

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): I wonder if there's leave to proceed to Bill 204, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act, sponsored by the member for Steinbach.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to proceed to Bill 204 sponsored by the member for Steinbach? [*Agreed*]

**Bill 204—The Criminal Property Forfeiture
Amendment Act**

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good morning. A lively bunch this morning, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 204, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: It's a pleasure to, once again, sponsor this bill and bring it forward to the Assembly. I think it's an important bill for Manitoba and for Manitobans. It might not draw as much attention as Jets tickets or those sort of things, but it still is important in the context of what we are debating here, and The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and cracking down on criminals, and this a bill—was first introduced during the last session. I introduced it as a way to strengthen The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, a bill we've spoken about many times in this House. I—wasn't being well run for many years, or almost no goods are being seized under this

particular act for many years under the NDP. We certainly bought forth suggestions and we're glad that the bill was finally, after many years, improved and strengthened, and, in fact, now there are some assets that are finally being seized after many years of disuse or no use of this act. This would go a little bit further in terms of ensuring that goods were able to be seized on an administrative process, and let me explain that for you, Mr. Speaker, and for other members of this House.

There are often cases where goods that are valued, for example, under \$85,000—I use that number—are found in a property—I'll say a drug house, for example—maybe it's cash, Mr. Speaker, and nobody puts in a claim for those goods; nobody says, that cash is mine, because it's obviously—was the proceeds of crime that were happening in that drug house or it was an instrument of crime in some other way. So nobody comes forward and says, I want to put in a claim on that money; it was mine, I legally obtained it and I was legally using it. But under the current act, the government and the police still have to go through a process then—a court process, which takes up time and resources to seize those goods even though nobody has put in a claim, even though nobody disputes the fact that those goods were either the proceeds of crime or were an instrument of crime.

So this bill would, in fact, make it—improve the administration of process, wouldn't put anybody's property in jeopardy, because nobody's put in a claim. It's uncontested, Mr. Speaker, and it would allow the police and those involved with the administration of this act to get on and do other work, not to tie up resources.

When I introduced this bill about a year ago or so, the government voted it down. They wouldn't let it pass, Mr. Speaker. They said they weren't going to act on it, weren't going to move on it, and, in fact, we haven't had this bill working in the last year because the government didn't think it was a good enough idea. Well, lo and behold, I understand that there's another bill that's come forward that incorporates this idea and suddenly, there's been a conversion on the proverbial road to Damascus with the government. Now, all of a sudden, they think it's not a bad idea at all.

And the question, of course, we have, is why is it that it takes the opposition to bring forward an issue? Why is it it takes the opposition to bring forward an idea only to have the government shoot it down and stall it for more than a year before it actually sees the legislative framework by the government itself? This is a bill that could have been working for Manitobans, working against criminals for the last 12 months had the government simply put aside their petty self-interest and allowed the bill to pass during the last legislative session.

Now, of course, I mean, I'm sure the minister will stand up as he often does and says, well, you know, there was a bit of an issue here and there was a bit of an issue there so we tightened some screws here and hammered in a couple of nails there just to sort of fix and prime it up. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, that nobody's perfect. I've never stood in this House and said any—that everybody has a perfect idea. We're all susceptible to failure and we're all susceptible to suggestions and I certainly, during the last legislative session, said to the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), I'd be open to his ideas if he had ways that he wanted to tweak the bill or make changes to it, and, in fact, he didn't because clearly he simply wanted to bring in his own bill under his own name and ultimately I think that's unfortunate because it does a disservice to Manitobans more generally. It does a disservice because regardless of whose name was on the bill, nothing has been happening on this front over the last year in terms of this particular ability to have an administrative forfeiture where there is, in fact, no other party who is putting in a claim or saying that they have an interest in this particular property where it's believed to have been an instrument of crime or a proceed of crime.

*(10:10)

And so I'm disappointed in the government, not for the fact that they brought in, now, a bill that's quite similar. I mean, I'm happy for that, that we are actually going to see this type of legislation pass. But I'm disappointed that they would take the low road, Mr. Speaker, I might say, by killing the bill during the last legislative session, saying that they weren't interested in it, weren't going to act on it and then suddenly come forward and say, well, now we're going to act on it.

And when you look more broadly, Mr. Speaker, on crime in the city of Winnipeg and Manitoba, perhaps that's why we have the very difficult, some

might say horrific, situation we have when it comes to violent crime both in Winnipeg specifically and more generally in Manitoba. It's because this government isn't proactive on issues; it's because they are reactive to almost every situation. When they see a crime or type of crime become prevalent, when they see it become an issue in the media, when they hear victims speaking out, they wait, they wait, they wait, they wait for other people to come forward with ideas, they wait for the public to demand something, and then they react. But they react long after there are many victims who've been victimized by different kinds of crime. They react after there's been a great cost to society. They react after the public has almost given up hope, and that's not what we need when it comes to an Attorney General. We don't want somebody who reacts to something all the time. We need somebody who's proactive, who's looking forward and says, we want to find a way to prevent people from becoming victims, well, before they become victims. That's what we'd want from an Attorney General. That's what we'd want from the chief lawmaker of this province, but that's not what we have.

And this might—some might say, well, this is a small example, and perhaps it is a micro-example of a larger problem, but it's still an example, and it's instructive, Mr. Speaker, in terms of how this government acts on so many different fronts. Instead of just standing up last year, the Attorney General had the chance to stand up and say, well, you know, this idea came from the member opposite, from a member of the opposition, but we are going to work with the member; we are going to bring changes, if need be, to that piece of legislation and pass it so that it could have been working for the last year for Manitobans.

Instead of doing that this Minister of Justice said, no, we're going to stall the bill; we're going to kill the bill—last session. We'll bring in our own bill that does essentially the same thing, at least that portion of his larger bill, and then we're going to claim credit for it.

Well, I don't really care, Mr. Speaker, about the issue of credit. May—I care about the fact that we can actually get something done here in Manitoba and do things to reduce crime, and that's the overall message that this minister has sent to individuals in the province. He has said to them that he is interested in politics; he's not interested in results. He's interested in trying to have some sort of political agenda, but he's not interested in having real, meaningful

measures that are going to reduce crime. And that, ultimately, I think, is the failure of this minister. Ultimately that'll be his legacy, I think, in terms of his time as the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General: that he reacted to situations, that he didn't have the foresight to see the problems that were coming down the road, that he allowed Manitoba to become the violent crime and Winnipeg to become the violent crime capital of Canada, that he allowed Manitoba to get to the situation where many—when they think about our great province and our great city which all of us are very proud of—think about horrific acts of violence, because that is what they see, whether it's on the national news or on the local news. He's allowed it to get to that point because he isn't proactive in his actions and in his legislative agenda.

So today we see that example. I expect the Attorney General's going to stand up, probably say a few things about how the bill has some merit, but they're doing their own, probably throw some barbs about how he doesn't like the—how this particular bill is written, throw some insults about—my way about other sorts of things. That's how he does things in the House, Mr. Speaker.

But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it still falls on him that he let this measure sit for more than a year, that he let it sit on the legislative waiting—launch pad, waiting for himself to come forward and bring it forward when it could have already been acting over the last year. And who knows what sort of efficiencies it would have brought to the police, to the department, to our courts, so then, in fact, that things wouldn't have been tied up and other resources could have been brought to bear on criminals.

So I look forward to hearing the minister's comments. I know that he will do exactly as I predicted. I'm not often right at predicting things in the future, whether it's with sporting events or other things, but I have a good sense that that is what this minister is going to do, Mr. Speaker, just like he did the last session. And, unfortunately, he might feel that his good antics in the House, that his good feeder here in the House, that it serves some sort of political purpose here in this Assembly.

But I can tell him out on the streets, out in where real people are talking about real issues, they know it does no service to them. They know it's not serving their purpose. They know, ultimately, he's failing in his job as the Attorney General by simply reacting to

everything, by simply allowing the opposition to bring forward ideas, have them stall, and then have him bring in something similar a year or two later. That is not what they expect for the Attorney General. That's not why he gets paid the funds that he does for being Attorney General.

And I hope that he, in fact, is going to take a different approach with future bills that come forward from members of the opposition, whether it's the members of this party or other parties in the House, Mr. Speaker, that he'll look to do his job in a proactive way, not a reactive way, because that's what Manitobans expect from this and all ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member opposite for his typical, thoughtful, non-partisan comments on what I think is a very important issue.

You know, it's great to see, and I actually welcome the member's comments today, because it's good to see the Progressive Conservative Party is finally beginning to realize the things that the NDP government is doing in this province to take on crime are worthy.

And you know, it wasn't even—it was just over two years ago, when we talked about how we are using The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and how we're going to use it to take on gangs and take on organized crime and hit them in the pocketbook. Well, his leader went out in the hall, after we talked about that, and said to the media, said to the *Free Press*, March 25, 2010, about the bill, it doesn't do anything substantive to help in the fight against organized crime or to improve resources.

The Progressive Conservatives really didn't understand how criminal property forfeiture legislation worked. They simply didn't understand how it would take on the fight against organized crime, didn't understand how it would help police.

And, indeed, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) was wrong, as he has been so many times before, not just wrong, but about \$12-million wrong at the current time, because that's how much property is now being pursued by the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit.

So, let's be positive. I'm pleased the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has actually, I think, come on board now and realizes the value of the criminal property forfeiture legislation, and we were one of

the leaders, of course, in the country at moving ahead.

Now, of course—and I hear the member for Springfield chattering away and I'm sure he'll have an opportunity to speak to this because I know he doesn't get to speak very often. So I'll be looking forward to him today.

And I know the member opposite from Steinbach wanted to get partisan, so I'll spend a little bit getting partisan and then we'll talk about the very important question and how we can truly improve criminal property in Manitoba.

