

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

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. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, good morning, Mr. Speaker. I believe that we're willing to proceed to Bill 207, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act, brought forward by the honourable member from Midland.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call second readings of public bills, Bill 207, the family maintenance amendment and garnishment act.

**Bill 207—The Family Maintenance Amendment
and Garnishment Amendment Act**

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), that Bill 207, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: This private members' bill came from a constituent that—who came to me and about a year ago or so, and I was rather hesitant at first. I believe there's more than enough laws in the books, and whether they're enforceable and that, but when she explained her situation, it did pique my interest and from there it has moved on.

And this is the story of a—I'll call them Susan and Ken. Obviously, I've changed their names for—to keep their identities away, but Susan and Ken agreed

to a divorce. This was probably their last unified decision they ever will make. But their two young children—and it was a rather bitter divorce, so, obviously, they arrived at a settlement in the original divorce case, and from the judge's decision Susan retained—or gained custody of their two young children. Ken was ordered to pay maintenance and the property was divided. There were scheduled visits to Ken by the children, and so the terms were all set out. The court costs and the legal fees are then paid by each party, respectively. However, Ken was unhappy with the settlement that the judge rendered, and so he appealed the judge's decision.

So the case went back to court, and the judge, on the appeal, decided that the terms will remain exactly the same, the terms of maintenance, custody, property, visitations. Nothing was changed. The only difference on the—under the appeal was that the judge decided that Ken should pay Susan her legal costs that she incurred in the appeal, and it cost her \$15,000 to hire a lawyer to take this to appeal court, and the judge ordered that he should pay her \$15,000 share of legal costs because he lost the appeal. However, Mr. Speaker, under the current system, legal system, that we have, the judge cannot enforce this decision for Ken to pay Susan the \$15,000 legal costs. He can only recommend that. The Maintenance Enforcement Program does not cover this currently, does not currently allow legal fees to be part of costs.

Now, Ken refused to pay. Obviously, in a bitter case, he refused to pay, and so Susan's only alternative would be to sue Ken, take him to court and sue him for the \$15,000 legal costs, and we all know that that would end up costing her even more in legal costs, which she was struggling to pay anyway. So that was not really an option.

This private members' bill, this Bill 207, would give the judge the discretion to include legal costs to Susan—in this case, to Susan, because Ken lost the appeal. So—and this—and I just want to emphasize that it gives the judge the discretion to award legal costs. Every case is different, but this would, under current law, he is—does not have that ability. It's not mandatory, and this would give the judge the discretion to include legal costs under the Maintenance Enforcement Program, and it would be

incumbent upon lawyers to explain to their clients that if they appeal their case, similar—if we're using this as an example, that that Maintenance Enforcement Program could be used to ensure that the legal costs are, in fact, repaid. Now, we realize that Maintenance Enforcement is busy and we don't want to incur them with even more unnecessary work, but in this case, this could have been done had the judge had the ability to do that and if he had so decided to do it.

So part of—also, part of Bill 207 also allows a six-month waiting period after the decision is rendered so that the two parties can either have the legal costs paid in full so that it's done, it doesn't become part of Maintenance Enforcement Program, or there's terms set out so that, as quite often happens, maintenance payments are made through Maintenance Enforcement, and this could include the legal costs if they arrive at—if the two parties arrive at terms. But it gives a six-month cooling-off period for it to happen so that the parties can, in fact, do this, and without involving Maintenance Enforcement if they so choose.

* (10:10)

And again, I want to emphasize this is not, should not, overload Maintenance Enforcement Program. We know they're busy enough. We know—we all as MLAs have all had our constituents come to us with cases about maintenance enforcement, particularly when it deals in other provinces and the difficulties that incur from there. But this is a tool that the judges could use; this is a further tool that would enable them to be able to cover legal costs.

We all know that there's enough trauma and stress and there's enough discord within any divorce case. We don't want to further complicate it, but it does allow for another tool for the judges. And, in this case, Susan had to remortgage her house in order to pay for her lawyer because her ex-husband refused to pay that \$15,000. And she struggles enough to make her house payments now and to care for their children, and there's enough pressure on families these days without having, if I can call it, sort of, frivolous, bitter court cases happening and causing them extra time and money.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm not a lawyer and that's—that has its benefits, and—but this was—this—so this was a case that I had to do a lot of research work on. I did talk to some lawyers who do a fair bit of family law and they were interested in this. I think that it's, again, as—rather than introducing new

legislation, this simply, if I can call it, tweaks existing laws that are on our books right now and it's just another tool that judges and family courts can use so that—to help families through a very traumatic time and a very disruptive time in their lives.

And if this small amendment helps to do that, then I think that we always have to have the families' best interest in mind, and, certainly, Mr. Speaker, I would look for government support on this private member's bill. I'm always open to further suggestions or possibly amendments to it to make it even better. And—but the—ultimately the goal in all of this is to help our families cope through a very difficult time.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the members opposite comments on this and we look forward to—I look forward to, perhaps, moving this bill on to committee and then looking for public comment on it.

So with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to speak to Bill 207. It isn't that often, actually, in this Legislature that we have the opportunity to debate and discuss family law issues. As minister, I think aside from some casework questions in the Maintenance Enforcement Program, I'm not sure I've had a question on family law and I'm not sure in my entire time in the Legislature I've heard that.

So I think it is helpful to have this discussion. I will say that I believe the member for Midland has brought this forward in good faith. He's dealt with constituents who've raised a particular issue, and I have no question he's brought this bill forward today in the Legislature in good faith.

Now, as well, I'm also pleased the member for Midland has recognized the valuable work that the Maintenance Enforcement Program does. And what I would be saying would be very different if we didn't have a new Maintenance Enforcement Program which is increasing functionality, increasing ways to that branch can collect maintenance owing on behalf of creditors. And, certainly, it's interesting that the member is—wants to bring something into the public sector that was previously done by the private sector. I'm glad that the member for Midland recognizes the work the program does.

I want to put on the record my admiration for the work that people in the Maintenance Enforcement Program do. They work in an environment where there are very few people who stop by just to bring

them Christmas cards or bring them gifts. They deal, many times, with unhappy debtors who don't want to pay; sometimes, frustrated creditors who are wondering when they're going to be seeing their money for child support which has been set out in order or a--an agreement.

So, certainly, we respect the work the Maintenance Enforcement Program does. I'm glad to hear the member for Midland does. He should probably have a chat with his leader sometime because, of course, his leader proposed cuts which would involve cutting people from the Maintenance Enforcement Program. His leader, in the wake of the budget, talked about a hiring chill, which would mean that if somebody from the Maintenance Enforcement Program retired or moved on to another job in or outside of government, they wouldn't be replaced. And I know the member for Midland surely can't agree with that, because I certainly don't agree with that, and I'm glad he's put that forward.

Now, there is some challenges in what the member has brought forward, and I was interested and I listened very carefully to the case he put forward with the constituent with the problem. It sounds like there wasn't a settlement in the divorce case. It sounds there was actually a contested case that wound up going to trial. It doesn't sound like there was a lot of co-operation which, unfortunately, sometimes happens in our system. And one of the things that we've done and worked on very hard is to make sure that we try to reduce conflict and reduce strife at the front end, and we do that through courses which are now mandatory for people who are going through a separation to try to work out their differences outside of the court system. We offer free mediation to parties to try to resolve matters. We offer free assessments through the Department of Family Services to help parties get some outside views and some outside advice without continuing to rack up the costs of lawyers, which we understand is a real concern for many people.

And I look at two cases I had practising, which I did think of when I read the bill the member from Midland put forward. I had one case, I guess not an untypical case in Manitoba, where there was a child that was born from a very brief relationship. This being Manitoba, it was two people who happened to be in the same wedding party who didn't have an ongoing relationship, but there was a child. And, unfortunately, the father was not a co-operative participant in the legal proceedings, and we tried to write letters asking him to come forward. When that

didn't work, I actually, on behalf of my client, instituted court action which requested a whole number of things. It requested an order of parentage. It requested an order for custody and an order for child support. The father did not respond in any way, did not show up at the court date that was set, and we're able to get orders based on what we thought his income was and we did get an order for costs. After that time I wrote a very polite yet firm letter to him suggesting that he should start paying child support because we'd be going to the Maintenance Enforcement Program and that the judge had made an order of costs and he should pay those within 30 days.

When he didn't, with the help of my client we found out where he banked and I arranged for an order of garnishment to be served on his bank. We found out after that he discovered the garnishment order was in effect when he got to the front of his local Safeway store and tried to pay with his debit card, which was declined. He then pulled out his credit card and tried to pay, which was declined, at which point, with the ice cream dripping from his shopping cart, he phoned my client and was made aware that because he hadn't responded there was a consequence.

So it is possible for lawyers to pursue those matters. However, the member from Midland has asked whether it would be possible to bring those functions under the Maintenance Enforcement Program, which is an idea that bears some further explanation.

Another case that I had was for custody, child support, some property issues and, again, there was an order of costs. The father in that case did not have an identifiable source of employment, but he did, as my client pointed out, have what appeared to be a fairly new boat at his girlfriend's house which she noted as she drove down Henderson Highway. So to collect these costs we involved the Sheriff's Office.

