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DEBATES
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PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

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

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 203? *[Agreed]*

Yes, okay, we'll now call Bill 203, the nurse practitioner day—we'll now call the bill.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: But before I do that and recognize the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers), I'd like to introduce to the members of the House—we have a guest. In the loge to my right we have Don Davies, Member of Parliament for Vancouver Kingsway.

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

Bill 203—The Nurse Practitioner Day Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act.

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I move, seconded by the member from Selkirk, that Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act; Loi sur la Journée des infirmières praticiennes, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Just prior to recognizing the honourable member for St. James and while I'm on my feet, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable

members to the public gallery where we have with us today 30 grades 10 and 11 students from Miles Macdonell Collegiate under the direction of Blanca Cardenas, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. James. Thank you for your patience.

Ms. Crothers: I'm very pleased to be standing here today speaking to this act that recognizes the critical role that nurse practitioners play in Manitoba's medical system. With a commemorative day on November 18th of every year, we would celebrate the contributions of Manitoba's nurse practitioners, which are many.

I think for some people, publicly, nurse practitioners might face a lack of awareness about what they do exactly, so I wanted to just highlight some of their responsibilities. And just to make sure that people are aware, that in order to be a nurse practitioner, you first become a registered nurse, which would require, obviously, a bachelor's degree in nursing, but then you have additional study to attain master's level training—*[interjection]*—thank you—and also have extra clinical experience.

So nurse practitioners see patients just like doctors do. They perform physical examinations, take medical histories, prescribe medications, order tests, perform minor procedures and they also, very importantly, counsel and teach patients about their health and how to improve it and how to manage it. Prevention and wellness is an important part of a nurse practitioner's practice. They also can admit patients to the hospital if they are seriously ill.

A nurse practitioner's approach, Mr. Speaker, is a person-centred one, which might sound sort of strange when you first hear it, but it combines what the patient sees as their health needs are and it combines that with the nurse practitioner's knowledge and their expertise so that they can reach the best outcome for the patient in the long term, not just in a chronic case. Nurse practitioners, they're

trained to look at the person and their lifestyle, and they create a strategy that addresses their illness and that also focuses on health maintenance and disease prevention too. So prevention is key in the work that nurse practitioners do.

They guide patients to whatever resources are needed, whether it's, for example, diabetes education or if they need to see a specialist or go to a social worker. They can handle 80 to 85 per cent of the patients on their own without them having to see the clinic's physician. And you can imagine the impact that would have for the physician at a facility if the nurse practitioners are able to guide patients that need some of the care that they can provide.

The work that nurse practitioners do are things like making diagnoses—sorry, making a diagnosis in identifying a disease, a disorder or condition; they communicate that diagnosis to the client and the other health-care professionals that they work with because they're part of a team; they initiate, order, prescribe consultations and referrals; they order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests, with some limitations; and they recommend, prescribe or reorder drugs, with some exceptions. So the amount of responsibility that they have and the care that they can provide is very broad.

I wanted to find some actual examples of what a day in the life of a nurse practitioner might look like, and I visited the nurse practitioner—Manitoba's nurse practitioner website, and they had some really good examples of what it looks like in a clinic where a nurse practitioner is. So I'm just going to outline a few of those to give people a thorough understanding.

So there's a nurse practitioner who's probably going to have a 10-hour day. And the first appointment that she has is with a young mom, and this mom comes in with an 18-month-old toddler. She has two 10-year-old twins and she has a tween daughter; she's a very busy lady, obviously. And it's time for her children's immunizations. So they are able to get their immunizations. Also, they schedule flu shots. They discover that one of the children is being treated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a couple of the younger children are complaining about earaches. So the nurse practitioner, who has actually seen this family before and has followed their—the kids' health since they were very young, is, on a personal level, very familiar with them. She's able to, obviously, do their immunizations, but in dealing with the deficit

hyperactivity disorder, she's able to talk with her mom and make sure that she has all of the supports that she needs. By the end of the appointment she has also renewed the prescription for the ADHD medication and has scheduled a flu shot for the dad that's not there.

* (10:10)

The last appointment of this nurse practitioner's day actually deals with a woman with chronic depression and she is having a hard time getting out of bed. She feels she's unable to work. And the nurse practitioner is able to spend some time with her to discuss where part of this problem is coming from. And she had a series of physically abusive relationships, a custody battle over her son and an out-of-control teenager, so she's very frustrated. The nurse practitioner doesn't just prescribe her an antidepressant. She talks to her about developing a plan to help her get out of bed every day, needs—the fact that she needs a routine, and is going to refer her to counselling services and services for her son to deal with behavioural issues. She provides that contact information for that, and when the woman leaves, she's got the assurance that someone is trying to help her deal with these issues. She knows she'll be able to come back to see the same person.

And I think that that's a significant part of what nurse practitioners do. It's not just dealing with the physical ailment that a patient has, it's also looking at all of the surrounding factors around that patient in an effort to make sure that this is resolved and does not continue to be a problem for this person.

Nurse practitioners are committed to engaging patients and making them part of the decision-making process and helping them see that they have ultimate control over their health. They work with other health-care providers such as registered nurses, physicians, social workers and others to make sure that quality health care is being provided. They're there to help with access and continuity of care. And they can do things such as what I've outlined already, managing chronic conditions and promoting health. In rural communities, this is a lovely opportunity for us to make sure that those who are struggling to find physicians have the opportunity to see someone that can help them deal with many of their medical care needs. This holistic approach to health care is a theme that I've read over and over again in anything I've read about nurse practitioners and their perspective on their own jobs. Because they provide such a wide range of health services to individuals,

families and communities, they're well-suited to providing care in different settings.

There's another nurse practitioner who works here in Manitoba at the River Avenue Community Health Centre. Her name is Katie. And she actually divides her work into three different settings: a large health centre, a wellness satellite clinic and home care. So she conducts physical examinations, follows up with clients, she sees people who have episodic illnesses and manages the care of people who may be vulnerable to illness, and she also provides prenatal care. She—on the fourth day of her work week, she dedicates her work to home care for clients who can't leave their homes. And again this is a great opportunity for us to make sure that people who aren't very mobile but need care don't have to leave their homes and can stay in their homes longer, and that's also very important.

There's a study out from Ryerson University and Dalhousie University that found that nurse practitioners play a vital role in providing rapid access to health care for residents living in long-term care settings such as nursing homes and homes for the aged. And again this just goes to show how diverse a role we need, that we have, for nurse practitioners in Manitoba. And they found overwhelmingly that the value of nurse practitioners working closely with residents and their family members had significant impacts on the well-being of the residents that they worked with.

Clearly, nurses are the backbone of health care, and offering high quality care, comfort and reassurance to patients and their families when they need it is vital. And we want people to get that kind of care. We've worked hard to reverse the trend of the '90s. For every nurse that the PC government fired in the '90s, we've hired more than three back. And, in 2011, we made a fully funded commitment to hire 2,000 more nurses during this mandate. Now, we're only halfway into that four-year strategy, but with 1,338 nurses already hired, we're more than halfway towards meeting that.

We need our nurse practitioners. We want to provide them opportunities to practise, to help us as we continue to improve health care. And I think that by recognizing the work that they do, the very valuable work that they do, once a year, is an important step to show that we acknowledge and appreciate their work and that health care is something we recognize is important for Manitobans. It's certainly important for us as family people

ourselves, and we would like to ask for your support today for Bill 203.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I feel very honoured to actually have the opportunity to stand today and to put some words on the record about The Nurse Practitioner Day Act and to indicate that the Progressive Conservative Party fully supports the establishment of an official nurse practitioner day in order to symbolically and officially recognize the great contributions of nurse practitioners to health care in our province.

We know that nurse practitioners are one of the solutions to improving access to care and to reducing wait times, not only in Manitoba but actually throughout the country.

It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the concept of nurse practitioners has been around since the 1960s, but the role and—was not formalized in legislation and regulation until the late 1990s. And it's too bad we weren't a little bit speedier on that across Canada, but a number of issues like this does take time and it does take a lot of education at many different levels to let people know what a new group of practitioners might look like.

But it is interesting that it's been around for a while. I would note, too, that in 1999, there was the introduction of the new Registered Nurses Act. It was proclaimed in 2001 and it provided new opportunities for the nurse to work beyond the traditional scope of nursing practice. So, you know, as with other places in Canada, in the late '90s, it started to see its birth here in this province and I am glad to see that it has evolved to where it is today. There's certainly a lot of places—there is a role, a strong role, for nurse practitioners in Manitoba and across Canada.