Now, in just the past week, of course, the member from Steinbach stood in this place, voted against more police officers for the province of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, outside of Winnipeg, voted against more Crown attorneys, voted against more support staff, voted against more Crowns—or more court staff, voted against more Legal Aid funding. And, of course, the year before, he voted against more resources for the Warrant Enforcement Unit. So I know, sometime in the next couple of years, the member opposite will realize, again, his error, and he'll probably try to take credit for it because that's the way he works and that's fine.

But today we're debating a very important bill. And as the member knows, there have been moves across Canada to strengthen criminal property forfeiture legislation. And, indeed, the province of British Columbia introduced legislation just over a year ago that would allow for a system of administrative forfeiture.

And, I know the member was busy on Google and came running into the House in the dying days of last year's session, and do you know why he did that? Because he had overpromised and he knew he was about to underdeliver.

For four years we heard the member for Steinbach standing in this House, travelling around the province, telling everybody how they had this plan to fight crime. It was top secret. It was so top secret, Mr. Speaker, they banned the media from their conventions or, as they call them, annual general meetings; it sounds more corporate. They banned guests from coming. They had private sessions because they were telling everybody they had this great idea. And out came the election campaign, out came the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), and poof, he gave his promises on

fighting crime. And it was, gee, you know what, the NDP actually had it right.

You know, I voted against every single police officer, every single Crown attorney. I voted against the increased resources for The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. But, you know, now that we're actually going to the people of Manitoba, and even though I've been googling desperately for four years trying to find something that might work, I really don't have very much to say. Because you know what? Tackling crime is a difficult job, but you know, the NDP's on the right track. So we'll draft in and we'll promise a dog kennel, which the City is going to build anyway, and we'll promise a Facebook page. And, you know, that was it; that was it for the Tory crime policy. And we know, of course, how the election turned out.

Now, in terms of the bill, there really is not that much wrong with the bill the members put forward, but there's a lot of things that should be thought of, that should be included.

* (10:20)

I'm very pleased that I had the chance to stand up and introduce Bill 11, and I'm sure when the member accepts a briefing, which has been offered to him on the bill, he will understand. I know he doesn't right now, but he'll understand all of the other pieces of Bill 11 which makes it worthwhile. For example, Bill 11 will provide the ability to pause the civil forfeiture process when an innocent victim is involved. When they're involved as a witness and the court feels it's in the interests of justice, the court would have the ability to allow the criminal process to be resolved first, keeping the property frozen, so it can be dealt with later to prevent them from being sold.

And this will make sure the first time that a victim has to give evidence or give testimony is actually in the criminal courtroom, because even though the civil remedies are important, securing the criminal conviction is important as well, and I don't know why you want to go ahead and vote in favour of a bill that doesn't include those provisions.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Bill 11 would allow for the distribution of money from the criminal property forfeiture fund under this act directly to the Victims Assistance Fund under the Victims' Bill of Rights to support programs and services that benefits victims of crime.

Many times, the property which comes into possession of the forfeiture unit, there may not be an identifiable victim. Many times, if it's a grow op or a meth lab, there may not be an identifiable victim. We want to make it more clear that the proceeds from that are still going to be used to make Manitoba a safer place and we want to be able to help out victims. So, again, I'm not sure why you'd want to move ahead with a bill that didn't include a provision like that.

As well, from speaking to police across the province, from speaking to Crown prosecutors and of course from consulting with the unit, there are some other ideas that they have that are incorporated in Bill 11.

For example, the bill enhances areas of disclosure to help out the director, the police and financial institutions to better share information. It'll give financial institutions the authority to disclose necessary information to the director in a way that's consistent with federal legislation. I'm not sure why we'd want to move ahead with a bill that doesn't include that, because we want to make sure the best disclosure is provided.

The bill also provides police with the ability to share personal health information where the director needs to confirm that instruments of unlawful activity have been used to cause serious bodily harm.

And I hear the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese) chattering away. If he wants to come to the briefing, I think I'm more than happy to have him come along as well.

I'm not sure why we'd want to introduce a bill that didn't include the latest and best practices of how criminal property forfeiture works across the country, and again, the members have nothing to say, so they'll take personal shots, but I'll keep trying to educate them in the course of the day.

Bill 11 will also introduce changes to allow the asset manager appointed under the act to manage and dispose of offence-related property that's been ordered forfeited by criminal court, under the criminal court forfeiture rules.

The federal government used to have more of a role in pursuing criminal property, but the federal government has recognized that provinces like British Columbia and Manitoba have such good criminal property forfeiture systems that the federal government is actually quite prepared to have the provincial authorities move ahead. And it's one

example, of course, of the federal government recognizing that many times the provinces can do things at a local level much better than the federal government can. There's some other examples where the federal government isn't taking that position. I may not know why, but debate on this bill is not the place to talk about it.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Bill 11 will propose technical amendments to make sure that Manitoba's act keeps pace with developments based upon practical experience and case law that's developing in other provinces.

And again, it's one thing, as the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) did—and I give him credit, he knows how to use Google. He found the bill in British Columbia. You can have opposition by Google, and you can have government by consultation. And the importance, of course, is to speak to our Crown attorneys, to speak to our police and to rely on our very, very good forfeiture unit for ideas to keep improving the bill.

So, well, is there anything wrong with Bill 11—or rather with Bill 204?

Well, yes, because it doesn't include the latest and best practices, and we'll move ahead, and I know it may not be enough for the member for Steinbach who'll run in here with something written on the back of an envelope. We prefer to actually consult with police, we prefer to consult with Crown attorneys, we prefer to consult with the unit to make sure that whatever we do provides the best practices.

And I know, well last—just last July, I was able to stand with police from across Manitoba, and, in fact, it was in the lovely city of Selkirk. I stood with the MLA for Selkirk, and we were able to provide to the police services across Manitoba funds which they're going to use for more equipment which is going to help them do their job and to keep them safer. And, certainly, when it comes to protecting law enforcement in this province, of course the member opposite knows that there is no government that is more interested than this government here in Manitoba

And I know when I briefed the member on the steps we've taken to make having booby traps in property a further crime—I'm sure he'll be supportive. When we talk about the steps we've taken to prevent people from using animals to protect unlawful acts, I'm sure the member will be in support. We'll be the first in the country to have that legislation. I'm sure

the member for Steinbach will take credit for it somewhere along the way. And he can do what he wants; we know we're working to protect Manitobans every day.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It's a great pleasure to be speaking on Bill 204, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill establishes an administrative forfeiture mechanism for certain types of personal property, where the property is believed to be proceeds of unlawful activity or an instrument of unlawful activity and no personal claims and interest in the property.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you get a sense of déjà vu when you hear the title, and you hear what the bill's about, it's because this bill has been in front of this House before. In fact, it was introduced by the member—yes, the member from Steinbach, who has been pushing this policy for a long time. In fact, the last time it was introduced, it was Bill 204—I'm sorry, Bill 221 and this bill in front of us is Bill 204. And a lot of credit should go to the member from Steinbach, because he's come up with a lot of ideas in regards to dealing with the high crime rate that we have in this province. Certainly, in the last 10 years, we've seen skyrocketing violent crime rates in the city of Winnipeg and across the province. People are fearful for their lives and would like to see their government do something about it, which is not something they have seen from this minister or from this government.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I could just take a moment and list some of the accomplishments that the member for Steinbach proposed, and which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) opposed. The Minister of Justice was against all of these.

I'd like to start with a helicopter for Winnipeg. Who opposed it? The NDP. Who is the one who put it forward? It was the member for Steinbach and the Progressive Conservative caucus. And, in fact, it was foot dragging and stalling by the NDP government that finally forced the Progressive Conservative caucus—our leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), and the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who forced the government, shamed them into finally making a deal with the City of Winnipeg. And who—again, who opposed all of this? The NDP caucus.

How about ending conditional sentences? Something else that was put forward—an idea, a

policy that was put forward by the member for Steinbach. Who opposed that initially? The Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

And then was the ankle bracelets. Now I—we can't say that—the it was this current Minister of Justice who opposed that. In fact, it was, I believe, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who was then the minister of Justice, who went out of his way to trash the idea of ankle bracelets. In fact, he said something to the effect that it would have absolutely no effect; it would not help at all. Well, we know that, you know, with New Democrats, they're slow learners, but they do eventually come around. And they finally realized that this was a good idea. They haven't implemented it as fully as they should have, but, again, this was one of those ideas—one of the policies put forward by the member for Steinbach and the Progressive Conservative caucus. Where was the NDP government on it? Well, initially, they opposed it, starting with the member from Kildonan.

How about changes to the federal Criminal Code? Always supported—put forward by the member for Steinbach—in the Progressive Conservative caucus. Took some time—took some time—we even, finally, got the member for Kildonan, the former Minister of Justice, to go to Ottawa and lobby on behalf of Manitoba as the Minister of Justice.

How about additional support for children who struggle with addiction? That whole concept put forward by—yes, Mr. Speaker, you got it—the member for Steinbach and the Progressive Conservative caucus. And who was not on board with that initially? Members opposite; the Minister of Justice, at that time, wasn't totally onside, eventually, he got there.

How about getting rid of welfare for people with outstanding warrants? Another idea that came forward, another idea put forward by the member for Steinbach and the Progressive Conservative caucus. Who opposed it? You're absolutely right, this Minister of Justice. He opposed it initially. He stood against it.

