programming that's ongoing within government, that's already there and existent on websites, that \$250,000 could go into some concrete, real programs for youth and children that are being exploited, that are being abused, but, no, this government has its priorities mixed up.

* (11:20)

You know, when I asked the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) why this Parent Zone website was buried in a line under child care, Mr. Speaker, he—his answer was a very flippant answer: Well, the department had to park it somewhere, so this is where they parked it. It doesn't really fit anywhere within my department, but we've parked it here. Well, to me that speaks volumes to the priorities that this government places on children and youth that are being abused, that are being sexually exploited.

And we've seen the mess that they've made of the child and family services system, Mr. Speaker, where we see children that have been in long-term placements because they've been removed from an abusive situation. We are seeing, without any plan, those children being moved back into sometimes very harmful situations, and we only have to look to the horrendous stories and child deaths that have occurred under this government's watch: Phoenix Sinclair, an example, where she was moved into a very unsafe circumstance and not found for months, dead and buried in a remote community. We saw Gage Guimond, who was taken from a loving foster family that he had been in as a long-term placement and, as a result of family reunification, without any written plan, Gage Guimond was moved back to family, and all Manitobans know what the result of that was. Gage Guimond wasn't protected, he wasn't safe, and he was killed at the hands of a relative as a result of poor planning and Gage Guimond being moved under those circumstances. We've seen that time and time again. We've seen the instance just not that long ago about Jaylene Sanderson-Redhead, the 20-month, innocent, defenceless baby that was killed at the hands of her mother because she was placed back in that family situation.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of things are unacceptable, and so to have a resolution today on the table that congratulates government for the work that they've done to protect children and youth is not one that I think this government should stand up and be—or can stand up and be proud of their record. We all know that much work needs to be done and it's not all government's responsibility. But when government puts in place policies and procedures that harm children more than they help them, I think it's time for this government to take a very serious look at the direction they've headed and try to, in some way, ensure that children are more protected, are safer than they are under the current circumstances.

So there's a lot of work ahead, and I think that, collectively, we could look at solutions, but this resolution does nothing when it speaks to government's track record when government's track record has not been very good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): It's a privilege to rise in the Chamber to address this resolution, but, unfortunately, as so often happens when folks from our side of the Chamber rise to speak after a member opposite, the first thing we usually have to do is address the gross misinformation and errors just put on the record by the member opposite.

I'd like to begin by her complete and utter misunderstanding of the resolution itself, which I will read the final line of: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to recognize the significant work being done by community members across Manitoba who have partnered with the provincial government in the fight against the sexual exploitation of youth.

Being done by community members, recognizing the significant work: so, basically, the past 10 minutes the member has said this is a resolution about us passing—patting ourselves on the back. No. This is a resolution about recognizing the work of community members we have partnered with. So again, you know, again, it's always the way things have to start on this side is correcting the record.

I also find it amusing that the comments that you made in light of Estimates, because I do remember the Estimates process being in the Chamber, and I would love to go through the *Hansard* and count the number of times you admitted confusion or a lack of understanding about how the department operated.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Blady: Sorry, my apologies, Mr. Speaker, I should—

Mr. Speaker: Go through the Chair.

Ms. Blady: —through the Chair, my apologies.

I would just like to note that while in Estimates, the member opposite repeated on a regular basis her confusion about the understandings of the working of the department that she is the critic for. And I find that again rather amusing because the reference, for example, to Parent Zone and what that will do to help sexually exploited youth. Well, what it does is it provides an interdepartmental access to resources for

families so that they can raise their kids, provide them with tools and it works to support parents. So you might not understand how it works but parents understand how it works.

So I would just like to say that the member opposite needs to understand how things work, and maybe had she read the resolution and maybe had the member opposite paid more attention to what she was talking about in Estimates, maybe she would have a more fulsome understanding of these things. Because the work that we are being—is being done is being done by this department with so many groups. And this resolution is about those groups. It's about the amazing work being done by the folks at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and our partnership with them. It's about websites that they provide and how we support those things.