Our sheriff's officers do great work. Most of it is quite routine: providing safety to judges and to parties at the courthouse, accompanying prisoners back and forth. So the sheriffs are actually quite enthusiastic when they have a chance to do something a little bit different, and the sheriff's officers were quite happy--quite happy--to go out and winch up the boat and to arrange to have it sold to cover those costs. But, indeed, there was a cost from doing that. Certainly, the father wound up paying the greatest cost because he lost a boat for a matter of a

few hundred dollars in court costs, but that was his choice.

But there are some questions that are raised by the bill, and I hope I can have some conversations with the member from Midland to see if we can turn this good idea into something that would actually be supportable. In this case, and I think the member has already kind of pointed this out, it's very rare that the only issue before a court, especially the first time around when there is a motion brought for interim relief, it's very rare that child support is the only issue.

* (10:20)

It would not be unusual, as in the case I talked about, that somebody has a question about parentage. There's often orders for custody, child support, property. There can be a request for non-contact orders, for sole occupation of the marital home. And when I read the act I'm just not sure if there's an order of costs, does the entire order of costs then become what's enforceable by the Maintenance Enforcement Program or not? And I actually don't have the answer today, and I think if the member from Midland who I had some conversations—we could try to flush that out and focus it.

As well, in a trial there may be cases where the very question of custody is at issue. As a lawyer, I had to deal with cases where one party wanted to leave the province with the children. In one case, my client opposed that. He was successful in the court making an order that the mother could not leave the jurisdiction with the children but he had to pay support. He was successful in getting costs in the main action. The question is, do you then break off a portion of that and say yes, but some—there actually should've been costs in the wife's favour because she was not permitted to go but he had to pay support. I think we need to talk about that.

The exact situation that the member from Midland talked about actually deals with the result of an appeal, and I'm not clear from reading the bill whether a case on appeal would actually be taken in by what the member is saying. So there are some issues that I think we need to think about more closely.

There's also other issues. In Manitoba, of course, we continue to have one of the best legal aid systems for family law in the entire country, and it hasn't been easy; we've done that alone. There's been no assistance from successive federal governments

whatever their stripe. So Manitoba continues to support that program alone even though once upon a time those costs were supported 50 per cent by the federal government. In those cases, it's actually Legal Aid that has the right to collect those costs, yet when there is a maintenance order, the money actually flows directly to the creditor. So I think we need to have some more thoughts about how that could work to make sure that legal aid is fully covered.

As well, some people assign their benefits to Employment and Income Assistance. If they don't have income, EIA is the measure of last resort. In many cases, the support that's paid is actually claimed by EIA in exchange for the benefits that are given. I think we'd need to think more carefully about what we do in that situation when there's an order of costs that's made.

So there are some—there's a good idea that's brought forward, and again I thank the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) for coming forward in good faith, bringing forward a real concern that's been provided by a constituent. I think we can have some more discussions, and I think we can find a way to make this idea work.

I am interested to hear what other members have to say on something that, again, isn't often debated in this Legislature. I'm sure members on both sides will have some really good advice, and I think together we can work to continue to make family law better in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to, first of all, of course, thank my colleague from Midland for bringing forward this idea to debate in the House here this morning.

I often say that some of the best ideas that we have aren't those that are generated here in this House. They often come from talking to constituents in our constituency offices or in Tim Hortons or the various places in our constituency where they tell us about real life experiences and say: This is something that's happened to me. How can we fix this or is there a way to fix this within legislation? Quite often, most often our constituents don't sort of have an understanding of how something can be changed in a legislative framework. They're just coming to us with a problem and are saying: Is there something we can do to fix this? And I think that's the experience that happened with the member for Midland, and I commend him for not just simply leaving it at that but going a step further and bringing the issue here to the Assembly and then going even

another step further and having it drafted into a piece of legislation that could resolve the scenario that his constituent faced, Mr. Speaker.

The Attorney General (Mr. Swan) started off with—I was a little concerned—he started off with a bit of a political flourish there, Mr. Speaker, but he seemed to correct himself in the latter parts of his comments, and I think that that's important because there are obviously times where the debate in this House becomes partisan and there's some times where it's appropriate for it to become partisan. We are all members of political parties, after all, but there are many times when we need to put aside those partisan feelings and those—put down the partisan hats and talk simply as legislators in terms of how do we resolve a problem.

And I think that we often forget that we get a lot of credit from Manitobans when we do that, when we work co-operatively and we work to find solutions. And we have had those opportunities before in this House in bills that I've been fortunate to bring forward or see passed, and other members have brought forward and see passed as well. So I was more encouraged by the latter portion of the Attorney General's comments than I was by the earlier portions of his comments, because it is certainly a problem in terms of costs. My experience is that often when it comes to costs that are assigned by the court, if the other party refuses to pay them, you can go back to a lawyer and ask for a demand letter for those costs to be paid for. But quite often, the party just drops it if they've already sort of won their case; they often don't pursue those costs if they're not significant in nature.

But in this particular case, I think, when you look at family law scenarios, you often have one party who has an economic advantage over another party; there's a disparity in terms of the ability to bring things to court. And, we still, despite programs and policies, we still do have a legal system that, in many ways, is more accessible to those who have funds and who have resources than those who don't have funds and resources. And so, that's, I think, often pronounced in the family law scenario, where there is often an inequality in terms of resources and the ability to fight things out.

Now, when you get into a particularly acrimonious separation or divorce, and many of them are, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, you have often a motivated party that's willing to go through into—and to spend a lot of money to stop another person in—

within that dispute, from getting what, ultimately, the court says that they should be entitled to.

So this is one step, at least. It's never going to, unfortunately, take away all the acrimony that often happens in these scenarios. There are ideas and suggestions that I would love to have discussions with my friend from Minto, in terms of how we can keep a lot of these issues out of court and prevent a lot of these issues from going to court beforehand, so that parties can come to a resolution that ultimately is beneficial for them, beneficial for their children, if they have children within their relationship, and beneficial for the court system so it's not taking up so much time on these sort of issues.

But here's one step that can be taken, I think, to ensure that the issue of costs don't have to come back and be relitigated or have cases where those who—should be getting costs, is simply—drop it because they don't have the wherewithal to go back and try to demand those funds.

I would say to my friend from Minto that there certainly are problems within the maintenance enforcement system, as it currently exists. And while I agree with him that the people who are working within that system do an extraordinary job under difficult circumstances, I would also say to him that often what I hear within the system, is that they're under-resourced in terms of their ability to do a lot of different things, Mr. Speaker, and that's not always human resources—and I hear the member from Minto, I think, already starting to shuffle in his seat—that's not always human resources, it's often a technological ability, whether or not they have the right, sort of, computer system to ensure they can track things.

So, it's not always an issue of human resources; often it's an issue of the ability to work within a system and what they have to work with in that system. So, I would ask the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) to also take that as a caution and to take that as something that's important.

But what's germane to this discussion this morning, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of cost and how can we ensure that we can have those costs assigned under the maintenance enforcement system so somebody doesn't have to go back, it can be part of a garnishment order.

The Attorney General raised some, I think, legitimate points, in terms of whether or not there were different scenarios where it might not be

always applicable or might not work as well. And I think that those discussions can happen between parties, between himself and the member from Midland. I know the member from Midland is an eminently reasonable person and he's quite willing to listen to ideas, and if there was amendments, I'm sure we could come forward with amendments to this bill. We could find a way to have it brought forward into committee and—

An Honourable Member: Writing up a reasoned amendment right now.

Mr. Goertzen:—and—not a reasoned amendment, Mr. Speaker. That's an animal of a completely different nature.

But I certainly do think that we could bring forward reasonable amendments, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the bill actually gets forced. It is a nuance, actually, but that this bill actually can come into force before this session rises, whenever that date might be.

* (10:30)

And I know that the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) has already offered that. He's willing to sit down with the Attorney General, and if there are wrinkles that need to be ironed out, that I think that those wrinkles could be ironed out, Mr. Speaker, and then all of us can be satisfied that we've done what's right for Manitobans, and that we could right a wrong, as it were.

So I know there are other speakers who want to that comment on this bill. I'm encouraged by the latter comments by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), the Attorney General. I think that there's a spirit of willingness to have this bill, at least in its principle, move forward, and if there are certain amendments that need to be made, I gather from the Attorney General's comments he's willing to sit down and have those discussions with the member for Midland. So we'll hold him to that, and they can determine when those discussions will happen. I'm sure they'll happen relatively quickly, and we look forward, then, to this bill coming back to the Legislature, if it can't pass in its current form, in a form that's near the current form, Mr. Speaker, in the near future, and it can pass on to committee and be made into law before the session ends. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): I would like to begin by again acknowledging the fact that the member for Midland has brought forward a piece of

legislation that, again, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) has said, is not something that we get the opportunity to discuss and debate in this Chamber very often.