* (10:30)

These are all ideas. When we talk about making our cities safe, about making our constituents and the people who walk our streets safe, these are some of the good ideas that came forward and, in each and every case, were opposed by the ministers of justice of the day from the New Democratic Party and

eventually, on most of these issues, they came around. Took a little while; they are slow learners, as I said. They came around and finally supported them and we're pleased for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the—this current Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) wasn't opposed to everything. He did have some of his own ideas, and I would like to list a few of them. For instance, this Minister of Justice came up with that great idea of giving Slurpees and sports tickets to criminals. He actually had a whole line item in his budget where they would hand out Slurpees to criminals. Now, I have to say on that particular one, you know, we opposed that one. We did not think that was an appropriate way to take on serious crime issues in this city. In fact, that we should be going after criminals and not trying to reward them with Slurpees and with sports tickets.

In fact, there was another policy of this particular Minister of Justice, and when he decided one night he would sit at his computer in the darkness of the night, Mr. Speaker, all the lights off, and he would sit in front of his computer and he would hit that delete button and delete, delete, delete. He spent all night deleting outstanding warrants. Instead of going after individuals, they deleted the outstanding warrants. Instead of enforcing the laws of the country and enforcing these individuals coming in front of a court and a justice, what they did instead was they deleted the warrants.

And in this case, yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to say we also opposed that position, that policy. So on the one hand, giving Slurpees and sports tickets and deleting outstanding warrants from the Minister of Justice and the other side, positive and progressive and ideas that actually fly and go somewhere like a helicopter, like ankle bracelets, like no welfare for individuals who are on outstanding warrants, all kinds of ideas that came forward from this side of the House, including this bill.

And this bill, again—it's not the first time it's been in front of this House. Bill 204 was here before and again it's in front of the House and we have the Minister of Justice once again pooh-poohing it. In fact, he's got a similar—a comparative bill now in front of this House that we will be debating because, Mr. Speaker, it took him—it took him a long time to finally wake up, study the Bill 211 from last year and, in fact, take it as his own, and put his own name on it.

And you know what? I don't think the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) minds particularly. You know, it's like all the other issues that he fought for, and we as a Progressive Conservative caucus don't mind that the NDP party steals a lot of our ideas and takes them for their own, Mr. Speaker. The thing is is that on these issues that rather than waiting another year or two or even six months when there could be some real changes made in the city, that these laws could actually apply to them. Why wait a year before you take them?

You know, Mr. Speaker, in Ottawa there was a private member's bill put forward on human trafficking by our former colleague here, Joy Smith, the Member of Parliament, and unanimity, unanimity, they passed the bill because it was the right thing to do, and it dealt with human trafficking.

And, Mr. Speaker, in other parliaments and in other legislatures, you know, opposition bills and private member's bills do get through, and we would say to the members opposite, you know what, come on board on some of these ideas. You know, don't just throw them out because they weren't from someone in your own caucus. Look at them and say, you know, maybe there's warrant there. Perhaps this is something what we should be doing, and in this case, you know, it took them a year before they could, you know, muster up the courage to take the same bill, put their name on it, and take credit for it, and we're fine with that, but a year has gone by. We lost another year and that's with all the issues that we find when it comes to good ideas that come up in this House.

In fact, I heard the Premier (Mr. Selinger) the other day in question period, and he got up and he said, we are always open to new ideas. Yes, as long as he can take them for his own. He doesn't mean that they are open for good, new ideas and that others—they'll just agree with him and let them go through. You know, it's almost—they have a little character flaw that if it isn't their name on it, they're not going to let it go through. And that's unfortunate because in each case, time went by, other people were victimized, and these kinds of bills, these kinds of things, could have already been policy, could have been law, and could have been in place.

I would recommend to this House that we vote on this bill and let it move on, Mr. Speaker. It's the right thing to do. It's a good thing for Manitoba.

I thank the member for Steinbach for this, and I would look forward to further debate in this House.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): It's always a pleasure to follow the member for Springfield and be able to move forward and put some accurate information on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the definition of insanity is to take a very complex issue and try to deal with it in a very simplistic manner. Insanity is dealing with a complex issue in a very simplistic manner, coming forward and moving it to—say we have this issue that's moved forward and what we need to do is deal with it in a very complex, multi-faceted approach.

I would like to put some accurate information on the record. The member opposite wasn't around when the Filmon government was in power. But virtually no private member's bills were passed—virtually none. I'm pleased that through co-operation and our work with our House leaders, we actually have private member's bills passed by both sides of the House. And I think that's a very positive step forward, and we've been doing that. I know that back in 2003 I passed a private member's bill. I know that lots of members have on both sides of the House. I think that's a positive step.

Next I'd like to talk about giving credit where credit's due. The member opposite from Springfield—sorry, from St. Paul—actually talked about the fact that they're moving forward on this issue and they brought the issue forward. As a historical fact, the bill came forward in 2002 and we've been working on criminal property forfeiture since 2002.

And so if the bill's been proved in 2009, we have a unit that's moving forward on the issue and, you know, I think that what we want to do is continue to adopt best practice. So we've been on this issue.

But the other idea that's important to note, is that the simplistic idea that we haven't supported positive moves in policing is just plain wrong. If you look at it, the police helicopter which is funded at \$1.3 million, we funded it, and the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) and the Conservatives voted against funding that. We have a new child sexual exploitation case co-ordinator in—working for it. We actually fund that position. The members opposite voted against that. We look at the police officers—261 police officers funded by the Province. We fund that, the Conservative Party of Manitoba voted against additional police officers. So we like police

officers and increased Crown prosecutors and anti-gang units and new supports to help fight crime. And the members opposite, if you look, vote against those investments.

Now I think that's shameful. I think that's saying one thing and doing another. And I think that we need to stand beside the prosecutors, the police, the jail guards, et cetera, to make sure that people who need to be incarcerated, are incarcerated, and there's space and investments to do that.

However, I also look at other investments, and I look forward in things like the prevention aspects. And I'm very pleased to work with the new Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief), because I think crime, yes, you want to push against crime, but you also want to prevent crime.

Last year, when I was—had the youth file, we actually employed kids using Green Team funds to work with other kids. And instead of working with 3,000 or 4,000 people, we had 24,000 young people busy through the Green Team, and I think that's a positive step. And I think the Green Team investments have been positive for both sides of the House. I think that they've been made on both sides of the House. I think the other thing that's interesting to note is the new initiative. Rather than just cutting grass we have young people working with other young people, and that was a positive step. And we've had about 23,000 people busy last year.

I think we look at other programs. I think the mentoring program that we're talking about is investing, where we have people work with vulnerable youth across the province, is a very positive step. Why? Because I know in my own life I've had teachers and coaches that actually have taken the time and trouble to actually work with me, get me on the right path and move forward. And I think that's very, very positive because I know that all of us have people in our lives that have made a difference. A lot of us are teachers on both sides of the House, and I think that's a positive first step because what happens is we all need support and guidance. And I think that's positive, and I think that's a positive step to preventing crime.

* (10:40)

I also look at the investment in recreational facilities that we've done, and whether it's in Brandon or Winnipeg or northern Manitoba, rural—we've made huge investments to keep kids busy. And I look at that and I say, wait; it makes a lot of sense

to create a recreational facility—a basketball, volleyball, swimming facility—rather than just jails, and that's why I say it's a very complex issue, but it also needs complex solutions. And so I like the fact that we've got the Centennial Pool that's been developed, the fourplex hockey rink, all these things that we as a government have voted to invest in and voted to invest in—and you know what? Kids are using those on healthy, active living, recreational activities versus just the punishment, and I think that's very, very important.

And I think what we do is we need to make—continue to make those investments. I think—I look at the programs on parenting. The Triple P parenting program is talking about working with young parents to make sure they have the skills and abilities.

And I'd like to compliment the members opposite because they came up with an idea in the last couple of years they were in government about the children secretariat. We've taken that, grew it, and that's now become the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, and it's a great program all throughout government that invests programs and supports for parents, child—children and families which make sure that you have positive outcomes.

And I think that's really, really important, because then what you're talking about is long-term investments. And I'm proud to be part of the government that's ramped up the spending and investments in children on the fact that it keeps kids out of jail, keeps kids out of trouble. So I think that becomes important.

And when people say, does it make a difference? Well, you look at the auto theft suppression strategy and it is working. So, the auto thefts were really high and we've been working through multiple partners, i.e., MPI, the staff at the suppression unit. And what we've done is since—we're down about 80 per cent since 2004. It is been noted as a success. And we're doing that through ankle bracelets, investments in prosecutors, investments in police, making sure that the kids are busy, steering them in the right direction, et cetera. And I think that's where we need to continue to focus on.

So although the member opposite's talking about we should do something on criminal property forfeiture and has brought forward Bill 11, I agree with our Attorney General (Mr. Swan). I think we've been on it. We agree with the basic premise. In fact, we've been doing it since 2002, ramped it up in 2009. We'll continue to enhance it and, yes, we will listen

to good ideas elsewhere, and I have to commend the province of BC for what they have done because I think that we can learn from other provinces.

But I don't want the member from St. Paul to not understand that we have been moving forward on this initiative. We've been forward—moving forward on prevention. We've been moving forward on effective punishment, more police.

And, you know, to be absolutely accurate in this House, I'd like to state that we vote for the money. So it's not just the philosophy of doing it; you have to give people the tools and resources. So we have funded the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit. We have funded the prevention unit. We have funded the policing unit. We've worked with the federal government for tougher penalties. And on every single one of those initiatives that make a difference for kids, the Conservative Party, to a member, have voted against.

So let's not put inaccurate information out in the world. What we want to do is make sure that they know that we're moving forward with all these. We will not be susceptible to revisionist history.