We know that there are a lot of people struggling for access to health care and we know that nurse practitioners are but one of the solutions to that. Certainly, the opportunity that is growing to work in primary health-care teams is a significant one, and I think if that initiative can be moved forward, fully explored, fully developed and fully implemented, with nurse practitioners as part of that, we are going to have a much stronger primary health-care system than what we do have now.

We know that there are many challenges; we hear that from people every day who are trying to access care. People generally are very satisfied with

the system once they're in the system and they recognize the hard work that is contributed by many of the front-line practitioners. But the one problem people continue to have a lot of problems with is actually accessing a health-care professional when they need access to the system. We know that there are about 180,000 Manitobans right now without a physician. We know that with the aging demographic of the baby boomers, we are going to see a significant number of nurses and doctors and other health professionals retiring over the next number of years. I have a lot of concern that we may not be ready for all of those retirements in the next number of years.

So that's why I do think having a Nurse Practitioner Day Act is a valuable one because it will bring more knowledge to the public and to others about what nurse practitioners are and what nurse practitioners can do. Nurse practitioners don't want to be mini-doctors, that is not their intent; they want to be nurses, but they want to practise at a level that a nurse practitioner does. We know that they can do 80 per cent of what a doctor does and they are fully aware of what the scope of their practice is and what they are allowed to do within that scope.

And I find it also really nice that this bill is introduced today during National Nurses Week. I think with the theme of this year—Nursing: A Leading Force for Change—this particular bill fits in very, very nicely with what the whole theme of the week is because we know that there is a uniqueness to nursing practitioners, we know that it is innovative and we know that there is a lot of room for many practitioners to be at the front lines of health care. We know that the system right now is teetering on the edge of sustainability and we know that nurse practitioners can play a role to uphold the integrity of the health-care system.

I was very privileged, Mr. Speaker, to be asked to be sit on a committee by the nurse practitioners in around 2005 or '06, probably in '06, and it was the Canadian Nurse Practitioner Initiative report review committee, and I sat on that committee with a number of nurse practitioners, looking at what is needed to bring nurse practitioners into a practice setting in Manitoba. And it was a very, very beneficial opportunity for me to get to sit with nurse practitioners, to work with new practitioners and to talk about the challenges that are before them in trying to introduce a new health-care profession into the province. And it wasn't like it was an easy road to

walk down for them. There were a lot of issues and challenges that they had to look at.

* (10:20)

They had to work at support—creating support for nurse practitioners. They had to address the educational preparation of nurse practitioners. They had to talk about what would be the appropriate remuneration. They had to talk about being advocates for regulatory changes. They had to explore role development in a variety of health-care settings. Of course, a very, very exciting discussion to have about what the role would be for nurse practitioners and where they could best fit in the system to make the biggest difference. And they also had to address funding models and financial supports, and that is one of the elements that still has not moved along adequately in Manitoba is to address funding models because if we want to move the issue of nurse practitioner integration more fully in the system, we have to address the issue of a funding model and what that should look like for nurse practitioners, and there may be different funding models that may not all be the same but that discussion is necessary.

You know, here we are almost 10 years down the road after all of this was starting, and we still see that the government has not addressed all of the challenges that adequately need to be addressed within the system. So I certainly encourage the government to not dawdle too much, don't drag their heels on something. We have an access-to-care challenge at many levels for patients in this province, and if there is a chance that we could make that better and reduce wait times and improve accessibility to care, then the government shouldn't be slowpokes about anything. They need to become much more active in moving this forward.

Nurse practitioners certainly have extensive experience. They are master's-degree-prepared nurses. Some of them are very highly specialized in different areas, and they can very much make an impact on Manitoba's struggling health-care system. We see the NDP failing at many levels in moving issues forward, and I think that we have an opportunity in the future to look at primary health-care teams. I don't think it's something that the government should be sitting back and not aggressively embracing and looking at how to do that better, and there certainly is an opportunity for nurse practitioners to play a vital role in that—those changes that could come about.

So we are very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to stand today and to acknowledge this legislation and to support it because we certainly support what the nurse practitioners have worked very, very hard to achieve in the last number of years. And to all nurses this week we would like to acknowledge their efforts. They really are a major, major player in keeping this health-care system pulled together, and to all of them we owe our heartfelt gratitude because they are on the front lines. They are struggling with many different struggles, and just as it is Nursing Week in Canada today, I just want to say thank you to all of those nurses that work very, very hard to provide good care for patients in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I would like to just, first of all, thank the member from St. James for bringing this Bill 203 forward on nurse practitioners.

I love nurse practitioners. They're wonderful to meet with because I think they have—being nurses, they sort of come from a profession of—that's focused obviously on caring and on caregiving as the centre of what they do, and so, you know, you always feel like they're hearing you. They're—they seem to be really excellent at communication skills, for sure. So I'm very grateful to them.

And I'm—I feel very fortunate to have in my area—very close to my area a QuickCare clinic that is run by nurse practitioners, and we have just found that, Mr. Speaker, to be a tremendous addition to our community. I know one day I was driving over the Arlington Street bridge and I noticed these kids flying off bikes and they were ripped to shreds and we had someone—somewhere really close and handy that we were able to, you know, get them to really quickly and get them in the car and get them over there really fast so that they would have somewhere to have that looked at where there would be literally, in that case, pretty much no wait at all. So I'm very, very grateful to the nurse practitioners.

I'd also like to actually thank our previous minister of Health because she did a tremendous amount of work towards bringing this profession forward in Manitoba and increasing the things that they were able to do. Because, of course, it has—a plan of the nurse practitioners themselves, of course, but also of our government to ensure that the nurse practitioners can work to the, you know, fullest of their abilities, and we want to make sure that that is happening. So that took a lot of work. I mean, people don't change easily in a profession, so I know there

was a lot of work that had to be done to sort of pave the way for nurse practitioners to really be able to move forward and do all of the things that they're able to do.

And I'm not sure that people realize all of the things they can do, because they do have a master's level of training and they have clinical experience so they're actually able to diagnose illness. And when it comes to diagnosing illness, I think one of the tremendous benefits that nurse practitioners can give us is in something that may seem very simple to people, but it's history taking, and it can be absolutely life-changing if the proper history is taken from that person. And you can actually—you actually know what's gone on in their past, what runs in their family, you know, what is there. And sometimes, you know, a doctor may not have the time to do that in the same way that a nurse practitioner can sit down and actually spend that time and getting that information. And it's tremendously valuable then for the diagnosis, for the physicians to know, as well, what they can do. But nurse practitioners are also able to diagnose illnesses and they can monitor and treat conditions.

They also prescribe medications to some degree. They can prescribe all the drugs except narcotics and other controlled drugs, because those are registered by the federal government, so they can't do that. But, in 2011, our government was able to expand their independent prescribing authority for the nurse practitioners so that it does include everything else. And again that is just of tremendous value to the people who are going to nurse practitioners.

And also diagnostic tests—they also have the ability to—and I hadn't realized this originally, Mr. Speaker, but they can also, you know, do the referrals to specialists. So, when you know—often we know ahead of time, I'm going to need to see a specialist about this—you know, you know that—but you have to spend the time to get to a doctor in order to get there. Well, in fact, a nurse practitioner has the ability to prescribe a referral—to do a referral, I believe, straight through to the specialist, so that's of tremendous value. And I believe that, you know, things like nurse practitioners—and I know less about the physicians assistants, associate physicians—not sure if I'm using the right title for that—those kind of things—the advanced paramedics, I think they are certainly a huge piece of our future care in Manitoba and in going into areas where, you know, maybe it's harder to get doctors to go there, but we could get, certainly, nurse practitioners.

* (10:30)

They also perform minor in-office surgical procedures. They can do stitches, Mr. Speaker. They can remove splinters. There's even certain biopsies that certain nurse practitioners—not all, it depends on their training and their scope of practice, much like it would, perhaps, with a physician. So there's so many things that I think people don't realize nurse practitioners are capable of doing, and they can take a tremendous pressure off the medical system.

So we have made a commitment as well to double the number of nurse practitioners training seats from nine in 2011 to 18, so I think that that will really be helping, and last summer we announced that nurse practitioner students are going to be eligible for up to \$10,000 to cover tuition fees in exchange for one year of service working as a nurse practitioner in a rural community after graduation, and I think that's just going to make a tremendous difference.