So whether it's Cybertip.ca, whether it's Billy Brings his Buddies, or Kids in the Know, and Zoe and Molly Online, these kinds of things inform children, they provide supports to parents, and this is what this resolution is about. It's about recognizing the kinds of work because the sexual exploitation of youth is something that is one of the most horrific things that can happen, and is a product of so many different things. It is a product of colonization, it is a product of social injustice and it is something where the most weak and the most voiceless need to be supported. And the work of community groups does need to be recognized, and I think this resolution is important for exactly that—that these groups are proactive and we work with them in the trenches.

So whether it's things like the StreetReach team based in downtown or the StreetReach North, and what they do and how that is developed in partnership with local communities, child welfare and community organizations, these work with the community.

The one thing that I have to say that I am so proud of with this government is that we work from the ground up. We work with those community organizations. We build these things up. We take their advice. It's not a top-down approach, which I think is what members opposite are much more keen on.

We support groups and we do what we need to do to make sure that they can do that important work that they do. I think of the work with Tracia's Trust and how that has come forward and what that has

done to help people. And having worked with groups like Ndinawe, I know the value of the work that they do, and I know how important the support they receive from government is to getting that work done on a daily basis.

And whether it is things like the preventative work, like the Neighbourhood Solutions, Kids in the Know, Tipi Teachings, the North End Safer School Corridor Project, Reality Check, Restoring the—each of these groups and each of these projects addresses a particular community. These are the folks that know what their neighbourhoods need, what those people in need in their communities are working on and how to deliver it.

What we do is we support them in that, and this resolution addresses how we should, as a Legislature, collectively recognize and continue to support that work. But the other thing is, is that in working with these groups, we know that they also want legislation and other larger packages of policy to support them. Doing the work in the trenches is one thing, but the other thing is you need to provide a more strategic framework. And that's where things like The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act come into play. We are creating, for the first time, the tort of human trafficking. We are creating something that will literally put teeth into the legislation, and it backs, again, an ongoing set of legislation and an ongoing set of policies that address how we deal with the johns, how we deal with those that choose to exploit our youth, and it is a problem that is, again, unfortunately, on the rise in a larger global economy where we have Internet access to things, where kids can be exploited thousands of miles away from their own home, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:30)

It's sad but it is something that we are working with the community partners on, and I am proud of those relationships and I do believe this resolution has a great deal of value for exactly that. As I said, it is not about patting ourselves on the back. It is a resolution that I believe if members opposite, in light of what was just said by the last speaker, if they really do believe that this—we should be congratulating and recognizing the community groups, that's what this resolution is about. It is not about the kinds of things the member opposite put on the record about it being about patting ourselves on the back.

We very humbly work with them to provide them what they need. We very humbly listen to what

they have to say, and we put together those kinds of things that need to be done. It was a privilege to be a part of announcement that recognized, again, legislation that would put in the human trafficking act.

It was also—I mean, again, one of the things that happened in this Chamber was the recognition of the REDress Project. That was unprecedented. This building was recolonized by those who were the most exploited. This building, this Legislature, comes from an origin founded by indigenous people. This is the only Province that can say that it entered into Confederation under the leadership of indigenous people and then promptly after that, a reign of terror ensued, and we had a speaker in this Chamber tarred and feathered because he was Métis. We had racism rise and we had the increased victimization of Aboriginal women, and that unfortunately goes on to this day, and part of the decolonizing process is to work both in the trenches with these organizations but to also symbolically bring back those voiceless victims of colonization into this building. That's what those red dresses were about.

It's about recognizing and raising awareness on this issue, so I am so thankful to the organizations that do this work. I believe that this resolution is something that is one small step in a much larger direction of recognizing the work that they do, because it exhibits like the REDress Project and the fact that there are 600 murdered and missing Aboriginal women in this country. The fact that we let that happen in this country is a shame, but the point is we are trying to turn that around and these groups that we work with, they are on the front lines.