We will continue to make investments to kids, addiction—and by the way, just for—in closing, we've moved the support for addiction from \$10 million, which was cut back in 1998 to '99 by the Conservative Party to—the funding for AFM—we've moved that funding from 10 to 26 million dollars. We have initiatives on prevention in school divisions throughout the province and we'll continue to make those initiatives on addiction. And, you know, that movement from \$10 million to \$26 million for after-treatment, for prevention and all this—let's make no step—mistake about it: we of the NDP voted for it and the Conservatives, to a person, voted against it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And I'm pleased to have the opportunity to stand very briefly and speak to Bill 204, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act, that has—was introduced by my colleague, the member from Steinbach. And at the outset, Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has, over the years, in his role as Justice critic, brought forward many good ideas and suggestions to this government, and this is one of those bills that could've been passed last year and the government could've been working aggressively to try to ensure that the proceeds of criminal activity that were never

claimed were used in a meaningful manner. And we have a government today who doesn't like to give the opposition credit for good ideas. They prefer to drag their feet and to hold things and bring in their own legislation and take credit for the good ideas that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has put forward.

Mr. Speaker, you know, there isn't any government that is perfect. I have sat on both sides of the House and I know that not everything we did as Progressive Conservatives was right, and I also know that not everything that this NDP government has done is right. Nobody is perfect. But when good ideas and good suggestions come forward by members of the opposition, I think it's incumbent upon governments to take a look at those and, you know, if in fact the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) felt that the member for Steinbach's bill didn't go far enough, there was that opportunity for him to sit down one-on-one with the member for Steinbach and make friendly amendments to a piece of legislation that could have been passed last year, that we could have been working with over the last 12 months rather than voting against it, tossing it out last year and then bringing their own bill in, which the minister says goes a bit further.

Well, I would say to the minister today he could've made amendments to this very bill last year. It could've been passed, should have been passed, and I would encourage government to stand up today, support this bill that's been brought forward by the member for Steinbach and let's get on with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Well, the member from Steinbach's comments are great and his use of Google is fantastic from BC. We have made this a tougher law with more teeth and, well, the member from Steinbach says that we have sat around for the last year and done nothing. We've seized \$2.5 million worth of assets and there's 62 claims pending worth 14 million more. So I would hardly say that's us sitting around doing nothing.

They claim that we have déjà view—déjà vu. Well, actually, we review. We went through this legislation and came up with a version that is better—kind of like Windows 7, while they are using Windows Vista. This version, we consulted with the police and the Crown attorneys to come up with something better, with more teeth, and while the member opposite said that we should've consulted with the attorney, we could've—the Attorney

General—why didn't he go and say, you know what—why didn't he sit down with him? I'm sure the Attorney General would've been very happy to sit down with the member opposite and review the bill that he had had. And I think that we've been working against criminals recently and we've actually seized a home in the opposition—Leader of the Opposition's riding worth almost a million dollars, and we actually seized all of the assets that he had too. So to say that we're not doing anything with crime is actually quite of a silly statement in this House. We've also taken the high road in making sure that this bill is right and proper provisions.

Well, the members opposite suggest that we're only reacting. We have been working on these issues for years and we've seized millions of dollars worth of assets, put gangs in jail and made this a hostile environment for criminals and organized crime to be in. For them to say that we've done nothing is just a false statement. Seizing houses that are fronts to organized crime and property bought with crime—how about suspending driver's licences for people convicted of drug trafficking? Preventing the introduction of body armour and fortified vehicles, we've just introduced that, that we're going to be allowing—that anybody with body armour or fortified vehicles will be in contravention of the law.

* (10:50)

We've eliminated the two-for-one remand credits. We've cracked down on gun crimes, including and making it harder for people that commit crimes with guns to get bail. We've increased sentencing on smuggling of firearms. We've created an offence for using the Internet for the purposes of luring children. We've made gang-related homicides of—for—with first-degree murder. We've created offences for drive-by shootings and shooting at buildings. We've made separate auto theft sentences in April of 2011. We've strengthened the child pornography laws. We've increased the minimum sentence for criminal harassment. Mandatory sentences for premeditated knife crimes: we've gone to Ottawa and fought for these kinds of things. We've gone to Ottawa and fought for additional sentences for home invasions and carjackings to have mandated sentences. Criminal penalties for possessing body armour: like I've said, we're going—we're doing that. We've changed the youth criminal—we're working with the federal government to change the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

It's funny that the members sit there and say that we're—the member from St. Paul suggested that we're

slow learners. If you actually recall an article in the *Free Press* a while back, it actually suggested that the Conservatives are actually slow learners, but I guess since he didn't read it, maybe because he, himself, is a slow learner. It showed that the Conservatives are actually less educated than us. It was an article in the *Free Press*, but maybe because he didn't read or can't read—I don't know—he didn't read that. It's clearly that they are not operating on the new operating system that we are. We've proved that in the last election.

While the member opposite wants to crack down on building—on crime by building new dog kennels, we've hired more police officers and prosecutors. We've created gang units. The members opposite want us to lock up everyone and throw away the key. They think that all youth should just be put in jail, like, oh, they've created—they've done a crime; let's put them in jail.

They're talking about how our free Slurpees and tickets are such a bad thing. You know what? Those things are incentives to keep youth from doing bad things. Those things are things that will keep the youth from going on the street.

You know, what do the members opposite want? They want a—they want more helicopters, apparently, so we could land them on children to keep them from committing crimes. Well, you know what? Why don't we put more of the money into preventing the crimes in the first place? Oh, wait. We are. That's exactly what our government does.

So, for the members opposite to claim that we should come on board, the member from St. Paul suggested that we should come on board and co-operate from bills from them. I remember last week: the bells ringing for hours and hours on end. Maybe the members opposite would like to think about coming on board with us because we're very easy people to work with. If you wanted to talk to any of our ministers, as I've seen, they're welcoming you to come and talk to them and make suggestions and work with them. We don't ring the bells for hours on end. We've—we're willing to work with you; we're ready to go into all these committee rooms and work with you.

I remember last week, the members opposite had to scramble four times to become—to finally get a ruling to have the bells rung. It was quite ridiculous. We have seen no co-operation from them on our side, and yet they're asking for co-operation.

What I'm suggesting here today is, let's start co-operating. If you have ideas, bring them forward to us. We're not opposed to all of your ideas. In fact, when we were in—sorry, since we've been in power, we've passed more of your bills than when you guys were in power. You didn't do—you didn't pass any of our members'—private members' bills.

On April 25th, the Justice Minister proposed amendments to Manitoba criminal property and forfeiture act. This bill is more comprehensive than what we are talking about today in the proposed member opposite's Bill 204.

We've also taken on private and public consultations, dozens of them throughout the province, with the minister of youth and opportunities. He has gone around this province tirelessly working with people to talk about the ways that we can prevent crime from happening in the first place.

We work with the youth. We don't just land helicopters on them and build dog cages so that way they can have more people thrown in prisons. We're not all about building prisons; we're about creating good environment for people to grow up in, creating opportunities for them. So I think it's kind of a sad statement for them to say that we're the ones who are on the wrong side here.

And, you know, underneath this new bill that we're proposing, the—all of the forfeiture would go to the Victims Assistance Fund. I think that that, Mr. Speaker, says a lot about this government. We're not taking the money; we're giving it back to the victims. That is—to me, it would be a key thing about what's different about ours.

And, you know what, some of the legislation that we've had: we've closed 540 drug houses and brothels used for act—criminal activities in the last few years—540, Mr. Speaker, that's a huge number. Five hundred and nine drug dens, alone, were closed as of July 2011. So for the false claim to say that we sit around and do nothing with crime, that—it's absolutely ridiculous. Five hundred and nine drug houses shut down.

Our stance on crime is we're going to hit criminals where it hurts: in their wallets. We make sure that we take away everything that they have. And that includes property; we've seized cars, we've seized houses, and we're seizing property from them at all the time. And that is what this is about. So I encourage the members opposite to come and work

with us on this. They're asking for our co-operation; I'm offering it. We're willing to co-operate on our side of the House. We're willing to work with you. I would think that, you know, you'll be happy, and I'm guessing that you're going to support—that the members opposite will support our bill when it comes forward, because it is similar to theirs, but, obviously, with more teeth in it. I'm thinking that there's going to be unanimous support of the House based on the conversations that we've had here today.

You know, we've used all of the money that we've seized from things for cost recovery and court applications. We brought grants to the police in training and public initiatives. We've used money to purchase Zodiacs, thermal imaging unit and video equipment, shields, we've—to improve the Winnipeg Police Service K9 Unit. Remedy the effects of the specified unlawful activity that they did to take the seizure, we've compensated victims directly. That's what our government is about; we're about helping people. First off, we're going to try to prevent the crime, and then, if it does happen, we're going to use that money that we seized from those criminals to help the victims of crime. That's what our government is about.

And I encourage the members opposite to come and join us. And maybe if they wanted to have a good discussion with us, we would be willing to have it with them. I think it's—I think that we've shown on our side that we're willing to co-operate. I think it's a fantastic thing. I really believe that it's co-operation—and I've had great conversations with the members opposite, some of the newer members opposite, who have, you know, seemed more than willing to try to work with us. And I'm encouraging some of the—maybe the more senior member opposite, who maybe have a little bit of a—you know, issues from years past, maybe they need to take some direction from the newer members opposite, and work with us.

You know, instead of coming against us, we could all work together. We continue to create a hostile environment for crime in this province, and I think that the statement—and, you know what, they tried to win an election on the fact that they're tougher on crime. Well, we hire more police officers, we hire more prosecutors; we're hiring more as we speak. The—we are—the—this fallacy that they've created—and it obviously didn't work, see, the public was smart enough to see through it. Maybe because, unlike what the member from St. Paul suggested, we are educated. They were smart enough to see through

the fact that we are tough on crime, and that we do a good job with crime. Despite what their rhetoric and rants would say that we aren't tough on crime, we are.

And, you know what, I give a great round of applause to everybody—everybody—who voted for us in the last election for seeing through the rhetoric and actually voting for the proper party in this thing.