I'm grateful that we're doing this work. The previous member on the opposite side was mentioning that there is—of course, we need more. We always need more people in nursing and more doctors. I would like to mention, however, that we have been continually increasing them. We did lose a lot, of course, in the 1990s. In 1992, the Manitoba's independent nursing colleges, in fact, reported that there was 15,665 nurses licensed and working in the province, but by 1999, sadly, that had been slashed to 14,000 in '92 by the government of that day. So that was a drop of 1,573 at that time, Mr. Speaker. In 1998, the Manitoba Nurses' Union reported that already 1,000 nurses had been laid off by the government.

So, you know, we had a lot of comeback to do, Mr. Speaker, in this area, and we've been really working hard to do that. We've been trying to reverse that trend. We've expanded that nurses training. We've created more nurse positions. We're hiring more nurses. In fact, there are 3,560 more nurses working in Manitoba now than in 1999, so that is an all-time high.

And, of course, we do need more, and there's no question. Whenever I'm talking to kids about careers, I always bring up that of nurse practitioner. I think it's just a fabulous opportunity for them, especially if they would like an opportunity to go to rural Manitoba and, you know, do a year or two there, which I think would be, for many, and certainly for a lot of urban kids, that would be a great experience to

experience a different piece of Manitoba life and get some of their tuition, you know, taken care of as well. But it just has all sorts of doors, and I think more and more doors will be opening for nurse practitioners. So I think the opportunity for kids to go into this field is a tremendous opportunity, and I would like to see as many as possible be able to do that.

Manitoba has the most nurses per capita outside of the Maritimes and nearly 20 per cent more nurses per capita than the Canadian average. So, you know, we're proud of that. You know, compared to BC, we have 32 per cent more nurses per capita. Compared to Ontario, we have 27 per cent more nurses per capita. So that's good, but retirements are looming, you know. Those kind of things are going to happen. Nurses retire too, and so we're fully committed to hiring more nurses. In 2011, of course, Mr. Speaker, you're probably aware, we made a commitment to hire 2,000 more nurses during this mandate, including 1,000 nurses to replace expected retirements and then, of course, 1,000 new nurses to grow the workforce.

So we're only halfway into that four-year strategy, but we've already increased it by 1,338 nurses already hired, so we're more than halfway towards meeting that goal. So we're very proud of that, and we just want to thank the nurse practitioners for the incredible work that they do in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up and put a few words on the record towards Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act. The PC caucus recognizes the essential role of nurse practitioners in Manitoba and acknowledges the contributions in leadership nurses make in our communities and for our families every minute and every day, while facing various obstacles and challenges in the front lines of our health-care system as it stands today.

Mr. Speaker, nurse practitioners play a vital role in our health-care system in Manitoba, and it is fitting that this bill be discussed during National Nursing Week. Nurse practitioners exemplify this year's theme of Nursing: A Leading Force for Change, with unique and innovative positions they occupy and skills they possess as leaders in direct patient care. With extensive experience on the front lines, nurse practitioners are often the ones who come up with innovative ideas for improving

health-care services and help to mitigate problems in the ailing health-care system in our province.

It is no secret that the Manitoba's health-care system is teetering on the edge of sustainability, and the services that nurse practitioners provide are essential to uphold the integrity of this system. This is why the Progressive Conservative Party supports the establishment of an official nurse practitioner day in order to symbolically and officially recognize the great contribution of nurse practitioners to health care in our province.

For years, nurse practitioners have been an essential element of the sustainability of our health-care system, particularly with regard to access to care by helping to alleviate pressured play-pressure placed on doctors for services previously only delivered by individuals with an MD. I know within the school system, Mr. Speaker, I've had many dealings with various students that needed to access health care or advice and whether that would be the public health nurse system or, of course, with the nurse practitioners, I know that if students could call down to the clinic in my hometown of Beausejour that they would be able to access the nurse practitioner within a couple days to get that immediate service or that care that they seem to need, or even if it was just that ear to listen to what is ailing them or whatever other issues the students were having.

But I also found that the nurse practitioners that I've had the pleasure of dealing with felt that communication throughout their peer group was key as well, and that was making sure that whether students had come in to see them on a certain day that that information was also relayed back to the students' medical or their family physician as well to make sure that the proper procedures and steps—and with the best interest of the students at heart—were moved forward, Mr. Speaker.

The establishment of November 18th as nurse practitioners day will be a stride forward in the official recognition of the increasingly indispensable role of this profession, which plays in our province's health-care system. Moreover, this official day of recognition is a way to give all nurses the gratitude and empowerment that they deserve. We believe their diverse perspective and experiences make it necessary to ensure nurses always have an input into decision-making processes within their workplaces, their communities and their province at large.

The front lines of our health-care system are concerning. There is significant health-care professional shortages, including shortages of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, health-care aides and midwives all over Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. In 2013, Manitobans had the longest wait of all provinces at almost 18 weeks between seeing a specialist for a diagnosis and actually receiving treatment for medical conditions. This was stated in the Fraser Institute in October 2013. And also, 25 per cent of doctors today report that there are no access to a family physician on weekends and holidays.

Brand new data reveals that out of seven participating provinces, Manitobans are waiting almost two hours longer to receive emergent or urgent care in ERs than the average Canadian. Ambulances in Winnipeg waited an average one hour and 15 minutes to offload patients in 2013. This cost the health-care system millions of dollars in delayed treatment and reduced services for front-line care. Across Manitoba over 1,000 Manitoba seniors are stuck in acute-care beds or left to struggle at home because they cannot access a PCH bed.

Since the NDP took office, more than 2,200 doctors have left Manitoba to practise in other jurisdictions. Meanwhile, over 180,000 Manitobans were without family doctors in 2010, and that number seems to be increasing, Mr. Speaker, instead of decreasing.

Because of the NDP's government lack of fiscal and social responsibility, these health-care challenges have to be carried on the backs of professionals like nurse practitioners, and as their role continues to expand, the stress that is placed on these professionals increases as well. We know Manitoba nurse practitioners strive for excellence every single day—and I know that the member from Concordia is eager to get up and put a few words on the record because I can hear him talking from his seat, Mr. Speaker, so he'll have a chance in a few minutes.

*(10:40)

We know that the NDP health-care mismanagement that needs serious fixing so that our nurse practitioners and all of our health-care professionals are supported and fully enabled to provide the highest quality of care to Manitobans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative caucus supports the creation of a nurse practitioner's day and supports the critical role that nurse practitioners and all nurses accompany in delivering health care in the province of Manitoba. Nurse practitioners are an important component to a sustainable health-care system in this province, but they should not be relied on as a sole solution. It's nice to hear that the member from St. James who brought forward this bill did her research on the life and times of a nurse practitioner off of the Internet, and it's nice also to hear that she admits that more work needs to be done by this government to address these larger systematic issues in order to ensure the sustainability of our health-care system. The more the health-care system can embrace the full scope of what nurse practitioners are trained to do, including by creating the environments needed for them to succeed, the better the system will be.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this Bill 203 passing through, and I would like to say thank you to all nurses and nurse practitioners for all that they do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity. I do just want to put a—just a few words on the record. I know we—there are others that like to speak to this particular bill, and we do in fact want to pass this bill, so I appreciate that we want to make sure that we're within the time limits. But I just wanted to begin by thanking the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) for bringing this important resolution to—this important bill, sorry, to the Legislature and giving us an opportunity once again to debate what I think are important issues and are key issues to how we as a province can move forward. So it's always refreshing when we can come in as legislators, talk about important issues and, in this case, to appreciate an important group of people within our society and a group of people who are incredible people that I just want to take a few minutes to talk about this morning.

So I wanted to start by talking about nurses in general, because I'm constantly blown away by the nurses that I know and the nurses that I meet, and just to know them and to know what they do and how they operate within our health-care system is incredibly awe-inspiring to me. I know some nurses; in fact, have nurses in my family, and the dedication that I see out of them is incredible. And I do want to talk a little bit about that, Mr. Speaker, but just in general, nurses are—show incredible patience and

incredible dedication to their work. We know that nurses have a work ethic that is second to none and that they at their heart and at their core need to be caring people. And I often think about the incredible work that they do and I think about how I could never do that kind of work. I could never be so giving of myself and so incredibly caring at that level. And I just—it's awe-inspiring to me and something that really gives me a lot of inspiration.