And I appreciate the fact that he has, you know, brought in something that relates to casework and he's seeing the value of the Maintenance Enforcement Program. And like him and so many others in this Chamber, I've had experience with casework that relates to marital breakdown, and, again, probably like many in this Chamber, have had the unfortunate circumstance of having either direct first-hand or family-based experience on marital breakdown and the stresses and the costs and just the general grief that that can bring into people's lives—even when they do start off thinking that they can go through this in the most amicable way and it moves from amicable to acrimonious, you know, far too quickly and far too intensely and, again, the disruption that that brings to people's lives. So, again, to be able to look at this issue and to be able to address the impact and try to bring forth changes is something that I think we can all strive to. And again, I think it's a great thing for us to be able to discuss this today.

Again, one of those things with divorce—or whether it's, again, in the case of some other kind of relationship breakdown or where there might not be an established relationship, but, again, the welfare of a child is at stake. Again, the conflict and the cost level are always something that just seem to be too high for so many people. And that really—again, how do we bring peace, how do we bring some resolution and how do we create a framework by which people are better empowered to make sure that everything is looked after properly? That—you know, again, I always think of the phrase that is top of mind for those that work in this line, be it the judges, be it the folks at Maintenance Enforcement, what's in the best interests especially of the child if there is a child involved.

And so, as someone that has had both direct first-hand and casework experience with Maintenance Enforcement, I have to say I really appreciate the work that those folks do. And I do not envy them the task that they have, because, as the Minister of Justice said, these are not the folks that people come to them and, you know, give them Christmas cards or give them presents and thanks for a job well done. It tends to be thankless work where they're dealing with a lot of people in really intense, stressed-out circumstances, and they've got to do the best they

can and manage those situations the best they can under, you know, dealing with people that are, again, like I said, in—often in—high conflict or at least very high-stress situations. So I do appreciate the fact that he recognizes the valuable role that Maintenance Enforcement plays—and whether that's a role that we see embodied in either the human resources and the people involved or the infrastructure that's there that facilitates those that work in Maintenance Enforcement to do their job better.

I do find it ironic, and maybe this is where he needs to—there needs to be some conversation on that side of the Chamber between the leader, the member from Midland and the member from Steinbach, because the member from Steinbach just made a comment about how there's reference to them being under-resourced or that the comment that they hear is about being under-resourced. Well, if they're under-resourced, I'm not quite sure what the kind of budget cuts that the Leader of the Opposition would have put forth what that would have done to resources whether they are human resources or whether they are technological resources.

So, again, it's one of those things where there's a little bit of an irony. You can't sit there and talk about how they're under-resourced and then propose across-the-board cuts that would clearly impact the ability to access resources to keep doing the job that they're doing. And this is, again, the kind of thing that would require that, you know, solid resourcing, good technological foundation, as well as strong human resources, again, to do what is often a thankless job.

I do believe that, again, it's a good idea that has been brought forward, but much like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) said, it's a nascent idea; it's got some really good points to it, but I have to say that I share the Minister of Justice's concern about the fact that there are some implications or some things that are just not quite clear.

Whether, again, the circumstances of appeal—that issue needs to be clarified as to what role that would have, where that would fit in to how this legislation is worded, what exactly would it encompass in the recuperation of costs and, again, the very important role that EIA and Legal Aid often play in some people's lives regarding these kinds of cases. So, again, there is the seeds of an idea here, it just needs to be flushed out and discussed a little bit more.

I think the other thing that needs to be looked at, too, is the fact that maintenance enforcement,

because we are in ever-evolving world, is something that does need to, again, evolve along with it. And that's one thing that I have to say has been done very well.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program, again, as we know, is—its primary goal is to enforce the child's rights for financial support. And it also, again, enforces spousal support obligations and extraordinary expenses as ordered by the court or agreed to by the parties through a formalized agreement.

And, again, that agreed to in a formalized agreement sounds like it might have been a—may have been a starting point for the case that the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) describes, but it sounds like there's some other layers there that, again, complicate the understanding of the situation because it almost sounds like the legislation as purposed might not, in fact, address or clearly address the needs of the casework example that it's founded on.

And, again, Maintenance Enforcement does its job and, again, makes lives so much easier for so many Manitobans because it collects and directly disburses over \$50 million to so many Manitoba families.

And so we've made changes over the years, everything from, in 2012, making changes to the program that allows for more timely transfer of funds. It better allows it to track those who fail to pay their support and allows them to go—allows Maintenance Enforcement to go after them and garnish wages.

It's also done a lot of work in terms of creating specialized compliance unit to target wilful debtors. And we've also done things that have, again, earlier in 2004 and 2007, that have helped with interjurisdictional collection of support payments for either children or spouses.

And so, again, it's an evolving process. I think one of the things that it represents, too, is the fact that maintenance enforcement isn't just one thing—we also have to remember it fits into a larger context related to family law. And, again, it's about encompassing all those things that need to be addressed.

And I have to say that I am personally quite proud of the changes that were made that—in 2002, having to do with the common-law property and related amendments act, because it made a number of

changes to the law that extend benefits of family law to same-sex couples and extended the property right and obligations of couples to their common-law partners, meaning that in the case of the breakdown of the relationship or the death of the one partners, there is a share of the property. And the fact that this extended to same-sex couples is huge.

We also, in 2002, amended 56 Manitoba statutes to legally recognize the obligation and rights for parents in same-sex, common-law relationships by allowing joint adoptions, and, in 2001, extended protection of pension and death benefits to same-sex couples in common-law relationships.

So, again, these just represent part of that larger package and, again, the kinds of things that are being suggested by the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) do represent the desire to go forward. I appreciate that—I just think we need to work on some things. And, again, the kinds of discussions that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) suggests, I think, would be very much in order.

Again, the other thing that we have to realize is that a lot of times when you have financial conflict like this, it often comes with other kinds of conflict in place. And, again, while garnishing wages and being able to ensure support is one thing, sometimes it's also about what is the structure that we have in place to secure people's safety.

* (10:40)

Because one of the things that happens is often with marital breakdown comes domestic violence, and it's one of those things where there's part of me—I'm so terribly proud of the fact that we are a leader in addressing domestic violence, and yet, at the same time, it's one of those things where I really wish we could address this issue and do so much preventative work that maybe we made that issue one of the past, that we literally put ourselves out of work in that field. Because what we've done now is we have a five-year domestic violence strategy focused on three priorities which supports victims and families, interventions where people with abusive behaviour and, of course, prevention, awareness and training. And those kinds of investments, again, plus the work that is being done with Maintenance Enforcement, we are, again—now that the Maintenance Enforcement ensures that there's a third party that collects and distributes the money, brings down conflict levels, there doesn't have to be interpersonal interaction to, you know, make sure that someone receives their support.

I'm also very proud to have worked on Bill 238. So to the member of Midland, thank you for bringing this forward, but I think we do need to do more work to make sure that we're doing the best for families.

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

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to stand today and put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 207, which I thank the member, my colleague from Midland, for doing the initiating and bringing his constituents' concerns into the House, and as the member from Steinbach mentioned, also taking it those extra steps forward to actually see that something can actually get done and move forward, Mr. Speaker.

As we all know, the family law system is very complex and difficult to navigate. Emotional and financial toll on the families are quite heavy and, I think, as the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) had mentioned as well, we all have some sort of connection to either somebody relatively close or at least know of somebody who has gone through a divorce. And I think the—even though no divorce is easy, I think it's even more hard on those families that have kids, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 207 will help lessen the unnecessary emotional hardships and ensure that the money is distributed justly between the parties. Sat here and listened to the—to some of the members from the—from this side and the government side share their stories. And I appreciate, you know, the Attorney General, again, after getting through some of the partisan rhetoric right off the bat, he did get to some—did share some of his case stories, and so that there was some relevance to what he was saying to the bill brought today by the member from Midland. I can't say the same exactly for the member from Kirkfield Park who seemed to want to give a history lesson on maintenance enforcement.

So just sort of to continue on this bill that the member from Midland brought forward today, Maintenance Enforcement Program currently facilitates the child and spousal support payments. They keep a record of payments made and take legal action such as garnishment if payments are not made. The program means that the person owed money from his or her former partner can avoid, again, the emotional turmoil of constantly trying to collect the money themselves, the financial uncertainty of not

knowing if the money is coming and the complicated court process of trying to garnish unpaid money.

I do appreciate, again, the Attorney General mentioning and acknowledging that the bill is a good idea. Unfortunately, he's making comments that he's unsure and confused about the specific appeal process.

As I've seen, Mr. Speaker, over the past year and a half since I've been fortunate enough to be the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, is that some of our good ideas on this side of the House are then taken and tweaked somewhat, and the government does decide to bring in their own bill under a little bit of a different name. So it actually encourages me to some degree that the Attorney General is talking quite favourably of this bill, but as he said, it's going to need some tweaks and some further questioning.

So the member from Midland who did a lot of the groundwork and the footwork, Mr. Speaker, basically is no doubt going to be handing this one over to the Attorney General, whether it's later on this session or in the fall to be brought up as far as his own bill.

Right presently, Mr. Speaker, there is quite the gap in the system. Over the course of a divorce or other family law proceedings, a judge may order that one party must pay the other's legal costs. The party owed money is left to collect that money on their own, which can be difficult and even practically impossible if the other person refused to pay.