And you know what, it's hard to say. You can never gauge the work in a quantitative kind of way where you can say, we prevented X number of children from being exploited. But you go into the trenches, you do the work, and it is folks like Ndinawe that do that work. It is the programs that we have and that we support that do that work, and I am so thankful for what they do and I've had the privilege of working with so many of those folks both in my previous line of work and now. And I think that it would be shameful to not pass this resolution recognizing the incredible work that they do, how hard that work is, because they are dealing with the most voiceless, most marginalized and victimized people within our society, and anything and everything that they can do to empower those people and to have them rise above victimization to

be survivors, or better yet, prevent victimization, all the better.

And so I believe that it is incumbent upon everyone in this Chamber to unanimously support this resolution recognizing the work that these groups do and that we are so humbly able to be supportive of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to put some words on the record with regard to the resolution that's been put forward by the members from the government side. I have some serious concerns with the tone of the members opposite with regard to this resolution.

There is a consensus within this Chamber and, I believe, throughout the province, that this is a very serious issue. The exploitation of children, the exploitation and—of youth within our province is something that none of us want to see within our province, Mr. Speaker.

And we have done what we can to raise this issue with the government. We've raised the issue in 2007 when families, mothers from First Nations communities came forward and indicated that their children were being taken from their communities, and they were doing everything they can to stop the exploitation and stop their children from being taken. And they were mothers from the community of Brokenhead and I met with those mothers, Mr. Speaker. I met with those mothers and I met with them and I listened to their stories of how they felt helpless, how they felt that there was nobody paying attention to their plight, to their concerns.

And one of the mothers said, legislation has to change. We have to do something so that the law enforcement can actually take their concerns and move forward with this, Mr. Speaker. One of the mothers said that the children, their daughters, had made reports to the police, but nothing could be done. The police said that unlikely charges would be laid.

So what we did was we brought a resolution forward. We asked the government to look at supporting the change of age of consent to move from 14 to 16 years of age, Mr. Speaker. And you know what the response was from the government side of the House from the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale)? He indicated, and I quote: ". . . the police tell us that pedophiles from rural Manitoba are coming to the North End of Winnipeg to sexually

exploit our youth which is very, very sad." Unquote. That was in November 2007 during the debate.

So I'm really disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that they think we're playing politics with this issue, because all of us, all of us in Manitoba, whether we live in the city, whether we live in rural Manitoba, whether we live in northern Manitoba, we all care about our youth and we want to ensure that youth have every single opportunity to grow and prosper in a healthy way. So I wanted to raise that point because I do believe that the member for—on the other side of the House was talking about disappointment and concern about what's being put on the record. Well, that statement speaks volumes to me as a mother from rural Manitoba, as a mother who has family that lives in northern Manitoba, as a mother who has family that lives in Winnipeg.

And I think that what we have to do is collectively work together to make sure that organizations that have been identified throughout this debate, Mr. Speaker, such as StreetReach, Tracia's Trust, other organizations out there that doing—they are doing their part, but what they need is a government that truly believes in what they are doing, that truly supports what they're doing. And when they ask, when parents ask for a change in legislation or government's ear on things that need to be corrected and could be corrected, they need a government that will act. They need a government that will take these issues seriously.

Mr. Speaker, we all know of families that have had children that have been exploited, and I believe that that is the absolute worst situation that can happen to a family. I believe that it takes so much from a human being when they are put in a situation where they cannot battle back, and after the situation occurs you need nothing but support from the people around you, and the resources that you seek have to be positive. So when you have a young person who has been exploited sexually, you have to ensure that that person gets all the positive supports and love that they can find and have.