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

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I recently had an interesting experience in St. James.

And we held a crime prevention forum, and you never know when you have those kinds of forums how many people are actually going to turn out. We had a very good turnout of very vocal people, which was the whole point—was to listen to what other people were interested in pursuing, particularly, with crime. And what I found was that many of the people seemed to understand the connection between finding ways to discourage crime as opposed to simply reacting to increasing the punishment as a knee-jerk reaction. And I was very encouraged by that because there is a connection between these two things.

Mr. Speaker, and there was one comment, in particular, that one of the residents of St. James made. And he wanted to highlight the fact that when we phrase some of the initiatives that we try to put out there for people to get involved in—was that we don't paint young people as thugs who need to be discouraged from getting into crime, but we find ways to engage them in positive—positive—phrasing. And I appreciated that so much, because he was thinking beyond just someone does something wrong, you have to punishment—punish them and that's it.

* (11:00)

I found that people were very open to this, and when we started discussing the new program—or the new department that we have, they were very positive about that as well. We've created a brand new department whose sole focus is on creating new ways to engage youth and identifying ways to support children from birth, because it's not just about supporting, you know, 13- to 18-year-olds.

We have really tried to listen to what the public would like to see, what young people would like to see, and I know when I've been on the doorstep in St.

James, that has come up repeatedly, finding ways to have more opportunities for young people, and this is one of the positive steps that we are moving towards.

We're also, you know, addressing crime through initiatives. We want to make sure that crime doesn't pay, and despite the comment earlier by the member opposite that we're not proactive, if you look at some of the things that we have coming up, such as the mental health court that's going to be opening in the spring, which will reduce reoffence rates for those with mental illness, that's certainly not something that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. James will have seven minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution before us this morning is the one by the honourable member for Burrows, Manitoba Volunteers.

Res. 2—Manitoba Volunteers

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member from St. James, the following resolution:

WHEREAS Manitoba volunteers make a tremendous contribution to communities across the province, helping organizations and neighbourhoods become stronger and more vibrant; and

WHEREAS volunteers make a difference through their actions to make Manitoba a great place to live; and

WHEREAS individuals and volunteer organizations support health, the arts, sports and recreation, economic development, community revitalization, housing and more; and

WHEREAS the 2007 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating indicated that 54 per cent of Manitobans over the age of 15 volunteer, which translated into approximately 81.5 million hours annually and was valued at over \$733 million in minimum wage dollars; and

WHEREAS people who volunteer often learn much about themselves and feel a greater sense of purpose and belonging; and

WHEREAS volunteers are integral to the well-being of Manitobans as they often provide

services and support to individuals and groups that governments are not able to provide; and

WHEREAS those who volunteer their time and energy to various activities and organizations are often the unsung heroes of their communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend all those who, through their dedicated volunteer efforts, add immeasurably to their communities and to our province.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Burrows, seconded by the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers)—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I was wondering if there might be leave of the House to take it as it was written in *Hansard*, or on the Order Paper, rather than as read, because the member, when she read it out, on the last paragraph she referred to heroes of their community, and it was actually "communities."

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to accept the resolution as printed? [*Agreed*]

* * *

WHEREAS Manitoba volunteers make a tremendous contribution to communities across the province, helping organizations and neighbourhoods become stronger and more vibrant; and

WHEREAS volunteers make a difference through their actions to make Manitoba a great place to live; and

WHEREAS individuals and volunteer organizations support health, the arts, sports and recreation, economic development, community revitalization, housing and more; and

WHEREAS the 2007 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating indicated that 54 per cent of Manitobans over the age of 15 volunteer, which translated into approximately 81.5 million hours annually and was valued at over \$733 million in minimum wage dollars; and

WHEREAS people who volunteer often learn much about themselves and feel a greater sense of purpose and belonging; and

WHEREAS volunteers are integral to the well-being of Manitobans as they often provide services and support to individuals and groups that governments are not able to provide; and

WHEREAS those who volunteer their time and energy to various activities and organizations are often the unsung heroes of their communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend all those who, through their dedicated volunteer efforts, add immeasurably to their communities and to our province.

Ms. Wight: And thank you to the member opposite for correcting that for us.

On April 17th, I attended the annual volunteer service awards, and I know many of the members here did. And it was just—it was an amazing experience to see the volunteers that attended, Mr. Speaker. There was people there from every possible area and of all ages. I know we had at least one who had, I believe, volunteered—and people can correct me who were also there—for at least 60 years that were getting volunteer awards. And I really noticed—I mean, I think we all know that volunteers are helpful. I don't think anybody is going to disagree with that. But in this job, because of how many we see in so many different community organizations, I think you really notice, even more, how incredibly important volunteers are to our communities and our society.

Communities and the volunteers really are the people who drive the projects and make sure that needs are being met in every possible area of our communities. One of the areas that I know we really have noticed this in, and I really wanted to talk just a bit about it because I've been so impressed by this program of Neighbourhoods Alive!, and it provides support, but only through the efforts of volunteers and community organizations. And so instead of just sort of putting money into something where we don't maybe really know exactly what needs to be done, it is being offered always through community organizations and groups right in that community. So it ensures that the ideas that come forward and the goals are community driven are actually what that community wants.

And I've personally gotten to see just recently—in my own area there's a Neighbourhoods Alive! area, and I am so grateful to the people that came forward. There was a number of people out of Seven Oaks School Division that offered to help and all kinds of community groups really rose up to the challenge, Mr. Speaker, of surveying the neighbourhood and finding out exactly, you know, what is really needed there and getting people involved that had never—I think in some cases, never been involved before and all different cultural groups as well. I attended some of the meetings, and people in that room had come from all over the world to our province and were in there ready to volunteer. So that's one of the things that I really didn't learn about until I came here.

I've also noticed, of course, that in our area in the area that I'm in, as I know every member here has, just phenomenal volunteers. One of ours, for example, is a group called KINRC who works with seniors. And so they're doing everything from, you know, helping with food preparation to getting the seniors out, also volunteering to help youth in their neighbourhoods and getting the youth to help the seniors in the neighbourhoods through, you know, snow removal and that sort of thing. So everyone is helping each other and building relationships between the seniors and the youth as well.

Another one that was just recently in the *Free Press*, actually, was WayFinders, and I had done a member's statement on it because I'd been so excited when I discovered it in my neighbourhood. And they work with students that have, you know, difficulties in school sometimes and helping them with their homework, but helping them with all kinds of skills as well, Mr. Speaker, that when I went and attended there the kids were doing everything from playing chess to putting together a bicycle, to breakdancing over in one corner making food and doing a science project in another corner. So it was pretty amazing and just incredibly impressive the different people that help.

I think in our schools that's another great place where we see all kinds of volunteers: people volunteering to help the kids, you know, have their programs; patrol programs; people volunteering on school committees; and the teachers themselves and the amount of additional volunteering work that they do with our teams and sports teams; and people coming in to coach; and the volunteers that do that, helping our children grow in every possible area.

And then, of course, our community has, as you all know, just—some of the best festivals in the world, I think, are here in Manitoba. And things like Folklorama, for example, which is just known across North America as being a fabulous program, but it is volunteer driven. And people put in just endless hours of time so that we can have those two weeks in the summer seeing every culture imaginable in the world. And I was just at a pre-Folklorama event, actually, on the weekend with the Indo-Caribbean community and they were, you know, showing ahead of time what they were going to be putting on—and the kids and all the work that had been done in that.

And, of course, the Folk Festival, and fundraising. Volunteers raise millions of dollars every year to assist our communities and it's just a tremendous amount of work that they do, and I can't tell you how impressed I've been by that.

* (11:10)

And then, I think, one of the wonderful things additionally about that is youth and the volunteer opportunities and what it does to the lives of our youth. And I know my own daughter, who's now 15, had to volunteer due to a school project. And so, we went to volunteer at Siloam Mission, which is just a incredible organization. And I really believe that that little experience changed her life, changed how she saw people. She realized, in part, how incredibly fortunate she is, herself, which, you know, 15-year-olds aren't normally thinking a lot about. And she saw the respect that with which the Siloam Mission people did their work, and how pleased the people were that were receiving the services from Siloam, and that those people could be anyone; they could be you or I. You know, it kinds of remind me of the—there but for the grace of God go I, because it's so true and it could be anyone in those situations. And I—our youth, as they volunteer, that's what they learn; they learn how to help others and they learn how that changes them. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it turns them into—absolutely, into better people and the kind of people that are socially—pro-social in our communities.

Recently, I also heard, and maybe this has been going for a long time, I just might not have heard about it before, but there's a great volunteer group that's organizing highly skilled business people to volunteer for short-term projects. Sometimes they might give 10 hours or something, but they would be a human resource expert. And they will volunteer their services to organizations that might need that

and to volunteer groups. And I just think that's a fabulous idea to get those highly skilled business people—also, you know, gives them an opportunity to give back, but give back in their own skill area and to share that knowledge that they've gained over so many years in order to help their communities. So I was, also, just very, very excited about that.

And we, also, have volunteers that are the people, Mr. Speaker, who keep the cultures alive. I was at another event on the weekend. That was the Polish congress, and they had spent the last 20 years searching out all the different Polish churches in Manitoba. And, actually, there's a fabulous one in Steinbach, and it has Leo Mol pictures in it that were painted by Leo Mol. And—but they had just done a huge display on this; keeping that alive. And I think we don't recognize, necessarily, always, the value that comes to our communities by the volunteers who work in different cultural groups. So those are just also tremendously valuable.