As I said, I do have nurses in my family. In my case, my mother-in-law is a nurse, so, you know, we can expect some positive words here because, you know, I got to be careful what I say. But, no, she is an incredible person. And the way that I see her in her role as a nurse, the way that she is committed to the people that she looks after, she works in an incredibly challenging environment, Mr. Speaker, and she just gives so much of herself to the people that she cares for. It's an incredible inspiration to myself and to my wife and to our family, and we just think that it's spectacular what she does.

Now, in terms of nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker, I think this is where we can see the next step or the next evolution in our health-care system becoming a reality before our eyes. I think what we are doing with nurse practitioners is incredibly innovative. I think it's really a game changer. And, you know, we heard some—from the members opposite some criticisms of the health-care system in Manitoba, you know, and I'm not going to stand here and try to pretend that everything is perfect. But I think that, you know, when we talk about nurse practitioners, we're talking about, really, an innovative approach to health care and really trying to solve the problems and issues that we see out there. There are challenges, but, you know, referring to, you know, only to the negative or focusing only on the negative, really doesn't, I think, move us anywhere forward. Rather, I think we need to concentrate on what is working, and nurse practitioners are certainly one of those elements that's working very, very well.

So when we get a chance to come here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and talk about just how great they are and, in fact, create a nurse practitioners day, I think it's something, as legislators, a very small part of the overall health-care milieu, that we can actually step up and say this is a group of individuals that we appreciate so much.

Nurse practitioners, of course, they're helping us provide that care that people are demanding these

days. You know, nurse practitioners are helping us relieve some of the pressures on the health-care system, in a way that, you know, wasn't thought of 10 years ago or 20 years ago. They've really given us an option to move some folks through the health-care system faster and give them that quicker approach to health care, which is really what we're trying to focus on.

Now, the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) mentioned, she said, you know, people probably don't even realize what the scope of practice that nurse practitioners have, and it is true. I think for most folks, and this is certainly not a criticism, because I think most folks come to the health-care system and they want results, they want to see a doctor, they want to have the care provided for them and they want to solve the immediate health-care problem that they have. They don't care that it's a doctor, they don't care that it's a nurse, a nurse practitioner. I mean, you know, for them, the title doesn't matter, the designation doesn't matter. All they care about is that they're getting the best health care that they can.

And, I think this is exactly where health—where nurse practitioners have been an incredible innovation for us, in that we're actually giving them the tools—we're giving the nurse practitioners the tools—to perform the tasks, in many cases, that nurses have been able to do. But, we're giving them the additional training and we're giving them the additional resources, that they can then go ahead and just do that work. And I think that that's—it's just absolutely incredible. You know, rather than, sort of, having patients adhere to the structure of the health-care system, or the old-fashioned way of looking at the health-care system, we're enabling those within the health-care system to actually perform the duties that they're able to do, to give people the care that they want.

So I think this is an exciting initiative. I think this is an exciting path that we're—we want to continue to go down. And I know that we're working very closely with nurses and nurse practitioners, to enable them more in the future, so this is a very positive thing.

But this bill, Mr. Speaker, is really just to show our appreciation, and so I, you know, I'll leave it at that. I probably went longer than I had anticipated, but I did just want to say, from the bottom of my heart, how much I appreciate nurses in general and, of course, nurse practitioners, and how much joy it

gives me to be able to stand in this Chamber and talk just a little bit about my appreciation and all of our appreciation, and to, in fact, set aside a day where we can appreciate those in our health-care system that are doing such incredible work.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, nurse practitioners are very important, I think, in our solution in rural Manitoba when it comes to the doctor shortages. This government here has done a poor job of creating—helping recruit doctors in rural Manitoba. And we just feel that the nurse practitioners could be a really big component in going forward into rural Manitoba.

One example is my mother who actually does most of her doctoring now with a nurse practitioner, a nurse practitioner that I actually went to school with. She was a nurse for many years and she decided to go and get her nurse practitioners degree, and she did it, and now she's practising in Roblin, Manitoba. She's doing a very good job. People talk highly of her, going to—to go to her to—for services. And, my mom really speaks highly of her. And it's very important that we have nurse practitioners in rural Manitoba.

The other thing is—one of the other example my mother experienced, she had cancer five years ago, and she's a cancer survivor. She actually has to go to CancerCare every six months. At first it was four quarters; every three months she had to go for appointments. Then it went to six months, and then to a year.

*(10:50)

This past Monday she had to report for her annual treatment—or examination, and she drove—on Friday she came to Winnipeg to visit family, and when she got to the CancerCare, they discovered that two doctors were sick. So they said that we had cancelled all the appointments for that morning. Well, she said, well, I drove three hours in to get that appointment, so what the—she said, well, can I go back to my nurse practitioner because she not only does examinations every six months. And she said, well, you know what, if you want, we can get nurse practitioners right here in the CancerCare clinic. And so my mom had that—her examination on Monday and she said it was a very good examination. She was very thrilled and she speaks really highly.

So here's an example of how important nurse practitioners are in our family, in our—and to rural

Manitoba, and we really want—really appreciate their—how much they have contributed to our medical services, and I think it's very important that we acknowledge them today for all the services that they have provided.

And we need to really invest more and more of their education and train more nurse practitioners to go forward here. I think it can be very important to help some of the doctors who are overworked in rural Manitoba and also in the city of Winnipeg, and these nurse practitioners can do a lot of the work. And when I was in financial services years ago, the coaching program that I took, they said, if a person can do a job as—70 per cent as well as you can do, that means they can take that job and do it better than you, because, really, that if they have the time and they can get the training, they can do that job even better. And so I think nurse practitioners could be a very important integrate into our health-care system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 203?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Now we'll proceed to call Bill 204. Is the House ready to proceed with Bill 204?

The honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Sport, on government business?

The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, the acting Government House Leader.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): —11 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 11 a.m.? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 16—Inclusion in Schools

Mr. Speaker: All right. Well, then, the hour being 11 a.m., it's time for a private member's resolution, and the resolution under consideration this morning is entitled Inclusion in Schools, sponsored by the honourable member for Burrows.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member from Gimli,

WHEREAS Manitobans value different cultures, languages, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS Manitobans recognize that diversity enriches the lives of everyone in this province; and

WHEREAS Manitobans want to see the diversity of communities reflected and promoted in schools; and

WHEREAS inclusive education means that all students are welcomed by their schools and supported to learn, participate and enjoy all aspects of school life; and

WHEREAS inclusion in schools benefits all students by fostering a culture of diversity, belonging and respect; and

WHEREAS providing supports and opportunities to all students empowers them to become participating members of their school community; and

WHEREAS schools across Manitoba are working to improve inclusion by designing programs, activities and classrooms that allow all students to learn and participate together.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize that inclusion creates a positive and healthy learning environment for all students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage school divisions to continue developing innovative and creative ways to promote inclusion for all students in schools.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Burrows, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development, the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson),

WHEREAS Manitoba value different cultures, languages—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

The resolution is in order.

Ms. Wight: There's many different ways of looking at inclusion, so I'm just going to try and speak to a couple of them.

I was inspired, Mr. Speaker, to do this particular PMR on inclusion in schools by a woman I happened

to hear at a divisional school meeting, and she was the mother of a daughter in the CAP program in one of our high schools. And she was sharing with the school officials that were at the meeting some of the barriers that exist at times for her daughter and for others that I think often are—they're not because people don't want to work towards this, it's just a case of, I think, everyone is—you know, everyone is very busy. They're working hard to do their best for their students, and sometimes we're not always realizing some of the barriers that might be there for certain people. And so this mom was—has been working hard to help her daughter and others and officials in the school system realize what can we truly do that is the most helpful thing for these kids. And some of them were small things.

In that particular school there was an outside courtroom, and it had been built a long time ago and nobody had thought about the fact that, you know, there should be a ramp going from the hallways of the school into the courtyard where kids often sat down and ate their lunches and chatted and whatever, right? So, you know, she was able to work with the school, and, of course, she got the ramp put in and her daughter was able to be included in that way now in that particular example.

Some things are just a little bit harder. She wanted her daughter to be able to sit in on dance class. Well, dance class is a credit course, right? So you have to work through that. Maybe the teacher didn't realize that people in wheelchairs actually do dance. There's fabulous—I don't know if you've seen the dancing, the professional dancers in wheelchairs, but they're incredible, absolutely amazing. So sometimes I think, Mr. Speaker, what we need is just a different way of thinking outside of the box that isn't always the first thought that people have, right?