So many of these young children do not have a family to turn to. So they are looking for this government to provide the hand up, the support to put them in the right direction, to get them in the right direction to grow and prosper and to take a different path, Mr. Speaker, and to work through what has happened to them, which is an unbelievable situation to any person that would have to be put in that type of a situation.

I've attended events, Mr. Speaker, throughout the province. I've been in The Pas. I've been in Winnipeg and in Brandon where we've done marches in support of individuals who are trying to make a difference, be them victims, be them organizations who have actually taken it upon themselves to provide that support. And I think we have to encourage and support those organizations for doing the work that they are doing.

* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, when we see at least 85 to 90 per cent—5 per cent of these children being female, that are being exploited, we need to ensure that there are supports and resources available to them to address that. When we hear statistics that say there are 400 sexually exploited children in Winnipeg—that's just in Winnipeg. So something has to be raised with this government to pay attention to the challenges that these young children are facing—the lost children, in a lot of ways.

I believe that we have a responsibility as a society to respect and understand that these children—it will take time for many of them to regain their confidence and their supports. But I believe that what we do in this House, what we do as legislators, can actually make a difference. And I believe that when we ask government to pay attention, as we did in 2007, to support a resolution on age of protection, I think then—and when you hear nothing from this government other than the comments made by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) with regard to that statement, you wonder sometimes whether this government really gets the significance and the importance of the issue at hand.

So I want to say, in closing, that we need to look at the root causes of sexually exploited children. We have to look at the poverty, which is at three points higher than the Canadian rate. We have 43,000 children living in poverty in this province. And those kind of things do play a role in the causes of child sexual exploitation. We do know that there's a significant increase again this year—or the most recent statistics that we have from the Children's Advocate on youth suicide, Mr. Speaker. What happens when you see eight- and nine-year-old children taking their own lives? What does that tell you? How can those children, at eight and nine years old, feel that there's no purpose to life?

So I think, before you start patting yourself on the back, as the government has done in this resolution, I think they have to look at this or—at

what is happening within our province and actually do more. Do more, Mr. Speaker. Because I believe that this government has to be held account to those statistics that are showing that this province has a lot of work to do—not a little bit, a lot of work to do to address the needs of our children who are at risk. Thank you.

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to add a few words to those already been spoken by my colleagues in support of the private member's bill before us this morning. I thank the honourable member from Burrows for moving this motion and making us members of this Assembly and the general public aware of this troubling situation that has befallen many young people of this province so we can support and act—and support the many community organizations that have programs now in place to address this problem.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago, in the early '90s, it was one early Sunday morning, I was travelling with my family on Sargent Avenue. Two adults and five children were cramped in a compact car meant to carry only five passengers. But such is life—we were—at that time, can only afford a compact car. In front of Safeway on Sargent Avenue, there stood a young woman in—she would be in her early teens. She had a very pretty face, a beautiful, expressive pair of eyes. She seemed to be in a daze. Her eyes looked sleepy, and her legs were not as strong and firm as she stood on the pavement. She was doing the hitchhike sign with her right hand. I would have loved to take her in. She's just a young girl, but looking at the back of the car with five small children there, there was no way we could accommodate her.

I was so disturbed and so fearful but, at the same time, helpless. At that very moment, all I could do is say a prayer and hope for the best for her that well-intentioned, kind-hearted person or persons would give her a ride and bring her to safety. Normally, we would travel to the church twice. First, I with three kids and my husband and then my husband would go back and take the two kids, but that particular Sunday morning, we would be late if he were to do that. So I was so worried for this young girl. So many thoughts came to mind. Where was she the night before? What did she do or what she didn't do or who were the people? What did they do to her? Scary thoughts indeed. I was—we were still quite new to the city and not knowledgeable about what resources there are to help people like her,

vulnerable young person, so I could only say a prayer and really hope for the best for her.