The exact items the Maintenance Enforcement Program aims to solve for support payments are again experienced by the families when it comes to legal costs. Bill 207 moves judge-ordered legal costs into the Maintenance Enforcement Program. This means that the costs would be collected in the same way as maintenance orders are already collected.

Another thing that I—a point that I heard from the member from Midland, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that when we do—when there is a ruling in a divorce case, sometimes the party who did not get ruled in favour of feels that need to seek revenge in some sort of way, and in some cases, they decide to hurt the other person—not necessarily—absolutely not physically, but definitely emotionally—and hits them right in the pocketbook, and they try to stretch the proceedings out, take them to court, and in the long run, what ends up happening is in regards to families where kids are involved, it ends up hurting the kids more so.

I think the—under Bill 207, with the six-month, I guess, cooling-down period, so that they—so that the judge can then order it to go onto Maintenance Enforcement is a great idea because that also would protect both parties, the one that was ruled in favour of and the party that was ruled against, so that the lawyers might not—or might try to encourage the parties to settle up and to move on, as opposed to dragging it out in the courts where the party that's maybe trying to get some revenge or, in a position of more income, try to drag it out and force the other party into, sort of, submission, Mr. Speaker. At least, that might deter that party if he or she knew that they would end up having to incur all of the court costs if they did proceed without a substantial evidence or case to go forward into court.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta and Ontario already has—they have similar provisions for allowing the legal costs to be included in their equivalent maintenance enforcement programs.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the government of the day support this bill and move forward, and I encourage them to do so because there are many families out there that could definitely use this. The money in the kids' piggy banks would far better serve them in the future than in the pockets of lawyers, and it's just—I again commend the member from Midland for bringing this forward and again look forward to listening to the government put some more words on the record. Hopefully, they'll let this bill move forward. I encourage them to be a leader in this process in the country of—this wonderful country, Canada—as opposed to being that No. 10 or No. 9. So with that, I thank you.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to start by thanking the member from Midland. I haven't been able to speak to very many things yet, having not been here that long, and it is always a—good to have an opportunity to do that—to speak on something that's important and that really matters. So I really do thank you for bringing it up, and I hope that it can be worked out.

* (10:50)

I know that all of us, as the member from—well, all of the members were saying on both sides of the House, we've all dealt, Mr. Speaker, with many issues around maintenance enforcement and the difficulty in families. And I know, myself, I've been amazed at the creativity and ability for people to find ways out of taking responsibility for their children. It has, over the years, astonished me at the way people

have gone about doing that. And I know, back in the '90s, it was particularly difficult to collect from your partner on that, and I had a friend who went through just incredible difficulty, where he would do everything from, you know, whatever, quitting his job, leaving the country, moving his business into the name of other people, so that he didn't have any amount of money that could go to the kids and, quite honestly, I just find it heartbreaking that that's what happens. I understand, certainly, relationships breaking up, but one would like to think that, you know, the kids would be paramount in what's going on and that that is who would be first in these situations. But, sadly, I think all of us in this job have learned that that is certainly not the case.

And I am proud, as the member from Kirkfield Park is, of some of the changes we have been able to make so far. It doesn't mean that we don't want to make more and that we can't improve it, as the member of Midland has brought up here, but a lot of significant changes have occurred over our mandate that have made this a little bit—a little bit easier, and maybe taken a little bit out of the pockets of some of our legal profession. I don't know.

In 2012, I know we made changes to the Maintenance Enforcement Program, allowing for more timely transfers of funds to those receiving support, which is just key to being able to, you know, provide for your children and pay the bills that you're needed, and it's very difficult to be a good parent when what you're worrying about all the time is how you're going to put food on the table and how you're going to pay your bills, Mr. Speaker. And so this case that the member from Midland brought up really speaks to that, that constant stress and worry that—I believe it was Susan—is no doubt going through, trying to pay those legal bills. So, certainly, I know that we want to be doing everything that we can to be helping in that area.

And the member from Kirkfield Park spoke a little bit about domestic violence and, again, Mr. Speaker, it's an area where we just need to keep working. We need to do more. Hopefully, we can see maybe people bringing legislation around issues there that they have thought of that can improve that world because, again, it's a devastating way for people to live and I know we've passed a number of pieces of legislation around that as well, and we have a major program working on the domestic violence side right now, and one of the key things to that, in addition to legislation, of course, is seeing men stand up and take issue with domestic violence and really

be willing to do that. We know that, yes, it can be either gender involved in domestic violence, but all the stats do point to, of course, it being much more serious—the domestic violence created by the male partner, and I think that we, in this House, all have a responsibility to speak up and stand up for that as well.

And I know in our strategy, we've put in over a million dollars in capital improvements to the shelters, and being able to get to those shelters and have somewhere safe to go this summer, where you can take your children, when you make that move, is just so important. We know that women are more likely to be killed by their partner once they've left. So the shelters are absolutely essential, and working with the Aboriginal communities on specific strategies, as well, Mr. Speaker, to address domestic violence is also key. So I know there's a—just a number of areas there that we want to keep going and legislation that might come forward on that.

I know one of the members was mentioning that sometimes their legislation gets tweaked. I don't know if that happened. I would think it would be a compliment, but not something bad, because what you want is the legislation, of course, coming forward, right? You want that legislation to get in, so wouldn't it be a good thing? I would think that would be a good thing, because it would then be in law which is what your goal is, of course.

And I guess I would just mention that I know there was complaints about history lessons, but I think one of the history lessons might be in the passing of bills and which government has passed more of the other side's bills, I guess, over the years, and I think we might win on that. I haven't been here, again, that long, so I don't have the stats on that. *[interjection]* Pardon?

An Honourable Member: You haven't been blinded by partisanship yet.

Ms. Wight: I have not been blinded by partisanship just yet—that's right.

So in any case, the legislation getting into law is what matters, I think, is my point. Whether it's—what side it is shouldn't really be the issue. It getting there is what we should care about.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have also made a number of changes to the law to extend the benefits of family law to same-sex couples, and that has just made a tremendous difference. We passed the common-law property and related amendments act in 2002, which

extended property rights and obligations of couples in their common-law—to their common-law partners. So, before that we begin to pass some of this legislation, there was just—it was just ignored, as if those partnerships didn't exist. So a breakdown in the relationship or the death of one of the partners was—is now, you know, covered, they're able to share property in the same way as married couples. And we extended the common-law property rights to same-sex couples, as well.

And Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, again, I'm proud to say, was one of the first jurisdictions in the country to do so. And in 2002, we amended 56 statutes to legally recognize the obligation and rights for parents in same-sex, common-law relationships by allowing joint adoptions. So, we have done a lot of work, I guess, is my point, in these areas of family law and domestic violence and all of those areas, making many improvements over the years. And I think all of us here know how important it is to continue to do that.

So I know that I'm really hoping that we can work together on this with the member from Midland and our member from Minto, particularly, and make this an even better piece of legislation than it started at. And thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to be able to speak today on Bill 207 and I thank the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) for bringing it forward. And as we've heard today, there's great encouragement to work together with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) on to—on this bill; there's some great points that he brings up on it.

I wanted to mention also that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) pointed out that, you know, maintenance enforcement, he feels that it needs some computer systems and that costs money. And we also have to look at the greatest resource to our system on maintenance enforcement is the human resources aspect of it. Those people are such a fantastic part of our system. And so I'm hoping that, you know, as the member for Steinbach so eloquently put it, that we should put apart—put aside our partisanship and work together. So I'm hoping that maybe this discussion has made the opposition realize that the PST increase is actually something that's necessary and that we should work together to make things move along for the province.

You know, they seem to have want to—they're saying that we need things like resources for computers and \$160 million for bridges on their side,

so I think that this—maybe this discussion has made them realize that it's time to move on. I mean, a hiring chill that they're suggesting would definitely impact maintenance enforcement, and the greatest asset we have is the human resources that those people provide and the nice people on the other end of the phone when our—when people are looking for, you know, some support—it's those people that come forward and it's got to be a really tough job. So, I'm hoping that this makes the other side realize we are in need of this money to continue moving the province and moving Manitobans forward.

I think that there's also another point brought up by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). He said that, you know, we often take their bills and look at them—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. Norbert will have eight minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: And prior to calling the resolution under consideration this morning, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have Emily Ternette and guests. On behalf of all honourable members, we would like to welcome you here this morning.

Mr. Speaker: So it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution under consideration this morning is the one sponsored by the honourable member for Wolseley titled "Nick Ternette".