So—or thinking about the difficulty for some of the kids in getting phys. ed. in the schools and working towards finding ways to make that possible for every child, whether they're, you know—whatever their concerns might be, and helping them to do that. Swimming, for example, is one of the best things for phys. ed. if you're a child in a wheelchair, but getting them to the swimming pool and all of those things and finding the people to do that work with them can—you know, can be difficult. It's not always an easy solution, right?

So we've—she really impressed me, the work that she had been doing with her daughter and on her daughter's behalf and on the—on behalf of all of the

kids that were going to that particular school, and so I thought that this would be one way that maybe we could help. I think with a little more additional creativity, so much can be accomplished. And we see incredible creativity in our schools now. Somebody was just mentioning to me earlier today that one of the schools has a—was it march to your drummer award or something? Something that recognized the kids that were a little bit different and actually gave an award for that, which I thought was a brilliant, brilliant idea.

But there's just so many benefits, Mr. Speaker, to having an inclusive school environment. So one advocate group that I discovered when I was researching this noted that inclusion allows each child to develop, you know, their own strengths and their own gifts, and it helps each child reach their highest expectations. And that's what we want in our schools in Manitoba. It allows them to work on individual goals, but at the same time they can be part of a classroom community. And it teaches other children a culture of respect from the time they are tiny, and we want everyone to learn and accept that individual differences are what is—makes people so interesting. It's not something to be making fun of them for. It's what makes us all unique and interesting, and that's what we want our kids to know from the time they're little. So helping the kids within the schools appreciate diversity and inclusion is absolutely good for everyone including the broader community.

* (11:00)

And, of course, our schools are already working to design programs and activities and classrooms that allow for a healthy learning environment. And, you know, I believe that each new school, Mr. Speaker, that we build, we also are putting greater thought into making that environment inclusive for people with all kinds of disabilities. Whether it's vision loss or hearing loss or mobility issues, when we're building that school, we're thinking about those things now in a way that we never did, you know, 100 years ago. We've still got schools in my area from 100 years ago that, of course, don't have an elevator, right. They weren't thinking about those kinds of things. So it's pretty exciting to think what we can do on a building front as well when it comes to—when that's at the forefront of everyone's thoughts.

I also wanted to speak a little bit about—the Manitoba school act talks also about the philosophy

of inclusion. So it is right in our act that we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community, that we want to work together because it's going to create a richer future.

And so I just wanted to mention here, Mr. Speaker, the Circle of Courage. And the Circle of Courage was created by Dr. Brokenleg, and it was working with youth that were having some difficulties in life and getting youth back onto the right path, and he called it reclaiming our youth. And there was four things that he spoke of and they were mastery, independence, belonging and generosity.

So that sense of inclusion that we can create in our schools, Mr. Speaker, speaks to these things. It speaks to belonging. It's—and belonging is where we treat others, everyone we meet, as if they're related to us in some way, like they're kin, like they're part of our family in some way, and give everyone that social bond. And it is one of the things that makes our kids have a—help them have a social conscience later in life. They need to have that sense of belonging in school.

That's part of what we were doing in Bill 18, was the recognition of that. We heard through all those speeches many, many people speaking about the tremendous pain that had been caused them by kids being teased and picked on in school or wherever, not just in school. And I can remember in my school we had a girl who had, you know, mental challenges, and I can remember the kids in that school picking on her and calling her names. So if we think this is new, it's not new; it's been there since the beginning of time. And it always broke my heart even when I was little—still does, whenever I think of it—and not being the most quiet person—I know, that's hard to believe—I would always speak up and try and stand up for her and then they would pick on me, but better me than her for sure. I had a definitely a much better chance of fighting back. But we want our kids to grow up helping others have that sense of belonging because it's tremendously important.

And mastery as well. Mastery, Mr. Speaker, is a sense of competence. So as we make the schools inclusive, we help the kids reach their potential. We help them realize that within the—their frame of their world, they can reach a level of competence in whatever area it is. And it's something that absolutely everybody can do at whatever level they're at, and we want them to be able to do that. It makes them realize that they too can achieve.

And I think one of the others is generosity. And generosity, Mr. Speaker, is about helping others, obviously. And by doing that a youth or an adult creates their own proof of worthiness. That's what Dr. Brokenleg taught in that. And having inclusive in school environments where we are reaching out to all of the kids, helps the kids grow in their spirit of generosity.

And so I really ask that everyone be able to stand up and support this bill for all of our kids today. Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It again gives me great pleasure this morning to stand up and speak to the resolution brought forward by the member from Burrows on inclusion in schools.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we believe that every student should have the opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment where students feel safe, valued and accepted for who they are. An inclusive environment is where students for—of all cultures and 'ethnicities,' religions, socio-economic status, gender identities, sexualities and abilities can learn from each other in a nondiscriminatory space. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interests of the students which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community.

When students go to school, they should feel part of a classroom community that is free of harassment and discrimination, a place where they can achieve their full learning potential. Inclusive education teaches students the value of empathy and understanding for others. As students engage with people of diverse circumstances, they not only learn more about others, but about themselves. It broadens their world view and allows them the opportunity to connect and make friends with people who come from all kinds of backgrounds.

Excellent teachers can help to get the values of inclusiveness across to students by incorporating it into their curriculum plans and course work. They can show students the value of diversity by uplifting and celebrating each student's unique strengths and capabilities, Mr. Speaker. Moreover, inclusive education helps to prepare students for the post-secondary level and the workplace. The values of an inclusive education build a foundation for children and youth to grow into caring and compassionate adults.

Mr. Speaker, when I was reading over the resolution brought forward by the member from Burrows, I was taking a look at all the whereases and then, there be it resolved, and I concur with all the statements that she puts in here. But it sort of questions—I have to question the fact that I believe that all the schools are doing this already, and whether that is school staff, whether it's a custodian or bus driver, teacher aide, paraprofessional, people working in the administration offices, senior admin, principals, teachers, all stakeholders. And I also feel that parents play a major, major role in the development of students, or of children, as well, our youth, and help to bring forward and cultivate learning experiences all the way through from birth all the way through to workplace and further on into their adulthood.

What I do question, though, is that I know that since I've become Education critic, what I found that—that we talk about inclusivity, and then we also talk about the government working towards inclusivity with—in regards to students with physical disabilities, those—also those challenges that maybe can't necessarily be seen either. I know that just yesterday, celebrating the May 12th, which is Manitoba Day, we also talked about some of the different hardships that students have to go through that can't be seen or is even very difficult to be diagnosed and to understand and help to foster that understanding, I guess, from the takes of other students, that students who are experiencing those hardships such as maybe some mental health issues, physical issues that, again, is not necessarily in the forefront, but is internal, Mr. Speaker. And it's basically the fact of teaching all our students, all our kids, all our youth, from soon as they're, you know, born or cognitively be able to listen to the stories, to teach them that very important word, empathy, so that they can, you know, treat others as they'd like to be treated.

I'm taking a look right now, Mr. Speaker, that I know I've questioned the Minister of Education on the fact that a post-secondary level, in some of our northern institutions, it's interesting to me that the government today brings forward a resolution which talks about inclusion in schools—and I'm hoping that this resolution isn't only talking about our K-to-12 schools or even our nursery schools, but also talking about our post-secondary institutions. Because I know that the minister has gone and cut some of the disability services that are available to countless students in our northern communities. And these

disabilities are not only the physical, Mr. Speaker, it's—and we're also talking about, you know, cognitive or maybe some of their literacy and numeracy skills as well. But those programs have actually been cut.

* (11:10)

I'd like to just mention a couple of the things that I know that a lot of school divisions are doing despite some of the things, the hardships that are brought down onto the school divisions themselves. And we're talking about the school division teams. I know I had the pleasure of being part of a fantastic student services team in the Sunrise School Division, and part of that team was better of probably nine or 10 years working straight on with the student services of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, divisional psychologists, speech and language, of course, parents and outside agencies, as well as staff within not only the building that I taught in, Mr. Speaker, but also throughout the school division, talking to divisional counsellors, divisional resource teachers. And, again, part of that school team, of course, can't go far from—without mentioning the role of the school resource team as well, because those are the people that actually have to sit down and create these funding applications and the plans and independent IEPs that I know that the minister is going to be looking at those, if not already—is well under way looking at those funding applications that are coming his way.

And I know that when we were talking in Estimates, speaking—having conversations during Estimates time, we were talking about the amount of students that are right now funded, whether they are level 2 or 3, within the school divisions. And I see that the numbers really haven't changed, Mr. Speaker. But when you actually talk to those grassroots, those teachers, there's those EAs, those parents, the fact is that those numbers are actually increasing as far as the students who need that extra support. But unfortunately the dollars or the programming or what the school divisions are having to do with the amount of money that they are being given, they're being expected to do a lot more with a lot less.