And, I guess, one of the things that I think that volunteers learn—and I know when I went to that volunteer dinner. The humility of these volunteers, like, they just—it was like they couldn't understand, why are you bothering to award me, I've—you know, I haven't done anything that anybody else wouldn't do. But I don't know that that's true because they put in many, many, many hours for, as I said, sometimes up to 60 years volunteering. And so, I think, one of the really important things that they discovered is that it changes their life. It changes the life, most, of the volunteer, themselves.

So I would just like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to these amazing people in our province.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It's a great pleasure to get up and speak to one of my passions, and that has to do with the volunteerism that takes place in our communities and across this province. What a great thing to be able to give of your time—to have the ability to go out and better your community, better your society, Mr. Speaker.

I can remember, back in 2001, I decided to take my two older children—Brigitta would have been about five and Stefan was four—and we went to the East St. Paul community club, and in that summer season over 600 children were enrolled in a sports program. And the president of the club, basically, said to all of those there—and the rooms were packed, there were more people than could fit in the room—and he said to everybody there that unless

individuals were willing to volunteer and take on some of the coaching roles of these teams that they, actually, were going to have to cut some of the kids out of the programs.

Well, as with most families, there's a lot of pressures on family, work and other stresses, and I, for one, didn't raise my hand. So the community club president looked down the line of these hundreds and hundreds of parents and recognized me, and he said, well, I'm going to start somewhere and I'm going to make an example. So he pointed at me and he said, Schuler, are you going to be a coach?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The rules are very clear of the House, that members are to refer to other members, even to themselves, by their constituency names or ministers by their portfolios. So I ask the honourable member to adhere to those rules.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, he didn't actually use my constituency name, which is St. Paul. He used my last name because I actually wasn't the member for St. Paul then; I was the member for Springfield. But, he used my last name, in either case.

And he said, are you prepared to be a coach? And I said, we don't have the time, we've got three young children, I'm busy at the Legislature fighting the corrupt NDP and, you know, there were a lot of things that prohibited me from being a volunteer.

So he pointed at me and he said, in front of everybody in the room, he said, well, your kids are out. And he pointed to the individual behind me, Bob Martin, my neighbour across the street, and he said, are you prepared to be a volunteer? At that point to him I said—whoa, whoa, whoa, hold on a moment, Mr. President, what do you mean my children are out? Oh, he said, well, we don't have the volunteers, we don't have the coaches.

Anyway, needless to say, I became the coach of the team and Bob Martin, my neighbour across the street, became the assistant coach. I had played soccer on the playground, that was the extent of my knowledge of coaching, but that's how I became a volunteer in my community.

And what a rewarding experience that was. It was just an unbelievably rewarding experience, and I learned a lesson about children. And that is children have an incredibly short attention span and an unbelievably long memory. And, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be careful when you're coaching. They look up to you, and I would point out to anybody

who coaches four- and five-year-olds, just remember, they're not playing soccer, they are playing chase the ball. If an airplane flies over and, yes, it happened to us, the game stopped and we all looked at the airplane. If there was an interesting dog fight or there was something else going on, we stopped and we petted the dog or did whatever else. In fact, there was one little guy who spent a lot of the game making little grass balls in his hand and proudly giving them to me. But I also learnt that the whole point behind sports for four- and five-year-olds was the snack at break time and the rewarding treat after the game.

So I'm not too sure if those kids came for sports or if they came for the treats, but they came out and they got exercise and their parents came out and grandparents and that's what volunteerism brings to a community. It allows the community to grow and develop. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the friends that I walked into parenthood with are my friends anymore. In fact, my children have made all my friends; it's all the parents and the people that you hang out with at all these sporting events and cultural events and all the events that you work in and participate in, those end up becoming your friends. So, yes, my kids made my friends for me. And what a nice by-product, what a nice benefit of being a volunteer.

And, Mr. Speaker, since then, a lot has changed. We've had a lot of things, like the Graham James affair that broke and, you know, I mean there's also a dark shadow over some of the volunteerism and some of the things that happen. So, since then, to become a volunteer has become a lot more difficult. The first thing you have to do, if you want to become a coach, is you have to take the Respect in Sport, about a three-hour online program that you have to go through. Rightfully so. It's good, it teaches you quite a bit. A lot of the clubs and organizations now want you in for some time to train you and talk about things.

The other thing is, is that now to be a coach you actually have to provide a criminal record check, which I would say to this House, that it's about time that the Manitoba Legislature look at covering those fees, because often it's the clubs that cover the fees for coaches, and what's happens is the clubs are finding this onerous.

And now there's another check that's come into place, and that's child abuse registry check, which, by the way, is very important to have. Unfortunately,

we've seen a government that's seen fit to raise the taxes on that by 50 per cent. What it does, in each and every case, is it makes it more difficult to be a volunteer. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say to this House, if we so believe in volunteerism, if we so believe that it's so positive, and the member previous spoke about all the different organizations, and she listed probably a fraction of them, because there are so many organizations out there that rely on volunteerism.

* (11:20)

And then what do we do as government? What has the government done? They have penalized volunteers even more. It—no more can you walk in the door and the club president point at you and say, member for St. Paul, you're now going to either volunteer or your child's not going to be in the program. Those days are over. Oh no, first, you have to do Respect in Sport; you've got to get this, check; you got to go that, check; then you got to have a meeting with them.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 213, which is in front of this House, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (No Fee for Registry Checks Respecting Volunteers), I would say to the members who support this private members' resolution, which I support, which I know my caucus supports, I would say to those members, and support this bill. Let's make it easier for volunteers. In fact, I would even accept a friendly amendment to this in a heartbeat if we would put in here, and also that the Province would cover off all of the criminal record checks for volunteers. Because volunteers, if I may quote the honourable member's numbers here, they bring in over \$733 million in value just in their time. In fact, I wouldn't doubt that you could double or triple that with the kind of money that they bring in. If you think about all the volunteers—and we had to do that, because for indoor soccer we had to go to Gateway community club, and if you didn't want to pay \$100 to the club you could volunteer in the canteen. Actually, I made one of my best friends, we met at that canteen and we have become some of the best friends. And what we sold at that canteen was unbelievable for the club.

And that's what volunteers do. So you know what? Would it be that tough for a government to say, you know what, if you're going to volunteer, we're prepared to help you. We're prepared to go the extra mile and we'll cover off—and by the way, these fees are minimal in the grand scheme of where

government spends. Why can't we cover off criminal record checks? I couldn't put that in my legislation because it would have been disallowed. I'm not allowed to bring a money bill in, because that's what I had wanted to do. Bill 213 was supposed to go for volunteers for sex abuse registry checks and for criminal registry checks.

Let's—member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) said, why don't we work co-operatively? Absolutely. If the government so wants to and take this bill and run with it, add in that criminal record checks also be covered off because we now need them, folks, and we should have them because nobody wants a Graham James ever again coaching their children. And you know what, it is getting—and rightfully so—and it's getting to the point where these checks are moving further and further into volunteerism. It's no longer those who access change rooms or club rooms or that kind of stuff, even more so is for individuals who have access to any kind of seniors who may be incapacitated, any children who might have any capacity, and it goes on and on.

And I understand if you're going for a job, that's a little bit different; it's for pay, but what we're talking about here is for volunteerism. I say to the member who put this resolution forward and to the seconder and the member for St. Norbert and all members of this Legislature, all 56 of us who have a right to vote on this, why don't we take Bill 213 and do something meaningful and not just words. Let's take off the fees for volunteers when it comes to sex-child abuse registry, when it comes to criminal record checks because you need them, you should have them, it's important to protect our children.

I'm involved in youth sport, it's my life right now. And I understand that volunteers want to protect themselves with these, so I encourage this Legislature: let's not talk; let's actually do something for volunteers.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this private member's resolution.

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I can hardly believe I'm about to say this, but I actually related to about 1.35 seconds of some of the things that members—the member opposite just said about his children. As a parent of a three- and a five-year-old who is currently going through the soccer experience that he was talking about, I can certainly relate.

An Honourable Member: It's a beautiful experience.

Ms. Crothers: It is a beautiful experience.

It also makes me appreciate the volunteers at my community club much more, because I realize how much work goes into those kinds of programs and it's caused me to reconsider how we think about volunteers and how we approach being volunteers. At my community club, there are probably about 10 or 11 people that are the core volunteers that somehow are at every single event that takes place because nobody else will go to it to organize it and to staff it and to make sure that everybody knows what they're supposed to do when the public, including people like me, come.

And I think that those hard-core volunteers are often underappreciated. And thinking about ways that we can show our appreciation I think for folks like me or the member opposite who felt that he didn't have the time initially either, it's finding ways to be supportive and helpful and volunteer a little bit ourselves even if we can't do the hours that they do.

I remember last year my son was in soccer for the first time and at the end of the soccer season I got a phone call from one of the volunteers who organizes the events and she wanted to know if my husband and I could do two hours over the soccer jamboree. And I am no different than anybody else with young kids, you're—you feel like you're stretched to the max all the time, trying to get the day-to-day life business taken care of and I thought for just a couple of seconds and realized I just—I could not say no because they have done so much for my children and my family, and when I said yes to her she was shocked and she said, oh, you're the first person that's actually agreed to come and do this, and I was so curious that I was the first person that said yes, I said, well, how many people have you contacted? Oh, you're about the 13th call I've made, and I felt horrible for her that she couldn't get at least one parent from some of these other family units to commit to a couple of hours after everything that they had done for us.

At the end of the day, I think that all of that time spent trying to get other people engaged in their own community is such a shame. It really is a waste of volunteer time, and if people like me could just realize that to be a volunteer you don't have to be a volunteer for, you know, 10 hours a week. You can volunteer a couple of hours a year and it makes a difference. I met with another community club in St. James, the Bourkevale community club, and they were—the same situation, 10 or 11 people that

constantly work together all the time in the community to get things done and they had trouble doing some of their annual events when they needed extra people because no one was willing to commit, and I think the commitment is the big scare for many people because they're afraid that if they say, yes, they'll volunteer, they're going to get sucked into something that they can't manage any more. And we need to realize that in order to support those people that are still willing to do the major push for volunteers, that we can support them by doing—you know, a couple hours a year is not a big chunk of time, but we can do those things.