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 7—Nick Ternette

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I move, seconded by the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview, that,

WHEREAS Nick Ternette was a political activist, journalist and volunteer widely known throughout Manitoba for dedicating over 40 years to being an advocate for social justice, participatory democracy and human rights; and

WHEREAS Nick Ternette spoke strongly for the people of Manitoba by making countless

presentations at committee meetings both at the Legislature and at city hall; and

WHEREAS during his lifetime he was also a candidate for office in 20 municipal and provincial elections; and

WHEREAS even after facing a series of health problems, including cancer, major surgery and five operations resulting in the amputation of his legs, he continued to fight for issues important to all people in this province, ranging from accessibility to poverty to environmental protection.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge and celebrate the tremendous contributions that Nick Ternette made to Manitoba by passionately and tenaciously advocating for many diverse communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba offer our deepest condolences to his loving wife, Emily, daughter, Tegan, and six grandchildren, as well as to all the loved ones of this strong, dedicated and outspoken political advocate: Nick Ternette.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum),

WHEREAS Nick Ternette was—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Altemeyer: It is indeed a pleasure to have a chance to bring this motion forward and to yet again celebrate quite a remarkable member that we lost recently, a remarkable member of our society. Many of us on this side of the House, and perhaps on the other side of the House as well, knew Nick. Certainly, it was difficult not to know of him and his legacy, and it really is that. It is quite a remarkable one.

It is a daunting task, I believe, to actually try to encapsulate anyone's life in a 10-minute speech. I don't think it's possible; certainly, I'm not up to that task when it comes to all that Nick did, but I'm certainly pleased to offer a few thoughts and a few stories from my own experiences with him and with Emily. And I'm really pleased today, Mr. Speaker, that in your gallery here in the Chamber his loving wife, Emily Ternette, is here with us along with good friends of their family. Jennifer Wiens [*phonetic*]

and Gerry Agastoni [*phonetic*] are here, and really lovely of them to give time to come down and hear what we have to say.

A lot of folks would've, you know, as I mentioned, would've heard of Nick. You might not have known much of his background or how he came to be in this part of the world. He was actually born at an historical moment. He was born in Germany in 1945 just at war's end, and his family came to Canada when he was 10 years old in the mid-1950s. He grew up in Winnipeg's West End, a part of which, I'm very proud, is included in the Wolseley constituency today, and he attended Daniel McIntyre Collegiate and then went straight on to attend the University of Winnipeg where he was none other than the assistant editor of The Uniter student newspaper, still proudly publishing today.

This was actually just the start of a long and quite wonderful relationship that Nick had with the University of Winnipeg. In 1967, he received his B.A. in sociology from the university, and he continued as a visiting lecturer in the faculties of sociology and education. And he was indeed a strong proponent of the value of oral history, and he actually recorded many of his personal recollections using this forum about his time at the university. He, of course, contributed numerous times as a journalist, and in 2010 he was named as the University of Winnipeg's distinguished alumni. The most recent and—another very recent and wonderful chapter of this great relationship that Nick and Emily had with the university is after Nick's major surgery and significant battles with illness. As luck would have it, the affordable housing, McFeetors Hall, that our government had helped to build ended up being their new home, and I had the pleasure of visiting them once when I was out canvassing, talking to students and people in the affordable housing units there right on the campus. And it's just such a wonderful home that they had made of it, and it was really a great move by the university to make sure that this distinguished alumni in a time of need was able to find a place to stay and continue to make his remarkable contributions to our society.

His political life is of course very well known. What's perhaps a little less known, and Emily was kind enough to remind me of this feature of Nick just now when we were chatting, Nick was an exceptional listener. It's something that I'm not nearly as good at, I freely admit. I don't know that many of us are good at that in this Chamber any more. But Nick just had this quiet confidence that,

you know, he had absolutely no problem with listening to many diverse opinions be they on the right wing or the left wing or somewhere in the middle or somewhere on a completely different plane. You know, he just—he knew what he stood for and he knew what his perspective was, but he was very, very good at giving other people the opportunity to have their say and then, of course, he would poke numerous holes in their arguments, as only Nick could do. And it just really spoke to the intelligence of the man and the quiet confidence that he had. He knew what he stood for, he knew what he wanted the world to be, and it was a very, very good lesson that he inadvertently taught many of us. I don't know how many of us in this room have run for political office 20 times. Nick ran for mayor no less than five times and always put in a very spirited effort. He finished third once, I think, in the city of Winnipeg mayoral race. And I'm not sure—someone would have to go through his archives to pull out just how many presentations he made at committee, but it should be the gold standard in our province. I don't know that anyone is going to beat that record, whatever it may be, any time real soon.

His engagement in the community as well is I think underappreciated, and Nick was involved in so many different organizations. And, you know, he continued to be a prolific writer and commentator. He would send out, you know, The Ternette Report that I would receive by email on a regular basis. But throughout his life just some of the other groups he was involved with—he was a community development worker with the neighbourhood service centre, he served as the executive director of the Winnipeg council of Self Help Inc., he was a volunteer with the Company of Young Canadians, associate editor for Canadian Dimension magazine, which also recently celebrated a remarkable 50-year anniversary not long ago.

He really was just an incredibly vibrant presence no matter what forum you ended up meeting him at. I certainly enjoyed his leadership at numerous peace marches. The megaphone was never very far away, and, indeed, it played a prominent, and I think very appropriate, role at the celebration of his life that our community got to have at the newly refurbished West End Cultural Centre. It was—I was thrilled to see the room was just absolutely packed and—on April the 7th. The centre was just filled with, you know, family, friends and colleagues, community members who'd known him for many, many years and, you know, the musical guests. And this was,

you know, in true Nick form; this was Nick's idea. This is how—this is what he wanted to happen so that his passing would be, you know, something that people could come together and celebrate his life and learn more about what he had stood for and what he had fought for and have a chance to continue to build that progressive movement for a better world.

* (11:10)

I mean, just some of the performers that very kindly donated their time: a long-time friend, Fred Penner; the Winnipeg Labour Choir; and several local folk musicians, Harry Havey and Karen Dana among them. He was just so principled in all that he did, and Emily, of course, constantly playing a—perhaps a less well-known, less public but extraordinarily important role, you know, with everything from research to speech writing and attending events, and is in no small way an incredible advocate for self—herself. I in no way want to be giving a speech on Emily Ternette any time soon, because her role as a incredible advocate for the disability community is well regarded and we certainly need more progressive voices these days rather than fewer.

I should mention—I mentioned his archives recently. Another good friend of mine and resident of Wolseley, the Reverend Glenn Morrison [*phonetic*], was actually working with Nick to prepare his autobiography, and that book will be coming out later this year, I understand. I think you might understand the title, it's called Rebel without a Pause, and that will be one hundred per cent Nick Ternette, I am sure.

And I think it's only appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that I close with my final minute here reading from one of the songs that was sung at Nick's celebration recently, from Eugène Pottier in 1871, The Internationale: Arise, ye prisoners of starvation / Arise, ye wretched of the earth / For justice thunders condemnation / A better world's in birth / No more tradition's chains shall bind us / Arise, ye slaves no more in thrall / The earth will rise on new foundations / We have been naught, we shall be all / 'Tis the final conflict, let each stand in their place / The international working class shall be the human race.

Thank you, Nick. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I am pleased to rise today in the House to speak to the resolution recognizing Mr. Nick Ternette and the

deeply rooted commitment he demonstrated for his community, province and country. I'd like to recognize his wife Emily in the gallery and share my condolences on behalf of the Riding Mountain constituency and the members from the Conservative caucus.

Mr. Ternette was someone who often fought for those who could not fight for themselves. Nick was tireless in his pursuit of policies that enhance the lives of all Manitobans and I am pleased to see that this is being recognized in the House today. Our society is better for the work of Mr. Ternette. His death is a loss for all Manitobans, and we recognize, forever grateful—and we remain forever grateful for Mr. Ternette's work as a community organizer and activist.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be fitting to spend some time reflecting on Nick's life and put on the record some of the causes he worked tirelessly to support. Nick was born in West Berlin in 1945 and arrived in Winnipeg at 10 years of age. He was actively involved in his community from the beginning of his time in Manitoba, coaching football and serving as an altar boy in the Russian Orthodox Church. Nick was active as a community organizer, an advocate for more than 40 years and was the driving force behind a number of initiatives that supported communities and individuals, often of vulnerable circumstance.

A few of the causes Nick advocated tirelessly for are light-rail transit, support for people on Employment and Income Assistance, support for victims of violence. Nick became known for using every tool at his disposal to advocate for causes he supported. Nick ran for public office more than 20 times and presented to Winnipeg City Council more than any other citizen. Nick's activism spread beyond the realm of the political as he founded and chaired the editorial board of *The Better Times*, a newspaper by and for the clients of Winnipeg Harvest. Mr. Speaker, Nick was also passionate about arts and culture. He loved ballet, theatre and was a lifelong fan of the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Mr. Speaker, Nick's work as a social and community activist was nothing short of remarkable. The sad reality is that despite Nick's tireless efforts to support the working poor in Manitoba, the government of Manitoba's ignored Nick's pleas to do better. Rent costs continue to rise in the province and that means low-income Manitobans and those on fixed incomes have to choose between quality

housing and other priorities such as nutritious foods and even prescribed medicines.

Mr. Speaker, I know Nick would agree with me when I say that societies are judged by how they treat their most vulnerable citizens. The way that this government treats vulnerable Manitobans and those in need is shameful. More and more Manitobans are using food banks because of the inability to provide basic necessities for their families. Manitobans are earning lower and lower wages, making it tougher to get by, let alone have the time to contribute to the social fabric of our society by volunteering and advocating such as Nick Ternette did.