So I know that we do have a long way to go for working with students and helping each and every student succeed and feel that sense of belonging within those walls of school or at the secondary level or post-secondary or early years or even nursery school, Mr. Speaker. And, again, as the member

from Burrows had mentioned, this is not a—necessary a partisan topic, this is a issue that we all have to be very cognizant of and we have to be moving forward, because as I've said more and more—many times in the House already, that we are talking about Manitoba's greatest assets, and those are our kids. And we're going to need them to be very well-educated, and in order to be very well-educated we need to give them that sense of comfort, belonging in the school system so that they feel protected and they have the ability to learn each and every day in those—in the schools so that they can continue to be very well-respected, hard-working people within our economy here in this great province of ours.

So, in closing, I believe, and as well the Progressive Conservatives believe—the parents and for some of us who are former teachers—we fully believe that all children in Manitoba deserve to feel safe and secure. And I look forward to hearing what—

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

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): It gives me great honour to speak on the member from Burrow's PMR, the inclusion in our schools. I also want to thank the member from Lac du Bonnet for his views and recognizing the challenges that we have now and in the future.

I was a teacher, as you know, for 33 years, and I started teaching when there wasn't inclusion. I started teaching when there was special rooms for people that had physical disabilities, learning disabilities. They were separated in different rooms, and teachers, at that time, thought this is the way it should be.

Well I want to talk about three students that not only changed my life but also changed the lives of students in the room. The first student is Alicia. She had neurological problems, mentally and physically. And I just remember when she came into the room, she—a great show of respect was shown by all students because she needed help in many ways. And some of the students that were helping her were the students that were getting in trouble, so she tended to bring an atmosphere into the room that was a calming influence.

I remember we'd—we always would take expeditions around Flin Flon—this is grade 6—and we'd go and we used to use the saying, we don't talk about adventure, we live it. And we'd go to different

old houses and that and dig in their garbages or whatever to find artifacts, you could say, from that period of time.

And where we had to go was a long walk, so we rigged up for Alicia—basically, it was a wagon, and we went through swamp and that, and somebody would carry the wagon. And this one boy, who was in the office many times for trouble, wanted to carry Alicia, and he would carry her across the rough parts where the wagon wouldn't go. We also had to walk down the tracks, and as you know, a wagon going down the tracks, she was bumping all the way. But she always took part in the things that we did in class.

And when we took her home that day, she was physically just tired out. And her mom met us at the bus station, and I thought, well, you know, I'd better tell her that, you know, she's had a tough time, she's had a long day. And her mom was in tears when I brought her there because she was so happy that she was included because she was thinking that maybe she shouldn't be because of the physical work that would have to go on her part but also on the other students, but she was so glad that Alicia was treated equally by her peers. It was her best day of her life, she said, and she still says that to me. We're in the same church and she lives in Flin Flon and that.

She affected my life greatly because I realized that people with different disabilities, whether physical or mental, need to be included in classes so that they're with their same peer groups, and they can work together and learn about life in general.

The next student I want to talk to you about is a student that had mental disabilities, but also he had hearing problems. So, when he was in class, you know, many teachers didn't pick up that he had hearing problems. I mean, you know, whatever, so he was a handful, to say the least. But one thing he did—what was successful in, was running. And he had trouble in school but, you know, we worked with him, but, boy, could he run. And when he represented the school, Hapnot or whatever, in school, it was an honour for him to run, and people really looked up to him. And, again, school was one of the best times of his life. Right now he delivers pizza and is, you know, having troubles, but doing well. And I'm very proud that he's gone that way.

The other student I want to talk about is a legend in Flin Flon, Jonny Doogs. Jonny has Down syndrome and he's fired many coaches of our hockey team, trying to get our Flin Flon Bombers to do

better. Jonny is just a fixture. Sometimes he's a greeter at Walmart or, if they're not paying him enough, he'll go someplace else. But the community has really surrounded him, and the community is better for that. He goes anywhere, well-recognized, and he always bugs me by—when he sees me, he calls me Ace Burpee. I don't know why, but he calls me Ace Burpee. It's starting to bug me, but I love Jonathan. You see the—*[interjection]* Okay, but anyways, when I go out and, say, meet his grandmother or whatever, Jonathan is always social and a big part of our community.

* (11:20)

And it just shows what inclusiveness can do for communities, the importance of treating our unfortunate. Whether it's in schools or just in your city centre, we all win by, you know, having inclusiveness. By working with the unfortunate people in our communities, whether it's language problems, whether it's learning disabilities, whether it's physical, mental, whatever, by working with them, making them part of your community, I think the community becomes richer.

And as a teacher, I have to say that working with kids, all kids, but the kids that were special needs, whether physical or mental needs, really made me a better teacher but also made me a better person, and I thank these students. That's just three of many, of course. For 33 years, I've got many students I could talk about. Some of them now work in the different constituencies within this province that some of my—members have worked with to this date. So it's—I'm proud to say, as a teacher, that inclusiveness is important.

We want to work together as a province. I know the opposition members think it's important too. And what we have to realize is that not only does it make our communities better, it makes our province better. And we've got to show that we stand up for the unfortunate. We stand up for the people in our society that don't fit into the square holes, that we can, and like the member from Burrows said, give out awards, give out recognition to people that maybe are different, and I think that's so important.

I think the proudest moment was when the former minister of Education announced the antibullying bill. That was so important to me as a teacher that we stood up and we were going to do something. And I think Manitoba's been recognized not just by the provinces but in—by the world that we're trying to do something, because society is

changing, and we have to change. Like I said, when I first started teaching, there wasn't inclusiveness. We have inclusive classrooms now. When I was teaching, there was bullying, and now, like I say, we're trying to deal with that, deal with different types of bullying. Who thought cyberbullying would be a problem? I mean, we're recognizing that society is changing and we have to change with it. We have to make sure that our schools, that our towns, our cities, our province is changing with the times, and I'm proud to be on this side, be an NDP member and make sure that we're working together for all Manitobans and making sure that we have an inclusive society for all members.

Also want to say that, after those 33 years of teaching, when I went into politics, yes, I missed the teaching, I missed the students. Because, as a teacher, there's something about it after your first day of teaching, you're always—there's highs and lows throughout your career, throughout your day, and, believe me, this in some ways matches it, but in teaching you can be as high as you can get one day and you can be really low the next day. But the thing about teaching is that it was different every day. And you had to work with each student to work on their weaknesses or on their strengths to try and get them to be calm and make them look at their own potential and work with them to realize that, you know, they can do anything that they want, but they have to work hard.

Working inclusively with different students that don't fit in, my last 10 years I taught was at an alternative school, and, of course, I taught mothers that were 16 years old with a baby. They realized to get out of the rut that they're in they had to—

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

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I thank you for this opportunity to rise and to put some comments on the record with respect to the resolution brought forward by the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) today concerning inclusion in schools.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's an important topic talking about the need for students to have an atmosphere in schools that is conducive to learning, the need to remove barriers in schools that can hinder the ability for students to have an education without fear, without intimidation, without prejudice—these things are important and so I know that the—my colleagues

on this side of the House have already spoken on this issue and more will speak before this hour concludes.

Mr. Speaker, I was thinking about this resolution and I was thinking about things that are going on in my own community, in the constituency of Morden and Winkler. And I am pleased to let the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) know that there are many things happening in our communities, in our schools, throughout the province of Manitoba that are happening independently, that are happening at a grassroots level. Because we understand that it is not just politicians who are aligned on this theme and who understand the importance of inclusion and acceptance in our schools but, indeed, our teachers in our schools across Manitoba understand these things, our administrators understand these things, our superintendents, our trustees understand these things.

And perhaps we understand them better now than we did some years before; there's a growing knowledge, there's a growing awareness about some of the challenges that students face. Perhaps we understand these things better than we did some time ago.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by what is going on in our schools. I think about one example I may have brought your attention to sometime before in this House, it had to do with the We Day that's celebrated in Manitoba. And some students and some teachers in École Morden Middle School took it upon themselves a year ago—it might have even started two years ago—to organize and have their own mini We Day, and what a fantastic event that was.