But, now, Mr. Speaker, I do know there are committee organizations and, thanks to this government who's diligently working and supporting and appreciating these community organizations, there are many programs in place to help vulnerable and sexually exploited youth. I thank my caucus colleagues and ministers of various departments for the vision and the support and the work they do, along with community organizations, to address this problem. I'm thankful that this government is committed to solve this problem of the sexually exploited youth in our communities. And there are organizations that have stepped up to the plate and have initiated among themselves to solve this very serious problem.

A disproportionate number of sexually exploited children, unfortunately, are Aboriginal children involved in the child welfare system and have experienced childhood abuse such as sexual abuse and physical abuse. While most sexually exploited youth are female, there is growing awareness of the sexual exploitation of boys and/or dispirited youth.

There is no single reason that these young people are what they are—vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, there are many common factors such as poverty and survival; homelessness; legacy of residential schools; the continuation of colonialism and racism; lack of stability, such as being placed in multiple-care homes; childhood abuse; gender discrimination; isolation; marginalization and peer pressure; generational sexual exploitation because they have a peer or family member who was sexual exploited, also due to substance dependency or long-term dependence on social services, government assistance and effects of low self-esteem.

* (11:50)

Along with many community organizations—and I'm proud that some of whom are situated in the Wellington constituency, such as Ka Ni Kanichihk and Eyaa-Keen Centre. The—there is a Manitoba strategy developed to complement the existing good work already being done by community groups active in the issue and to fill in some of the gaps in service identified by community agencies and current research on child sexual exploitation.

Among the community programs and services are outreach projects aimed at reducing the number

of residential care runaway youth who became—who become at—an—at increased risk of sexual exploitation—has been expanded, an initiative of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. Two additional outreach positions respectively at Marymount Inc. and Manitoba Association of Residential Treatment Resources have been added to the existing one-worker program that operated out of Knowles Centre.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there's Safe Transition Home, a six-bed safe transition home in Winnipeg. Honouring the Spirit of our Little Sisters is in operation by Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. for female and transgender youth ages 13 to 17 who have been subjected to and at risk for continued sexual exploitation. Programming includes the provision of family group decision making, cultural opportunities, education, employment, training, mentoring, life skills and volunteerism. An initiative of Family Services and Consumer Affairs, the Safe Transition Home officially opened November 10, 2003.

Also, there's a residential child care facility. An agreement with Marymount Inc. has recently been finalized to enhance one of their residential child care facilities, which is Rose Hall, thus enabling them to deliver specialized services for young women ages 13 to 17 who have been sexually exploited. Rose Hall partners with the Marymount child sexual abuse treatment program in this endeavour.

There is also training for foster parents and other workers. It's an intensive, specialized training for foster parents and other front-line workers who deal with children and youth who have been sexually exploited has began, co-ordinated by the Trails Program of New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults & Families.

There's also the specialized foster care resources for children aged 8 to 12 who've been sexually exploited and has been developed in conjunction with the specialized training program outline.

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

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): The sexually exploitation of youth and human trafficking is one of the most disgraceful blights on our society. In fact, you would think that a modern society like ours here in Canada, the United States, Europe and other

so-called modern countries, that we wouldn't have this kind of thing taking place in our countries.

Yet it's on the contrary, and what's unfortunate about it is often when we think about human trafficking and sexual exploitation, we think about the slave trade of the United States where they would go into African villages and by force capture individuals and put them on a boat and bring them over in chains and sell them and exploit individuals like that and traffic them. That's what we often review to—or refer to when we talk about human trafficking. Yet that's actually the contrary of what we have here in Canada.

In fact, for those who were at the Manitoba Prayer Breakfast at Easter, Brian McConaghy discussed human trafficking and gave quite a compelling and emotional speech on what takes place in our society, and it was shocking for me because he said you drive down your streets in any one of our communities, and for those of us who do a lot of driving around the city, whether for reasons of our job or we're going to sports events or we're going to music concerts or whatever, he said behind any one of those doors can be someplace where human trafficking takes place and individuals are sexually exploited, and it really isn't the stereotype that we think of when we talk about these issues.