I think that one of the things—having children or maybe it's just getting older, I don't know—that I realize is that you can't just say you don't have time for stuff anymore. I mean, I've got a mandolin in my study that's collecting dust and a giant loom in the basement that my husband torments me about regularly because I haven't put it together and tried to do something with it. But when you make the time for those things, even if it's just a little bit of time, it really adds up and then you suddenly realize that life is not nearly as hectic as you think it is. It's really—life is as hectic as you think it is, if you slow down and take time you realize you actually have time to spare, and I think that this is probably a secret that many volunteers already know.

The point for me is that, surely, we can help out a couple of hours for a community organization in your area that supports the work that some people do—whether they can afford to do more volunteering than you in terms of time or not, those small gestures really add up and they make a very big difference. I think that the volunteers that are regular all the time in organizations would appreciate that kind of support just as much as public recognition, because it makes their job of doing some of the work they want to do for these organizations a lot easier. But that's just my perspective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I am pleased to speak on volunteers and their effects on communities. They are indeed the backbone of many rural communities and, indeed, in Brandon. They're critical to many events and organizations throughout Manitoba and, indeed, Canada. We are well known in Brandon and in elsewhere for how effective our volunteers are, and I would want to say that youth in community events are very important in these areas. Many people have talked about coaching. I have been a coach for well over 30 years, which does go to say a little bit about how old I am, but—of all

levels. I have coached at the grassroots level, up to the elite level where you need certain certifications to coach at the national level, and had to go through all that. A great learning experience and a great experience for everything all along the way.

* (11:30)

Obviously, there's way more volunteer events than just in coaching. The Christmas dinners, everything of that nature, where we've taken our children out to deliver, you know, the food to people out in the community and, indeed, a learning experience for our children to see how people—the best I could put to—put it to them is people make different choices in how they spend their money and sometimes we have to help them with those choices, so giving back to the community is a huge, huge part of all this.

Meeting the athletes, meeting the parents, creating relationships with them, has been just a stellar part of our lives, and certainly, as some of the members said here, it's a big part in the growing of your—growing up of your children and how you're able to do that.

Now, obviously there's no payment through all that except, perhaps, a little bit of recognition once in a while. You might get a hotel room paid for or some mileage paid for along the way if you're travelling around, but that's certainly not why you're in this—while you're in this process.

The thing that has impacted me the most is, 10 years down the road, being recognized by someone that I did coach and say: You remember me? And I would say: Yes, I do, you played on such-and-such a team. And obviously I had an impact on that individual and we had a good chat.

I also had discussions with parents down the road where they said, you know, we watched what you were doing on the ice and we didn't agree with it but we didn't quite understand it. But now we understand that the time you spent with our son, in those skating drills, enabled him to play at the level that he reached and, without that, he would not have been able to play at that level.

So, hearing those things down the road makes it all worthwhile, and indeed, the likes of Skye Kelly that I spoke of the other day, where you maybe have a small part in moving her down the road to her success, those are the things, those are the payments, those are what we get back from volunteering, from coaching. So there's all those things that come back

to you in spades, and we see those time and time again in the community for all the volunteers that are there. They don't look for the thanks, they don't need the thanks, but if you see someone that's volunteering and you can thank them and tell them what a good job they're doing, it just makes their day, and I heartily encourage everybody to do so all along the way.

Now, obviously, there's not just the volunteers that are an important part of this, but the dollars that companies and individuals donate to the community; they're a huge part to these volunteer organizations. They need to raise the capital somewhere along the way to enable them to do what they do because they can't often charge enough for what they do, and individuals, companies, are critical to all of that type of donation.

Indeed, in our particular companies, being a volunteer in your community is a part of your job description. It is a required part that you have to go into your community and be a volunteer because we're all in all these small communities throughout Manitoba, and it's necessary to the fabric that we keep things going there until they reach such a point that they're able to do it themselves.

We had some of our staff in Waskada when the hotel shut down and the restaurant was no longer running. They woke up every morning, went in, 6 o'clock, started up the restaurant, cooked meals for the people in the community that weren't able to do it themselves. They did that for several years, until now, in Waskada we have the oil boom and it is going again, but they sustained that for that community throughout that time and made sure that those things were—that were necessary were still there—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, there's always different names for things, but you—*[interjection]*—anyway, looking for donations from companies from individuals, I've always wondered why just a small part of it is tax deductible. Why as a volunteer isn't your time tax deductible? Shouldn't that be something that we—we're not necessarily asking people to do, they're doing it on their own, but they should be allowed to get some other recognition of that as well from the tax regulatory agencies.

And, you know, we talked a little bit about police record checks and the criminal checks that we have to do there, the child abuse registry, and that is, indeed, a very critical and important thing for volunteers. We want to make sure that our children

are safe throughout their environments in which they're participating in sports or in culture or whatever environment that that was in, so it needs to be done.

But I do believe that we need to make it affordable to people because if I have to pay for that check, either it's going to be I'm going to pay for it myself or it's going to be passed on to that volunteer organization. The organization, again, has to pass it on to somewhere. It might be to fees to the parents for their child participating in it. So, you know, that money has to come from somewhere.

And also, the time, Mr. Speaker, because it takes a lot of time to go through all those checks. And when you look at a sport, say, like volleyball that I have had the great fortune to coach at several levels there all the way up to nationals, that is a sport that is very compressed in its time frame. So you might start the team in September, pretty much by November you're done that particular entity.

And if you go through a police record check, and if you're as fortunate as I am to be born in 1960 and a male, when I originally—well, just recently, actually, I had to go in to do that again. When I filled out the first form and paid the fees, the individual at the desk said, oh, you're a male born in 1960, chances are you're going to have to be fingerprinted because someone on your birthdate will have a criminal record. Sure enough, a few weeks later that came back, I had to go in to be fingerprinted—again, another few weeks. And not only that, but now, I understand, and I hadn't thought of it until a friend raised it, when I travel to the United States or to other countries—what's one of the questions that you get asked: Have you ever been fingerprinted? Now, I have to say, yes, I have, and that can open up a whole new avenue of questions. And I'm sure many of you, like I, when you go through a border crossing, are a little nervous. So we don't need extra things like that to be—help us to make us nervous. So anyway, yes, I've been fingerprinted, and now I have to answer in that particular affirmative. I, of course, was fingerprinted on the Thursday as it is the non-criminal fingerprinting day. So that was, at least, a good thing there.

However—but that takes a lot of time. So by the time you go through all that process, and the child abuse registry, it might be the end of the season. So if you wanted to coach, if you wanted to drive the van, if you wanted to participate as a manager, that's not available to you until you get all those checks

done. So you might be through the whole volleyball season and, you know, you couldn't volunteer, you couldn't do it.

So that was one thing that—actually, it really came to the fore a couple years ago when there was a coach of a particular varsity team. I was the only parent on that team that had a valid criminal record check. I was the only one that was eligible to drive the van. In Brandon, when you go to volleyball tournaments, except for one or two that are 'hend' in—held in Brandon, we are always travelling. So you always have two vehicles going, because unless you have a special permit, a special licence, you can't drive the 15-passenger van and you can't drive the 15-passenger van after October in Manitoba; so you have to take two vehicles. I was the only one that could drive. I was—had time, so I was pleased to do it, but, again, it's an added cost. I'm the only male driving with—on a female volleyball team. I have to have a separate room, because my daughter's not going to stay with me, she wants to stay with the team—another cost to the team. Other parents wanted to participate. They wanted to help. They wanted to drive with the team, but they couldn't do that. Even my wife couldn't drive with us. If she wanted to come watch the game, she had to drive in a separate vehicle, because she didn't have that criminal record check.

So it's all very valid, but I think we have to make sure that the time is accessible to people that they can go through that process, and we don't make sure—and we make sure that we have opportunities for coaches so they're not disallowed from participating because of those particular reasons. Somehow, it needs to be accelerated a little bit so the opportunity is there for people to participate. And, I mean, I had a fabulous time driving around Manitoba with this volleyball team—saw them excel at certain times, and saw them grow as individuals—but other parents wanted to participate as well.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The volunteers are great in Manitoba.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): I'm getting up to say—put a few words on the record in regard to this resolution at the behest of my colleague, the MLA for Gimli, and, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to get up following the member from Brandon West, as the member speaks of his personal family and volunteer experiences. And in supporting the MLA for Burrows in our government's position on this resolution—in support of this resolution, I'm also

going to put a couple of comments on the record in this regard.

First, Mr. Speaker, you know, volunteers in Brandon—it's the backbone of the city of Brandon. Volunteer work has sustained Brandon through a number of Canada Games, with the new one coming up in the future that this government is proud to support. It has hosted world curling events; the Memorial Cup, which our government was proud to support and fund over the opposition, the members opposite, who refused to provide funding for that event.

* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, so volunteer support in Brandon and western Manitoba is very, very important, and I myself have been proud to have been a volunteer recently on a very important initiative in Brandon, the Westman seniors housing co-op board. I was a founding member of that board about four years ago, and that volunteer work, along with several hundreds of others of senior citizens in Brandon and community members, has resulted in a very, very, very positive development today in the member for Brandon West's (Mr. Helwer) own constituency. And that positive development is the—is a development of 50-plus affordable senior housing units as part of the first phase of the Brandon and the Westman seniors housing co-op's efforts in providing affordable housing in Brandon and western Manitoba.