Mr. Speaky—Mr. Speaker, our party presented a proposal to increase the basic personal exemption, which will put more money in the pockets of Manitobans and make a real difference for Manitoba families. On the subject of employment and income assistance, an area that I know was near and dear to Nick Ternette's progressive heart, Progressive Conservatives have committed to raising the rent allowance portion of the EIA to 75 per cent of medium market rental rates.

Mr. Speaker, for a government's claim to be on the side of the poor, it is shameful. The rental allowance has been flat for the past 13 years, while the rental market in Manitoba has provided for ever-increasing costs. This government has forced people on social assistance to spend all of their money on rent, necessities—necessitating the use of food banks, and children and families have to—that have to go without food and other critical necessities that no Manitoban should go without.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps if the government spent a few less dollars on advertising and a few more on the priorities that matter to Manitobans and to Mr. Ternette, we might actually be able to move forward to a healthier and stronger Manitoba, where everyone has equal chance at success. Much of Nick Ternette's work was focused on ensuring that the very thing that every Manitoban, rich or poor, had an equal opportunity to success and for this he should be recognized.

So, on behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, I offer condolences to Nick's family, his wife, Emily, and friends and offer very heartfelt thanks and recognition for all that Nick contributed to our province. Thank you.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, it's my honour

to rise today to put a few words on the record about the legacy of Nick Ternette, and when I was thinking about what I wanted to say today, I think what I wanted to focus on is how important it is to have activists and advocates in our society and in our lives, like Nick, because they remind us of the value of idealism and the reality that every significant change in the world started with one or two or a few people who came together to talk about ideas that seemed impossible, to challenge the way things are and to not be satisfied with the status quo.

And recently I was driving and I passed the green field that's being built at Gordon Bell school, and I thought to myself that that project really embodies and encapsulates the spirit of Nick Ternette because it was a project that lots of people said would be impossible, would be physically impossible, couldn't fit in the area. You had, you know, very powerful interests trying to claim that space for their own and a small group of high school students, with help from some of their local representatives and activists like Nick, turned that—turned what many said was an impossible dream into a reality.

I also want to speak for a moment on Nick's commitment to participate in electoral politics. I think often today, in activist circles, getting engaged in the electoral process is something that isn't thought about as a key part of working for change, but Nick, as we heard, ran in some 20 different elections.

Now, I know a little bit about being a long-shot candidate. My first election was running for the NDP in 1997 in Brandon-Souris, where I came fourth, proudly but fourth. And I took that opportunity, knowing that likely I was not going to be the successful MP at the end of the day, but it would give me an opportunity to talk about issues that I thought were important and that I knew would go unaddressed in that campaign, issues like poverty and homelessness that were occurring in Brandon, and issues like some of the punitive policies that we were seeing in those days from the provincial government towards poor people.

*(11:20)

And so I think when you embark on any election campaign and you look at who's running, the reality is that every election campaign, most candidates will lose. Most of the people who put their names forward work hard on a campaign, recruit their friends and family and loved ones and many people

who may have never thought that they would be engaged in electoral politics—most of those people don't end up getting elected. But they put their names forward because they believe passionately in the issues that they want to talk about, that they want to hear about. And they believe that they are there representing important voices. And Nick was a good example of that.

As we've heard, of course, in the last stage of his life, Nick encountered disability in a very personal way, and he renewed his activism on issues such as accessibility. Now, he wasn't new to these issues; he had had his consciousness raised by his wife, Emily, who is a powerful advocate in her own right, both within the community of people with disabilities and in the women's community.

As we heard from the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), Emily and Nick at—recently moved to McFeetors Hall. I know, talking to Emily before that move, how heartbreaking it was to leave the house that they'd shared together but how much they were both looking forward to this new adventure. And I often thought of them as the first ever activists-in-residence at a university. And I know that living there in the residence with students—I know that they are responsible for inspiring a whole new generation of activists, people who, like Nick, will dedicate some part of their lives to fighting for change.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to be elected and engage in politics, I think, realize quickly the truth of the saying that politics is the art of the possible. We compromise, we strategize, we try to move forward to make our communities more fair, more just. And sometimes we feel like we measure that movement in years and decades. And most of the time, the things that we hope to accomplish take a lot longer than we hoped and don't always look exactly like what we set out to do.

And so those of us who are engaged in electoral politics, those of us who are fortunate enough to be elected to represent Manitobans, we need the Nick Ternettes of the world. We need activists who push us to go farther and faster. We need advocates who stand on principle, who remind us of the idealism that probably brought all of us to seek elected office—the belief that you can change the world. And we need fighters who never give up, who face challenges, personal and political, and refuse to accept being told no, or that something is impossible.

In preparing to speak today, I thought a little bit about, you know, how would Nick react to this

tribute? How would he react to knowing that we were spending an hour of our time today giving honour and tribute to his life? And I hope he would be honoured. I hope he would accept this in the spirit in which it's given. But I also know that he would take the opportunity to tell us to get back to work, to tell us to get back to work to improve the lives of the most vulnerable Manitobans.

And so I, too, want to end my words with song lyrics. This is from a song, I think, that was written during the Spanish Civil War. And I know Nick was a pacifist, so I want to say I think these words are as applicable to the fight for social justice as any other fight. And these are from a song written by Lewis Allan: To you, beloved comrade, we make this solemn vow. / The fight will go on—the fight will go on. / Sleep well, beloved comrade, our work will just begin. / The fight will go on 'til we win—until we win.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, what an honour it is to just say a few words. I know there are other members who wish to speak as well, and I want to give opportunity for all members who want to speak on this resolution paying tribute to Nick Ternette and recognize his wife, Emily, as well, for being here along with her friends, and thank her for being part of today and allowing us to honour Mr. Ternette.

This is a Chamber that in many ways is about differences. We have differences as political parties. Sometimes we have differences in philosophies as individuals, but, ultimately, I think there is something that unites us and that's our desire—all of us when we run for election—to make a difference, whether that's in our community or whether that's in our province overall. That's a unifying force, I think, for those who run for election.

Now, Mr. Ternette, it's been already said that he ran 20 times, and I suspect that he didn't in those 20 times always believe that he was going to win, perhaps just like the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) 'ranning' in Brandon-Souris didn't believe she was going to win at that time. But I think that Mr. Ternette always ran with the motivation of saying that we're going to put forward ideas, ideas that maybe weren't always debated in elections, that always didn't get the proper form that they should have been—that they should have had. And so in many ways that's a sacrifice, when you put your name on a ballot and you put forward some time and some money to go out there knowing that the outcome might not be successful for you. But he

had—I think he had a longer range outcome about how do we get some of these ideas into the public forum and into the debate, and that's a very noble thing for somebody to do that not just once, but to do it 20 times, Mr. Speaker. That's something that is something of a record I'm sure, but that's also a legacy that Mr. Ternette leaves for us.

We here as legislators and as MLAs often get hung up in talking about how do we get people to vote, because we bemoan the fact that there is less and less people voting. Well, we can look to Mr. Ternette—is an example to go well beyond that. It's not just about voting, but then how do you participate in the democratic process long after an election? Because there are many ways that you can have an influence, as Mr. Ternette showed without being elected. You don't have to be a member of city council or a member of this Legislature or a Member of Parliament in Ottawa to make a difference in your community and to have ideas brought forward into the public forum, and I think Nick showed that.

As a student of politics when I was the University of Manitoba taking civic politics, we—our professor had us meet Mr. Ternette. I was a little bit younger then at that time, and I was influenced by the fact that he had such passion for getting involved in a lot of issues. I might not of agreed with everything in terms of a political philosophy, but I was certainly impressed by the fact that he was so dedicated to the ideas that he had and that he was willing to sacrifice time and—his own time to ensure that he could get those ideas to the forefront.

No doubt, in the last years of his life things were more difficult in terms of the physical disability that he had, but it seemed that it didn't really slow down his heart and his passion for ensuring that these ideas were brought forward. In fact, maybe it even accelerated it, Mr. Speaker, as you saw, the importance of ensuring that his ideas for a social justice were brought forward into the public forum, into the Manitoba forum, and that those ideas got the airing and the debate that they had. I'm sure that in many ways, and probably in ways that he didn't know and in ways that Emily might not know or that we might not be able to quantify, he was able to shape debates. Sometimes it may not have been in overturning certain decisions, but maybe nudging them in different directions, and all those individual nudges often add up to a huge difference over time.

So I hope that his wife, Emily, and those who were good friends with Nick know that his life made

a difference, that he had an impact within Manitoba and that all of us, regardless of the political stripes or the different ideas that we might have here in the Legislature, all of us respected that. Because, ultimately, all of us see the value in people being involved in a democratic system whether they are elected or not, whether they come to committee at city hall, in the Legislature, whether they bring forward petitions, whether they're going from community hall to community hall to have ideas brought forward, those are very, very valuable things.