They took all the students from grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the school, they organized an event for the Access Event Centre in the large community hall because the school's gym couldn't hold that amount of students, and then they proceeded to bring in guest speakers, they brought in bands to play some great rock music; some local bands came in, they had some inspiring students give presentations. And, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak at that event too. What a wonderful set of messages that came forward, what a wonderful effort by teachers to focus the attention not just on the academics that happen in class, but on the need for students to do things like show acceptance to others, to show empathy for others, to demonstrate compassion, to reach across, to transcend, to overcome differences. And really these are the virtues that we should be stressing in schools.

I have to tell you, I was so encouraged to be in that audience. There were times when the whole audience cheered and we were all cheering along as the dignitaries that were there, and they had us doing silly things and standing up and doing funny dances, and I was really actually hoping that there wasn't going to be video evidence to follow those proceedings but I've yet to see any evidence of it emerging, so I think we're safe. But it was so neat to see.

The event was organized by a group of students in the school that was called the Freedom Fighters, and they talk about local projects. And what I appreciate about this mini We Day at École Morden Middle School is that they actually put a substance to these arguments. They didn't just talk about these themes of acceptance and empathy and inclusion, but they talked about what it looks like for students in the school, in the local community and around the world.

As a matter of fact, that group of students talked about a project—I remember a year ago when Freedom Fighters member Molly Wheeler got up and talked about an effort they had done to fundraise to bring clean drinking to a village in Kenya, and the events that they had done and the fundraisers they had done allowed them to raise, like, \$1,500 for the village. They did things like a popsicle sale and a book sale and a bake sale and a mini-stick tournament. And if you think that students in schools are poor, try putting out baking at lunch hour and all a sudden everyone's got a toonie or a \$5 bill. But it's really neat to see that even students in a middle school, if they know it's going for a drinking water project, they get on board and they are not stingy with those toonies and loonies and \$5 bills. So these students blew away their fundraising projections.

* (11:30)

Mr. Speaker, there have been other things happening in our communities as well, in our schools. I know that I heard recently about a We Are Silent event in which the students took a vow of silence to reflect on the fact that many people do not have a voice. So, by being silent, they actually create one loud voice. And I know that oftentimes, as parents, we know that our kids can be loud and boisterous, so any time we can avail ourselves of an opportunity to have our kids take part in something that requires them to be silent, that is always a good thing. *[interjection]* So I know that—one of the

members behind me here is right now saying, send me the sign-up sheet and I'll enrol my child in that.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to stress that this is a good resolution, in as much as it points us to consider that students at a young age need to understand that they have a role in creating the conditions in their own classrooms, in their own school, for these things to happen. But I would suggest to the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) and to the members of this House that this resolution in my mind seems to stop short. When I consider the virtues that we want to create in children, because we as a society really have a responsibility—create virtue, to create all of that substance in our kids that will help them to have rich lives, that will help them to reach out to others, I think that there are words missing in here. And I know that right now diversity and inclusion are important words in our school systems, but I believe and I challenge us that those words should not be used in isolation at the expense of leaving out words like acceptance, like empathy, like compassion, like reaching across, even love.

I believe we have a mandate as parents, as teachers, as workers in schools, as superintendents, as police persons in the community, all these adults in charge in kids' lives, kids who go to community clubs and things like this, we need to talk to them not just about a couple of buzzwords. And I understand there is value in these words, there's importance in these words, but I believe that we should freely use those other words in our lexicon. We should apply these words and help students to know that it is one thing to tolerate someone, but empathy seems to raise the bar and say: What happens if I put myself in another's shoes? What happens if I walk for a mile in their shoes? How does that affect my understanding of that person? Then maybe the mean thing they did to me I can see just a little bit better. Maybe that will help to bridge some differences. And wherever we can bridge those differences, Mr. Speaker, that's the important work, and I know it's the work that so many teachers in their classrooms are doing.

This recall—this makes me remember a conversation I had with my 16-year-old daughter this weekend, Mr. Speaker. She works at an assisted-living building in the city of Morden. And she comes in a couple times a week and she works there, she has a job and she helps serve supper in the dining room. And she told me—when she started, she was very nervous and she was very unsure of how this would go, working with people who, in her

mind, were so old, even older than her father—she constantly reminds me how old I indeed am.

But you know, after six months and then a year, we began to see the change in our daughter. And this last weekend, our daughter made a pronouncement, and she said, you know what, in our schools, she says, every student between the ages of 15 and 18 should be made to work in an assistant—assisted-living centre or in a personal-care home. She says, I am so blown away by how wonderful those people are.

And indeed, now we hear back from the residents who live there and say, you know what, I like your daughter; she's got spunk. I like her because she talks to us.

And it is so neat to see relationships growing up between 90-year-olds and 16-year-olds. She comes back and tells us things about the residents. Of course, she has to be careful because of privacy laws, but she tells us some wonderful and enriching stories about their lives and who they were when they were younger. Mr. Speaker, that's just one example of what it means to reach out, to interact not just in school but across generations and across cultural barriers and across all kinds of other divisions, divisions of economics and socio-economic dividers and help us come together.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good resolution. I feel like we need to include in this conversation other virtues—acceptance and empathy, love and compassion—to make sure our students are well equipped to overcome the differences they have and move ahead. I thank the speakers who have already spoken on this. I look forward to hearing other comments on this resolution.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I'd like to start by thanking my colleague, the member from Burrows, for bringing this resolution to the Chamber floor so we can have this discussion. I think it's a very important discussion and one that we've been having as a caucus and as a government for a number of years with respect to how can we continue to improve our schools and make them more inclusive environments for all children.

As a former Education minister I believe that every child has a gift, and every child walks into our school every day with that gift. And it's incumbent on us, as a society, to find ways to explore options to allow that child to explore that gift and succeed in

school. And, certainly, one of the proudest days of my tenure as Education minister was to stand in the Chamber to bring in appropriate educational programming legislation and to enact that legislation and to bring in the regulations through a consultative process with a number of stakeholders to ensure that we were doing our best to constantly improve the environment for all learners so that they could feel included in our schools.

But, Mr. Speaker, it was also a very difficult time for me when I did receive a letter from a parent who didn't have the courage of his or her convictions to sign that letter, where every other parent who came and advocated on behalf of their children who might have had intellectual disabilities, who might have had physical disabilities and other barriers to their learning, would stand up and advocate for their children. And somebody actually wrote me a letter and said: Why are you doing this? Those kids are taking up a lot of resources and it's a waste of money.

And I could not believe that, Mr. Speaker, that somebody would actually put pen to paper and write that letter but not have the courage of their convictions to sign their name to it. I understand that cowardice when they brought such a disgusting dialogue to the debate that was going on about how we make our schools better places for our children.

And I shared that with the association of the school—pardon me, Student Services Administrators' Association and talked about how we, in government, are working very hard to bring in policies, regulations, and legislation to improve the quality of life for all students, but—and we could legislate that, but we couldn't legislate against ignorance, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately those attitudes do exist and unfortunately those attitudes still exist today.

That's why it's incumbent on us as legislators to bring forward resolutions such as this, to have this discussion, to see what we can do that—or talk about what we have done to make our schools better places, but talk about how we can continue to make schools better places, and I'm very proud of the government for the work that we have done over our tenure in office, and I know that we will continue to do more to make our schools more inclusive environments.

And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, my comments will be brief because I know other colleagues of mine would like to speak to this resolution, but I can also say that one of the best

nights of the year for me when I was Education minister was to attend the Yes I Can! Awards. The Yes I Can! Awards are a celebration of ability, celebrating students who had overcome incredible barriers, whether they were intellectual disabilities, physical or other handicaps that would prevent them from fully participating, but they participated in a context that was recognized by their colleagues, by their peers, by their teachers, for the outstanding achievements that they were able to achieve, given multiple barriers to achievement. And it was a celebration of community because the entire community embraced and worked with these children to ensure that they enjoyed success in their schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we continue to have this discussion because we've done a lot of good things, but we know we can do more, and we know that we need to continue to be vigilant to address those attitudes that still exist towards individuals who have barriers to participating fully in our education system.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I do know, as I say, that many of my colleagues would like to speak to this resolution as well, and we certainly would like to see this resolution passed. And I thank my colleague from Burrows for bringing this to the Chamber floor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Speaking to this private member's resolution brought forward by the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), inclusive schools and our school systems, our teachers, our school divisions do such a great job in making sure our schools are inclusive for all students.