And as I say, Mr. Speaker, I was very, very proud to be a volunteer member of this co-op, this non-profit organization, to assist them in founding the organization and then working together with several hundred volunteers in a collective effort to provide for the construction of this seniors housing co-op. And, again, the funding of that co-op which was provided by the government on this side of the House in a budget that was passed last year, again over opposition from members opposite.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, just very briefly—and I have to make mention of it—relates to the sustained and—sustained ad hominem attack that was made against myself and my wife by the member from Brandon West last week in this House, for the sin of, in my wife's case, for the sin of being a volunteer for a non-profit community organization in the city of Brandon. And that went on for a number of days, so it speaks to the—it's unparliamentary to use the word, but it's saying one thing and doing another. It is used in this House; that word is used in the House by members opposite. I've been in the

Chamber even this week when the word was used. I won't do it because I think it is disrespectful to utter those things, but the meaning is clear: saying one thing and doing another.

On this side of the House, we believe in building our communities. We believe in funding the building of our communities. We believe in working together with people to build our communities. We do it each and every day. We do it without fear or favour, and I'm proud to support this resolution, and in word and in deed support the volunteers and non-profit community organizations that build this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution.

Volunteers are extraordinarily important to people in Manitoba. They make a contribution which is really amazing, and no matter what area of activity, but particularly in sports at community centres, in areas of culture, Folklorama, in so many other events, in—even in political activity. In elections and between elections, volunteers are a vital engine of so much that happens and so much that contributes to the quality of life that we have here in Manitoba and as citizens in Manitoba.

At our community centres in River Heights, the number of people who volunteer, who contribute, is just incredible, and I take my hats off and thank all those who do a great deal of volunteer support for people at community centres and, indeed, in other ways at schools, for example, in River Heights.

I was earlier this year at a celebration of the contribution of community centres with Palmer Fritschy's photographs as part of the Rink Project. It is just one example of what needs to be done in so many more ways, and that is to thank those who are volunteers and to recognize them, and that's a big reason why I'm supporting this resolution today.

I, too, as have others in this Chamber, I, too, have heard and talked with people at the community centres and recognize the real importance of helping volunteers to get engaged and supporting volunteers to get engaged. I believe there's a real role for the provincial government to support the—and provide the funds to support volunteers who are coming out and helping at community centres and in other vital places who need criminal record checks or sexual abuse—child abuse record checks, that this makes eminent sense that we should be supporting this, because it is a cost to volunteers at the moment or a

cost to the community centre or the community club, whichever is taking the local responsibility.

But certainly there is reason, every reason, for us as legislators here in this Legislature to be supporting those things that we can do to make it easier for volunteers to get engaged, to make the cost for community centres not inordinately high because of all these new costs related to checks, and to make sure that in the future, not just in this area but in other ways, we make it easier for people to get-become volunteers and to get engaged.

I want to just mention for a moment the important roles of schools in promoting volunteerism. This is a really important aspect which occurs in schools in River Heights and, I know, in so many schools all over the province, that whether the young people are helping with school patrols, whether they are helping in projects to raise funds for those who need it—we have an event helping a student from Kelvin High School, Breana, I think it's this Thursday, and there are many volunteers involved in that and many people who will come forward to support students who need it, to support others who need it in the community. The number of hours that goes into volunteering and helping seniors is also very, very significant.

And so, I think that the activities that surround volunteering, that nurture and help and enable people to get involved in volunteering in one way or another, is tremendously important and that's the reason that I support this resolution and hope that it will pass unanimously.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): I'm pleased to be able to rise and support this resolution today and to speak on how important volunteers are.

When people volunteer at non-profit and volunteer organizations, individuals and society benefit as a whole. By leading and helping people, volunteers touch the lives of many people while building capacities of communities.

But—in Manitoba, the annual service awards dinner highlights and recognizes the important volunteer groups and individuals of groups in Manitoba. This dinner is celebrated during the National Volunteer Week in April, and I had the pleasure of attending the 29th annual volunteer service awards on April 17th of 2012 at the Convention Centre along with some of my colleagues. And this is where my friend and constituent Janice Lukes won the Premier's award for

volunteerism. I also had the honour of attending the woman's distinction awards of—on Wednesday, May 2nd, where Janice Lukes, one of my constituents and friends, also won a woman of distinction for her work and volunteerism in the community. It's people like this that work in the communities that help build our communities better.

Janice has done lots of work on the trail system in Winnipeg, and she's a fantastic volunteer and tries to work for the betterment of the community. Janice is responsible for many kilometres of active transportation and trails in this city and is actually working on another set of active trail—or transportation trails going on with the Jubilee underpass that's currently looking at—the City's looking at redoing. So I give, really, a great amount of thanks to Janice for all of her activity.

The St. Norbert community club board, which—in my constituency, I'd like to recognize them as volunteers too. You have Brian Richard, Daryl Fowler, Monique Pishak, Sandra Stoesz, Linda Richard, Ron Prive and Todd Mann. These—this club depends on these volunteers to run everything from the community hockey programming to the soccer and even to the bingo program that is so successful for the club. Next week's bingo on Tuesday has a \$86,000 jackpot, so I encourage you all to come out to St. Norbert and join in on the bingo night.

* (11:50)

The Waverley Heights community club also relies on volunteers, and people like Chuck Davidson, Trevor Buchberger, Diane—sorry, Duane Johnstone, Trish Braun, Curtis Windatt, Lionel Johnston, Dave Layte, Art Mencik, Chris Durston, and Brandy O'Reilly, and husband and wife team Heather and Joe Racano, they volunteer there as well to do—to make sure that that club runs—and volunteer for their children because this is, ultimately, it's to make the community a better place for our kids.

I volunteer, coached out of that club and I wasn't alone. I had my co-coach and volunteers that worked with me, and those people should be recognized for their volunteerism, for working in the community and doing great things with the club. These people give their time for the betterment of children and their lives.

So many volunteers in Manitoba support these kinds of things, like literacy and math skills even. Some of the community groups do that. They work with the newcomers to support their literacy and

math skills, which is a fantastic program that, through our Provincial Nominee Program that we've run so successfully, takes place. That's how we support our communities is through a lot of these volunteers.

I also would like to recognize people who do the Christmas Cheer Board. I personally have taken my son out for the last 12 years doing the Christmas Cheer board and to try to instill that volunteerism in him within the community. And, you know, I think it's important that people recognize that, and I think that as leaders in the community we have to do that to show our children that this is way that Manitoba runs.

I looked toward—to my mother on this. She was diagnosed, as I said in my opening speech this year, she was diagnosed with CLL, which is a type of leukemia, 12 years ago, and she passed last year. But she spent the last years of her life volunteering at St. Boniface Hospital in the palliative care unit making sure that people were—felt comfortable and didn't die alone. This is the kind of volunteerism that I encourage in our community, to be able to brave through your own imminent death and be able to work with people who are—and comfort people who are dying, I think, is just a fantastic thing to be able to do to people.

Volunteers are essential to our community and they develop initiatives. And I've learned that when communities are able to drive projects, they are more responsive to the community needs. People know what they need in their own community. As the member from Burrows said, volunteering is a part of the culture in Manitoba. The 2007 survey that she referred to indicated that 54 per cent of Manitobans give—over the age of 15—volunteer, which translates into the 81.5 million dollar—million hours annually and valued at over \$733 million in minimum wage dollars. That's a huge amount of money that people give of their time and effort.

Our formative years are shaped by volunteers: coaches, spiritual leaders, teachers, caregivers. I'm kind of confused by the member from St. Paul's statement that he's worried about some of the checks and balances that we've put in for volunteers. I think that that's part of what should be done. I know that when my son was in all of his organized sports, I'm glad that we have those checks and balances in place because I want to prevent anything from happening to our youth and to the most vulnerable in our society, which includes seniors who are unable to,

you know, handle the situation. And so we should be checking and being very careful with our volunteers. It's nice that they volunteer, but that's part of it is they have to know that they're—we're just being careful on that end of it.

Our friends at the Humane Society also are volunteers. Those people come in and walk the dogs and take them out, you know, out of their cages, and make sure that those animals are treated fairly and kindly. You know, I think that that's very important that we recognize people like that.

And a few weeks in the *Free Press* there was an organization with a bunch of volunteers that someone—it's called No One Dies Alone. They accompany people who have no one else in their last hours, much like my mother does, and I applaud groups like that. That group makes a difference in someone's life. Being able to have somebody with you near the end of your journey is so important to people, and I think that, you know, people like that deserve so much credit.

Our fantastic schedule of summer festivals, like the member from Burrows said, would not be possible without the ticket takers, the drivers, the lights and sound experts, people that sew costumes, cooks, waste managers, and a host of other talents all donating their time. Operation Red Nose, which is successful for—in the holiday season at Christmas time, that all depends on people's volunteerism to be able to make things like that happen.

Indeed, the—our volunteers are a key part of our strength in our province, and we see change for the better in our communities when we engage people and use their gifts towards our community and working together towards the shared priorities.

Non-profit and volunteer organizations have an incredible amount of expertise and understanding of the communities they need and serve. And this provincial government that we have right now could not accomplish the things it does without—and enhance the lives of Manitobans without these wonderful volunteers.

So I think it's very important that we pass this resolution by the member from Burrows because it recognizes how wonderful these people really are in everyday life in Manitoba and all that they contribute to us. We look forward to continuing to work alongside as a government with the non-profit and voluntary sectors to provide further strength to this province and promote the well-being of Manitobans.

Activity and citizenship is of absolute importance to Manitoba, and I want to recognize these volunteers and thank them very much for their time and, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to talk today on this resolution.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Is it the will of the House to call it 12 noon?
[Agreed]

I declare the resolution carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

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