And so it's a great opportunity on behalf of our party as the government House leader for the Manitoba Progressive Conservatives to say thank you to Emily, to say thank you to Nick for the difference that he made in Manitoba and showing us that democracy is important, that you can make a difference regardless of the position that you're in in life and for being an example for all of us to learn from.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise today to speak a little bit about Nick Ternette, and I'm—give my deepest condolences to the family and his wife, Emily, truly a loss to our community and society and political activism in this province.

Nick was never afraid to take on an issue and speak his mind. I mean, he ran 20 times and five times for mayor. He was actually my inspiration when I ran in Winnipeg South for my party federally. I decided to take on a task that was—it was a difficult riding for the federal party in there—and you know what? I looked at what he had done and thought, you know—you know what? I needed to give people that option to vote for my party in that area and to put forward my party's ideas and my ideas into the political realm of Winnipeg South.

* (11:30)

So long before I was involved in politics, I used to watch Nick on the news and all of his activism and all that stuff, and I thought, boy, like this guy is really out there and really active in his community. And then years later when I did get involved I got the chance to meet him at—many times at rallies and at peace marches, and it was such an honour when I met him because of all of us his activism and me watching him for years. I remember being awestruck meeting him.

And the last time I actually got to march with him on the Take Back the Night march last year. His wife, Emily, and him were—we took the march out from the University of Winnipeg and around, and it turned out that about halfway through his march, the battery on his chair died. So as we were chatting, a police officer and myself were walking with him, and the officer and I took turns pushing him down Portage Avenue as we got to chat, so it was just such an honour to be with him and to talk to him.

And I know that he was—our policies that we have as a government, I know that he would think great—he thought great things of them. I mean, he always pushed us for further, but, you know, he really loved the fact that we were moving on issues of disability and equal access for people. And, once again, he would push further that we need to do more, but that was in true Nick fashion. And, you know, he thought things like when we were chatting on that rally, we talked about the minimum wage increases that our government is doing, and, once again, you know he pushed for more, but that was the great thing about Nick is he—he always saw what was going on and always pushed further for more improvements to people and to—into better lives for Manitobans.

So, you know, I really just wanted to get up and say a couple words about Nick and just how impressed I was with him and his activism in his community. And I'm really looking forward, actually, to reading his biography and his book about a rebel without a cause, because I think that he was very much involved in every cause and for bettering the lives of Manitobans.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a couple words on the record and really honour the fact that Nick Ternette will be missed. And I hope that other people take up that community activism. I know his wife, Emily, will probably do so, and push us and push and always continue to encourage us to do better for every Manitoban.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further comment to the resolution?

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm honoured and delighted to be able to get up and say a few words about Nick Ternette and put it on the record today.

I had the—as many members of the House will know, worked at city hall for many years and

although I didn't get to know Nick personally, we knew of the Ternette effect when he did arrive at city hall because it sent waves through, not only the political side on the council building but huge waves also on the public service side because we knew we needed to be well prepared and ready for anything that could happen, as the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) stated so well. He would puncture an argument in no time at all, and so consequently you needed about 15 backup arguments just in case in order to try to make your point.

So, it's a real honour for me also to speak to—about Mr. Ternette in terms of his running many times for mayor. Like the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), I've also put my name out there and lost, and it's often a difficult thing. I ran in two federal elections and we came a strong third each time, a winning third. But what you learn from those elections is that we are in a very results-oriented business. It's actually the campaigns that are the things that you remember and the most rewarding things. It's the people who come to help you, who support you, who come out of the woodwork even though they don't know you, because they believe in something. And I think it's that essence of belief that Nick Ternette brought to the table in each and every campaign that he ran in.

And also, his quite willingness to speak truth to power, and that's not a very simple thing to do. We who are in this Legislature know that speaking truth to power is often a difficult thing, and Nick was able to speak directly to power and speak truth to power each and every day. And I think that that's a remarkable component of his political career, because it's easy to give in to thinking that, sort of, that everybody else, to current thinking, to current political trends, to fads in thinking, it's quite different and quite remarkable to stay determined to defend your principles at every level. And, of course, Nick did that almost routinely as a matter of course, and I think that that's something that I—when I think about him, that's most memorable to me.

His activism and also—we're involved in political parties in this area, and in this House, and in this Chamber, but activism is much different. It's about being engaged right directly within your community and in your neighbourhood. And so it speaks directly to what happens each and every day in our homes, on our streets, in our neighbourhoods, in our communities, in our cities and in our province and, indeed, in our country. But that activism begins at the grassroots level, and that's also something that

Nick brought to the table. And it meant, again, that he spoke truth to power, but it meant that he brought principles to the table. And God knows, Mr. Speaker, in politics today, whether it's in Manitoba or Canada or around the world, staying true to our principles is absolutely—and our values—is absolutely the most important thing that we can do in order to try to create a better world. And, of course, that's what Nick was all about.

I also want to say that I was always impressed with Nick's courage, it's—both on the political side of things, but also in—with his health issues as well. It takes an extraordinary level of courage to go through the health wringer in the way he did and yet remain at the front and centre of politics in this city and in our community. And I find that a remarkable element of his astonishing career, to have the courage to reach down so deep within oneself, because you believe in something, to stay out there when others of us, with less of that ability, would say, well, I've done my part and maybe I'll move off to the side. He took his courage—his bravery meant that he didn't take that path. Instead, he decided to stay front and centre in our community. And I think that that's a remarkable feature of his political career and of his personal career.

Now, I don't have the—I've never had the pleasure of meeting Emily, but I know, just as the member from Wolseley pointed out, that all good political careers really are a partnership among two people. And so I have no doubt at all that she played a huge part in his political career in the same way that I'm pleased to say that my wife plays in my own political career. You need someone to be able to talk to. You need someone who can help to shape your ideas. You need someone who can give you the courage of your convictions to go back out there and fight for a good and just society. And I have no doubt at all, Mr. Speaker, that despite Emily's own activism, she also performed that great service to her partner in life, and that's Nick Ternette.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured and I'm delighted and privileged to be able to get up and say a few words about a great Winnipegger, a great Manitoban and a great Canadian. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Could the record note that the resolution was agreed to unanimously?

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

I declare the resolution carried unanimously then.

House Business

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business, 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 St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau). The title of the resolution is United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

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 St. Norbert, and the title of resolution is United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

* * *

* (11:40)

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we could resume debate on the next private member's resolution, which I believe is the one on rural CancerCare hubs.

Mr. Speaker: So we'll call the resolution for further debate, Rural CancerCare cub-Hubs, standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach, who has six minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Res. 3-Rural CancerCare Hubs

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to have this opportunity to continue on debate on this resolution this afternoon, and I believe earlier on, when I was talking about this resolution, I was expressing some concern that the government in terms of their resolution, it failed to give credit because I think there is need to give credit to people who are contributing financially through their health foundations in their community. And I know that all members opposite, and on our side, would have the similar experience in dealing with the different health authorities within their region. Many of them

have foundations that work with those authorities, to raise money, to raise money for needed facilities within the community, and I know the government doesn't like to talk about this a lot because there's a lot of private money that's going forward to have these facilities built.

I know in Steinbach, for example, the CancerCare unit, which is a—an important part of Bethesda hospital, needs to—needed to have a lot of private funding. I hear different reports, Mr. Speaker, on how much private funding there was but estimates range between 50 and 60 per cent. So that's a significant contribution by the community, and often we hear that it wouldn't have happened had there not been that level of commitment of private funds to that particular facility.

So I want to give credit, obviously, to the very generous donors within the Steinbach region. It really is a regional sort of thing, Mr. Speaker, and to those who are on the health foundation because they are out there, raising funds for these causes, and to ensure that these facilities get built.

But the government shouldn't be too quick to give itself praise, to give itself pats on the back because ultimately, Mr. Speaker, they have a responsibility to ensure that there is the kind of support for these facilities that isn't completely dependent on private donations. And so many individuals who are giving privately, they're not doing it for credit. They're not doing it for recognition. But they do wonder why it is that it takes so much private funding to come forward, so much private funding for these things to happen, to get the kind of attention that it needs.

But we certainly do know that for those who are struggling with cancer—and all of us are touched by that in some way. We've heard personal experiences from members in this House and we appreciate hearing those personal experiences because they are not only touching but in many ways they're inspiring, Mr. Speaker. So whether it's a personal experience, or whether it is an experience from a family member, we know that all of us want to have the kind of facilities for our loved ones, or for ourselves, if we ever need them in the communities closest to us, so that we can get that treatment at home. But let's never forget why a lot of this is happening; it's happening because of those generous individual donors.

We should also remember, of course, that those who are working within these facilities, the staff

within the facilities do a tremendous job of providing not only the medical care that we would expect that them as professionals would be administering to those who are patients within the various hospitals and CancerCare hubs and CancerCare units, but also there's a very strong emotional support that they provide. And I often hear from those who have experience within the CancerCare units that the personal understanding and the personal support they receive from the medical staff is something that makes a very difficult time in life a little bit easier, Mr. Speaker, and we should never forget and fail to give recognition to the medical staff who do that, who ensure that there is comfort for those who need it at that time.