And just last week I was in a restaurant and there was a young lady going to university and she had an accent and a distinguishable accent, and so I—we asked her what her accent was, and she had a very interesting story. She was in an orphanage in Russia and, at the age of 14, she was adopted by parents and came over here to her adopted parents. She landed in—here on a Thursday, didn't speak a word of English and on Monday morning she was in school, and we all know that can be difficult. School can be a difficult time for teenagers of any age or description, but she, with the help of her adopted parents and the school system, did a great job in adapting, learning the English language and making friends.

* (11:40)

And, obviously, it was a success because she's going to university now and she's studying to become a psychologist, so just such a great inspirational story of her life experiences. She also told us she has a brother who she will probably never see again from the orphanage, but she has a sister in Russia and that she's—now with the wonders of Facebook in Russia she is actually trying to connect with her younger sister, and so we wished her well. But that's just one example of our school system, how they are able to help young people adapt when they come.

From our own family, we have a son-in-law who immigrated to Canada with his family when he was eight years old, the youngest of three children in—back in, oh, about 1978, I think it was. They immigrated to Canada from Germany, didn't—none of the family spoke a word of English, and it was the same thing. They arrived in Canada, they had bought a farm and within a couple of days they were in school, all three kids, and not speaking a word of English, but the school welcomed them, and we—they did very well. We see this quite often through many instances how our schools go above and beyond just to make sure that these students are included.

A few weeks ago, we were speaking to the Salvation Army, and they were telling us about how they were helping refugees to this country in the city here adapt and helped the children in the schools, and also not only just the children but how they were helping the parents and grandparents that came as refugees. And one of the comments that the workers from the Salvation Army told us was that quite often Canada has this image of being the land of milk and honey, and when these refugees come here they have these great expectations of everything happening, and then reality kind of sets in when they're here because it's a very difficult challenge for the families.

But our school divisions and our schools and our teachers and other students have always been a great help to these people facing challenges when they come here, and it helps to build the diversity of Canada and of Manitoba, and so we certainly thank the schools for doing their part in welcoming these new residents to Manitoba, and, of course, we always feel that—and schools ensure that students feel safe and secure at schools, and we need to continue to support our educators in this as they continue to do this.

And so, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I am going to turn it over to someone else, and just—I just,

once again, want to thank the schools and the school divisions for their outstanding work in supporting our students in Manitoba each and every day. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), on House business?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): No, actually speaking.

Mr. Speaker: To debate.

Mr. Goertzen: They actually let me speak once in a while without House business, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to—

An Honourable Member: Who let him up?

Mr. Goertzen: I know, it's a shock for my colleagues.

It's a pleasure to speak this morning, Mr. Speaker, not on unlimited time. I will limit my time, in fact, to ensure that this motion comes to a vote here this morning, and I want to say that it's about time, I think, that the government looks at an approach that empowers school divisions and those who are on the ground. Certainly, the frustration of many school divisions and officials, those elected officials within the school division, is that they feel that their autonomy has been taken away, that they have many solutions in terms of promoting acceptance and promoting antibullying and diversity that aren't prescribed by law, that they have unique ways and they have creative ways of ensuring that their schools that are in their divisions ultimately are accepting places.

And we've heard that from many schools—whether that's private schools, or whether those are public schools who've said, include us as part of the conversation, make sure that we are listened to because we have ideas.

We've had some schools that have come here to the Chamber or to the committee rooms and talked about how safe their schools are, they've talked about the acceptance that there is in their schools and they have statistics that back this up—some of that is, of course, anecdotal and some of it is in hard statistics, Mr. Speaker, and they've had tremendous success. And when I've asked them whether that is in committee and it's on the record, they're on the record, or whether that's informally to say to those schools, would you like to share your ideas with the government, could you bring forward some of your

own ideas and policies and programs that you have in your own schools? Whether that's at a school like the King's School or is it a public school, they've said, absolutely, we'd love to have that discussion, we'd like to bring forward those ideas.

They want to be included, they don't want a top-down approach, they don't want government coming to them and saying you have to do it this way or you have to do it that way, because ultimately that never yields the same kind of results, the positive results, that we see when it's ground-up approach, when you go to the individual schools or the divisions and say, well, what would work for you and what would work in your scenario.

So I hope that this is a bit of change of mindset for the government and that they'll look at more of a ground-up approach, that they'll allow those individual schools and school divisions to come forward with their ideas and their successes and show how they've been able to create schools that are inclusive, that are safe, that are rewarding learning environments for all the students within the walls of their school. Because ultimately that's what we want; we want schools that will be there to ensure that every student, regardless of what their individual or personal situation is, Mr. Speaker, will ensure that they have the ability to learn in a safe, rewarding and inclusive environment.

But I don't believe that that comes from the top down, I believe that that comes from the bottom up, that it comes from those individual administrators within the divisions, it comes from those teachers and those who are within their individual schools because they know their schools best and they know their challenges best, that the challenges that are faced in one region of the province are different often than are faced in another part of the province. And we've heard that in many different kind of ways, discussions in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, where there has been discussions that the challenges that are faced in northern Manitoba are different than the challenges that are faced in Winnipeg, or in Brandon, or in southern Manitoba. We understand that and we know that there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution.

So I hope that this resolution that's been brought forward by the member—and I think it has been brought forward for the reason of trying to ensure that the discussion will happen from the ground up, that we'll be empowering those schools and those divisions to find their way to ensure that their schools are welcoming and that their schools are safe

because it should always have been that way, Mr. Speaker. It should never be the kind of top-down approach, a one-size-fits-all solution that never really is a solution at all, it's just a prescribed formula that doesn't change an awful lot.

So we're glad that this is perhaps setting a different tone for the government, we're glad that it's hopefully looking at a grassroots approach, where individual schools and individual divisions will be empowered to make the decisions that make the most sense for their divisions and their schools.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I do wish to put a few comments on the record in regards to inclusion in schools. I would like to read the second WHEREAS, and that is: WHEREAS Manitobans recognize that diversity enriches the lives of everyone in this province.

An individual who embodied that was Shirley Timm-Rudolph, trustee in River East Transcona School Division. She was 57 years old, succumbed to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She had served 13 years on city council and four as a school trustee and—

Mr. Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I'm seeking leave of the House to not see the clock until this resolution has come to a vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock until a vote has occurred on this resolution? *[Agreed]*

Sorry to interrupt the honourable member for St. Paul.

* (11:50)

Mr. Schuler: I thank the Legislative Chamber for this. Shirley Timm-Rudolph would have stood today with us and would have supported a resolution like this. She was a great individual.

Mr. Speaker, without making it too emotional, about three weeks ago, I was in a coffee shop going to have a meeting, and someone came up to me and said, hi, Ron, how are you? And I looked at the person and I said, fine, thank you, and, you know, was very polite. And she said, you know, how are things with you and the kids and all that? And I kind of looked at her, and she said, you don't recognize

me, do you? And I said, you know, I'm sorry, I don't, actually. You sound very familiar, but help me. She said, I'm Shirley Timm-Rudolph, and she said, I understand, Ron, because I'm dying of cancer. And to say that I was shocked would be the least of it. And, you know, we hugged and, yes, we got a little emotional, and she cried and so did I.

And she was a great lady. She was a trailblazer for women in this city. She was tough. She was controversial at times, said her piece, and I loved and respected her greatly. And I know that she is going to be missed not just as a citizen of this province and this great city we call Winnipeg, because she certainly had a heart and a passion for the city of Winnipeg. And I do believe that what she did she did for what she felt was the best of the citizens of this great city.

She was a great school trustee, made it out to as many events as she could until her health just wouldn't allow it anymore. And I know for all of us, it's a sad moment when, you know, someone who has put in a lot of time, selfless time, working on behalf of citizens, working on behalf of the people, and she never even got the opportunity to live out her term. I know she's going to be missed on the school board. She was a force to be reckoned with. She had presence on the school board.

And if I may be so bold, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, we would like to send our condolences to her family and those who, with us, mourn her passing away. It is a loss for the school division, it's a loss for the city of Winnipeg, and Manitoba has lost a great politician, a woman who passed away way too early, way before her time, and we wish her peace. May God grant her peace and may God grant her family the kind of peace and comfort that they so deserve at this time. Her family, I know, is taking this very hard.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I know she would have also have appreciated this resolution, because education was also one of her loves. Thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the resolution?

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: On House business, just before you call the question.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino). The title of the resolution is Filipino Nursing.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, and the title of the resolution is Filipino Nursing.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now, with regard to the resolution, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? *[Agreed]*

Honourable Government House Leader? Call it 12 noon? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

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