And that's one of the reasons why one of the heroes of those who've been forced into the sex trade by—against their will, those that are being trafficked, one of their greatest heroes in—modern heroes in Canada are Member of Parliament Joy Smith, former member of this Legislature, whose son, as a police officer in Brandon, had been seconded to the ICE Unit, the Integrated Child Exploitation Unit. And she soon found out that her son, young man that's got a young family, his hair started to go grey prematurely. And she realized that something was taking place and she talked to him, and he expressed to her the kinds of things that they saw and what they were actually trying to prevent. And that is where individuals, using the internet or any other means, prey upon unsuspecting children, often from our native communities, who come into the city, don't have a place to go to, a home to go to, and then are picked up by these individuals. And they are promised all kinds of stuff. Usually it starts with food, it goes to alcohol, it goes to drugs and then starts the sexual exploitation.

Joy Smith took this on and realized that it wasn't just a Manitoba issue, it wasn't just a Canada issue,

that human trafficking was as bad today as it is—as it was over a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago.

In fact, interestingly enough, in one of our local newspapers—very good article, in fact, in the *Metro*, Thursday's—May 26th *Metro*. And it asks: Do you know where they are? Concerns about sexual exploitation underscore cases of missing children.

And what I find interesting here, and I'll read a little bit from this: Winnipeg Police and Child Find Manitoba are highlighting ongoing investigations of concern as a way of marking the seriousness of the problem of missing kids in Canada. Each year, thousands of kids in Canada go missing as either runaways or victims of abduction. While many are found safe, some aren't located for many months. Many simply vanish. In Manitoba, about 4,000 kids are reported missing each year, according to Detective Sergeant Shaunna Neufeld, the new head of the Missing Persons Unit.

This is huge when you think of 4,000 children. Now, given, many of them are found. Many of them are not. And what happens to these children is they are often forced into the sex trade, and that's why it's so important for all of us to be aware of it. And Member of Parliament Joy Smith has been on the forefront of this. She's one of the very few individuals in the history of Canada, in the history of the Canadian Parliament, who got a private member's resolution passed, and probably one of the few, if ever, in the history of the Canadian Parliament who got it passed unanimously.

And what's interesting about that is the individuals, the party that was actually giving her push back on it, that was actually giving her grief on it, was the Bloc Québécois, and not that I'm saying that's the issue that defeated them in Québec, but,

you know what? It could have been one of the issues, because I know that Joy and many others went to Québec and got all kinds of individuals involved, and they had a very big march in Québec, a big march and demonstration against human trafficking. And it was at that time that police chiefs and others got on board and said, we must take a stand against this. And we've seen great leadership out of the Harper government on this issue and we've seen all kinds of legislation coming forward now, not just nationally, but at the various provincial levels.

It's important for us to be aware of this. It's important to not think that this is a Third World issue. It's important not to think of this as a historical issue; this is something that happened with the slave trade in the United States. It's important to realize that it could be happening in our communities, in our streets, and is happening. Four thousand children are missing every year, and we know that many of those are going into the sex exploitation industry. And members in debate today have talked about the way we should be viewing it, and it is just a horrendous kind of a trade.

And what's surprising about Joy Smith's bill, until that point in time, there was actually no codified recourse for law enforcement to go after human traffickers. Now, there's actually something in place in the House of Commons whereby officers and officials, federal officials, can actually go forward and charge somebody and there's an actual—

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 31, 2011

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY	Gerrard	2420
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	Martindale	2421
Second Readings—Public Bills		
Bill 219—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act		
Cullen	2411	
Allan	2413	
Schuler	2414	
Caldwell	2416	
Mitchelson	2418	
Howard	2418	
	Resolution	
	Res. 14—Sexually Exploited Youth	
	Martindale	2422
	Mitchelson	2424
	Blady	2425
	Rowat	2427
	Marcelino	2429
	Schuler	2430

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

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