So the resolution I think, Mr. Speaker, leaves out a number of important things. It doesn't recognize, I think, specifically, the great contribution by the foundations, the health foundations around the province who are providing funding, the individual contributors who are donating money, private money into the health-care system to ensure, in fact, that these things are happening within their community, often to the level of 50 per cent of a facility, ensuring, in fact, that we do have those facilities in the community. And also I think it's important to give more recognition to the individuals who are working within those centres and for the great support that they provide as staff members, whether they are doctors or nurses or other health-care professionals who recognize that it's a difficult time for family and who do all that they can to ensure that a difficult time is made just a little bit easier.

So this, again, is one of those resolutions—I would always encourage the government, if they would bring forward these resolutions to us in advance, we could have discussions about how they might proceed. We often don't get that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I'm not entirely sure why; I'm not going to impute motives on the government but it would certainly, I think, make the operation of this House go more smoothly and might see different resolutions that might have good intentions, find their way into passing.

So that's just something I'd leave for the government, the House leader, to consider in future, and I'll leave it at that.

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

I neglected to ask the House if there was leave to return to debate on resolution for rural CancerCare

cub, so I'm canvassing the House now. Is there leave to return to debate? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): It's certainly a pleasure to arise today to speak on this very important resolution. Clearly, there's always motive behind resolutions when brought forward into the Chamber and, certainly, I'm sure there's—this is the opportunity for the government to pat themselves on the back in terms of this resolution.

But I certainly do want to acknowledge the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for bringing forward this resolution so we can discuss an issue that's very important to Manitobans. And it's an—important to Manitobans all across our great province. And I think it's important to note that, you know, we're all impacted by cancer in terms of our family members, our relatives, and it certainly impacts all Manitobans. And it is, certainly, a disease which we all will find in—very, very alarming in terms of the statistics we see. Certainly, we see a number of different types of cancer illnesses are escalating and at the same time we see some changes in terms of moving the right way, in terms of the disease. Clearly, there's a lot of work that has to be done in terms of cancer care, cancer treatment and we look forward to those—that research continuing.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, just watching the news this morning, I know the Health Sciences Centre are currently have a lottery under way where they're actually 'lotter'—the lottery—the main prize there is a million-dollar home over in—leave it to—Tuxedo, actually. So, certainly, a tremendous prize that is up for grabs there. We certainly—this is a brand new, million-dollar house; it's fully furnished and the landscape—the landscaping will be completed too when the new—the lucky winner takes over for that nice house. So, certainly, by the pictures I saw this morning, it did look like a very beautiful house and, certainly, fully furnished and ready to—for the lucky owner to move into. So, I'm sure they will—whoever the winner is on that particular lottery will be more than happy to move into that very nice, luxury house.

And, clearly, Mr. Speaker, it's—Manitobans have really responded to fundraisers such as that and I think as soon as you talk about the word cancer, Manitobans, as in their nature, they will step up to the plate and do whatever they can to support research and activities related to cancer. So I know I've certainly supported that particular lottery in the past and I plan to do so the same, and I think I just—for members in the Chamber, we should recognize

that there's early-bird prizes coming up on that particular lottery.

* (11:50)

So for those of you who are interested, I would suggest you get your tickets early. So this may sound like a sales pitch, Mr. Speaker, but I know it's certainly a worthy cause, and certainly I think that members would love to support the good research that's going on at the Health Sciences Centre and certainly in other areas across our—across Manitoba.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of good things going on in terms of cancer research, and we do appreciate the good work of the doctors and nurses in that regard. And also—just in referencing this morning's news, and they were talking about cancer patients in Winnipeg in certain facilities and they were talking a lot about the volunteers that came to work in those facilities in dealing with patients and that's something we shouldn't overlook. I know when we talk about cancer care and cancer treatment, we always immediately think about, you know, the doctors and the nurses that are associated with treating patients, and certainly they do great work in that regard and we do have great doctors and nurses within our health-care system who are doing what they can to help Manitobans in need, but really the unsung heroes here are the volunteers that come to assist the doctors and nurses and in fact assist the patients in that regard. And it was quite astounding to hear the news report this morning about the number of volunteers that were coming forward to assist in that regard and it was interesting too. I know they talked this morning to some people who were actually in and having cancer treatment and had been through that process and had luckily recovered from their cancer scare and they thought it was time to give back because they saw—when they were in there taking treatments they saw people coming forward to assist them with medication and maybe some of the—you know, the anxiety that goes along with undergoing treatment. So it was certainly encouraging to see those patients then becoming volunteers, and I certainly think that's encouraging.

You know, when I get a chance to travel around rural Manitoba in my constituency, I see that every day. I see the volunteers in communities that are willing to go and make a difference, Mr. Speaker, and that's really the nature of Manitobans. We are volunteers by nature; we certainly lead the country in terms of our volunteer hours. And we also lead the country in terms of our financial contributions to

many worthwhile events whether they be community, province-wide, or whether they be something like treatment and research in terms of cancer care. And that's very important.

In fact, I know in my communities too—a lot of my communities—we have to travel for cancer treatment, and it can be a challenge. It's certainly a challenge for a lot of seniors who maybe don't have their own means to be able to travel from, you know, be it Killarney or Glenboro or Souris into—for the most part, it's been into Winnipeg for treatment, which it was quite a long haul for a lot of those seniors. So what's happened in a lot of these communities we have volunteers coming forward of their own time to bring seniors—and primarily seniors, Mr. Speaker—in for treatment, and it's very—I wanted to say hats off to those people that contribute their time to do that because it takes up, you know, pretty well the whole day. If you're travelling three hours into the city for treatment, obviously there's the time taken with the treatment, and in fact sometimes you may have stay overnight in a hotel or such or some other place that you may have to stay, and clearly that's an extra cost to Manitobans, as well, but, the volunteers, they're committed to driving people that are taking cancer treatment. And we certainly want to say hats off to them for taking their time to look after their friends and their neighbours and sometimes their family.

And I think that's another thing that, you know, we sometimes overlook, especially those people in the city, the larger centres, who usually have the availability of cancer treatment and some of the other benefits that they would take for granted. They don't realize the commitment it takes for those people travelling great distances to come to an appointment. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that, you know, prior to taking treatment for cancer there's a lot of diagnosis and that process can be a very long and arduous process, starting with, you know, getting an appointment with your GP, your general practitioner, where he will make a—he or she will make assessments and then put you in touch with a specialist in that regard. And then from there, you know, people will have to acquire an appointment with the specialist in whatever particular field that is. And usually that's a—can be a long wait for some of those specialists. And that's some of the calls that I get in dealing with the health care; it's that wait time that—before you get to see a specialist.

And, Mr. Speaker, that really does weigh on people's minds when you're sitting waiting for, you

know, six weeks, eight weeks, or sometimes several months waiting to see a specialist and just to confirm what the diagnosis might be. So there certainly is a lot of anxiety in terms of—on patients' minds.

So it's certainly—I appreciate what is being done by the great people in health care in Manitoba in terms of dealing with cancer and the great research that is being undertaken now. And I do want to say a special hats off to the volunteers that work in the cancer field. It's certainly very important, and I think we should all take time to recognize the people that do the hard work looking after their friends and family.

Thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): It's a pleasure to rise and put a few words on the record with regard to this resolution with—that speaks to rural CancerCare hubs. Living in a rural community, you see, often, families who put out an extra amount of money, extra amount of life savings to ensure that their family member receives the care they need if they're dealing with treatment for cancer.

A young woman by the name of Jessie, a good friend of my daughter's, her family—she had leukemia, and that family, you saw them work through the process. You saw them, you know, do everything possible to assist their daughter who had to travel to Winnipeg to receive treatment. And Jessie, you know, spent her time at Ronald McDonald House and befriended another young girl who was also battling cancer and receiving treatment, and they became fast friends.

Jessie's friend didn't make it. She passed. But what this left Jessie with was the feeling of commitment to ensure that young people or anybody fighting cancer should receive as much support and resources so that families don't have to struggle when they have to travel to receive treatment.

The hubs, I believe, are a good idea and are providing that additional support, but there's obviously more to do, as the minister always is known to be—known to say. But there are a lot of families who do appreciate the local treatment, but they also do appreciate that there are volunteers within the community who stand up and offer, in whichever way they can, whether it be a vehicle, whether it be picking up a medication at a—at the Health Sciences Centre, or just providing emotional support to these families.

I believe that, you know, the health centre in Russell has a cancer hub—a CancerCare hub—and they appreciate that support. It is a small space and it's not very private. There are individuals who I know would rather rest than watch TV, and there's others that would rather watch TV than rest, so it creates a little bit of a challenge to ensure that everybody's receiving, you know, care in the best way possible.

But I do believe that staff such as Bonnie Biley and others, who have worked—worked through the CancerCare facilities in their communities, take pride in what they provide in care and service, and I know that the patients that I've spoken to love to give back if they become—if they go into remission or become cancer free; you often see them as being volunteers and being key in the community.

So, you know, I just believe that rural CancerCare hubs are a step forward, however, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done with regard to people who are dealing with issues such as cancer and heart disease—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Riding Mountain will have six minutes remaining.

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 14, 2013

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