

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

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

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

**Vol. LXII No. 29A - 10 a.m., Thursday, April 15, 2010**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 15, 2010**

*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 which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

**House Business**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Recognizing the Manitoba Women's Institute, sponsored by the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with rule 31(9), it's been announced that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Recognizing the Manitoba Women's Institute, sponsored by the honourable member for Morris.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on further House business.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, on House business, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if you could canvass the House to see whether there's leave to move directly to Bill 211.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement of the House, orders of the day, private members' business, second reading to move directly to Bill 211, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act. Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 211—The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that Bill 211, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act; Loi sur la responsabilité et la transparence en matière réglementaire, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, this bill requires the government to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent. It also requires government departments to develop regulatory reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint in making new regulations. Both the government procedures and department plans must be made public.

And, Mr. Speaker, the reason that I bring forward this bill, as I did in 2008, is simply because of unnecessary forms and permits and these kinds of things that impact on small business, the kind of thing that makes them use a lot of their valuable time to do, to be having to fill out some of these forms when they could be spending a lot of more time on their business.

And I want to make it very clear, right from the beginning, that I am not talking about doing away with regulations that do—are for the public good, such as health and safety, public safety or—nor am I talking about regulations that have anything to do with the environment.

These are strictly the kinds of things—the regulations that we call red tape that impact on a business's ability to spend the number of hours they need to do in their business, Mr. Speaker. And we know that a survey done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—and I just want to say that

when I talk about the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, it's not one person that I'm quoting here; this is a organization that represents 4,800 small- and medium-sized businesses here in Manitoba.

So, there's a number of people that respond to surveys and saying that there's a significant impact on their way of doing business when they have all of these unnecessary forms to fill out.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm—what I'm talking about is—I'm not talking about no regulation at all, but I'm talking about smart regulation. Let's look at the duplication in forms and permits, and this can be across municipal and provincial governments. Sometimes it's a municipal regulation that's required, but it's backed by provincial legislation.

So, let's look at these kinds of things, and let's see what we can do to eliminate this unnecessary burden on small business, Mr. Speaker.

This is really not a small issue when you consider the amount of money that it costs. In a—overall terms, the cost to Manitoba businesses is estimated at \$945 million in a year. This is the cost of doing business when you have to do all of these forms. And this is up a little bit from 2008 when it was \$864 million, Mr. Speaker.

So, I think we have a way to go in looking at what we have now, and seeing what things can be cut to—what red tape, I guess, can be cut to make the business climate a little bit more friendly here in Manitoba, because we a lot of entrepreneurs here in the province. We have a lot of people that participate in small- and medium-sized businesses, really which drives our economy here in this province—the private business owners of small- and medium-sized business. And we need to allow them to do the job that they need to do to produce the goods and services for the people of Manitoba, without restricting them.

And I know that it was reported that—and I'll just quote here from a press release from the CFIB: If there is any doubt that red tape frustrates entrepreneurs in this province, consider that 26 percent of business owners indicated on a recent CFIB survey that they may not have gone into business, if at all, if they had known the burden of regulation.

\* (10:10)

And the question is: How many businesses never started because they wanted to avoid the headache associated with excessive red tape?

And I just want to make the clarification between regulation and red tape. We know that regulations are those that are necessary. Red tape are those kinds of burdens, paperwork, permits that aren't really required. We need to think outside the box here. Sometimes things are done a certain way. They've always been done a certain way and somebody needs to have a look at them and say, well, really, we're doing it this way but why do we need to do it this way? Is it only because its been done this way for a long time?

Mr. Speaker, we need to look at how we can cut unnecessary burdens for small business. And I want to acknowledge Vic Polsom is in the gallery today from Juliana Pizza as a person that would support this bill because he is a person that—in a small business—that knows some of the frustrations associated with having to do a lot of redundant forms.

But I want to say, as well, that, across Canada, there's been reduction in red tape. And just as an aside, red tape got its name, I guess, from—in the 1700s when regulators would make rules and regulations and tie them up in a little scroll and tie them with red ribbon. So that's where the red tape name came from.

But I just wanted to say in British Columbia they've looking at a 43 percent reduction. Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia—Nova Scotia has been very successful with a 15 percent reduction which has saved 91,000 hours of business time, Mr. Speaker.

So there's been success also in Ontario, Québec and Saskatchewan who've made commitments to do this. And the Canadian government, as well, has targeted and reduced a 20 percent reduction in regulatory requirements, Mr. Speaker, and this has all been done successfully without compromising public safety or any environmental impacts.

And I know that last year—there may be some willingness on the government's side to agree with me on this because I note that, last year, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) said: I believe that we can agree with many of the things that the member of Morris said, and even the member from Carman has said that there should be a focus on reducing red tape; and he said, as well, that we will continue to

make—to ensure that our government remains competitive in that position. So I think that there's a willingness on the side of the government.

I also see in the budget that they addressed red tape. So I think that there's a willingness. I don't think that it's a particular partisan issue. I think it's something that's in the best interest of Manitoba businesses.

So I think that, you know, the members opposite might criticize us and say, well, you voted against that budget. But, as I explained in my budget speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, there are some things in the budget that we do support, but in overall general terms the one budget document, there's so many things in there we could not support. So that's why we did vote against that budget but, as I said, there are some certain things in there. This is one of them.

I mean, I see there is a willingness on the part of the government. They agree with me that something needs to be done, so I'm really encouraged by that and hope that we can pass this bill to committee, and once the bill is able to pass to committee then we can have a full discussion. We can have small businesses come and say all of the things that frustrate them.

So I'm really looking forward to working with the government on this bill. We have a bill on the table. It's ready to go. Let's pass it to committee. Why don't we do the best thing for Manitoba small- and medium-sized businesses. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in the Chamber and put a few words on the record about, first of all, the efforts that we've been making towards improving the business environment here in Manitoba for small businesses, and I guess we could start by the recognition that, of course, our small-business tax will be zero. We'll be the first jurisdiction in Canada to have our small-business tax reduced to zero.

And I also need to speak to the fact that, through co-operation of the federal government, we're going to be encouraging small-, medium-sized enterprises to participate in the very large—a very large forum for businesses to have business-to-business meetings called Centrallia, where over 500 businesses from all over the world will come for a trilingual event where we will have companies from Latin America, companies from Europe, companies from North America and, hopefully, other jurisdictions

will be able to participate, where we'll have as many as 3,000 business-to-business meetings for our businesses to have the opportunity to showcase what it is that they do best and perhaps generate a lot of sales and services through that particular exercise. So I think that's a good thing for small businesses in Manitoba and an exercise I'm very much looking forward to being a part of.

Now, with respect to the proposal as tabled here in the House by the member opposite, there seems to be a bit of confusion here that they don't recognize—the opposition doesn't recognize that regulations are significantly different than red tape, and our focus has been on red tape. We have been working with our business partners and working with our municipal partners to move forward with an initiative such as BizPaL, and BizPaL is a fantastic tool where a small business can go on-line, or somebody who's looking to establish a small business can go on-line, answer a few questions, and, depending on what answers they provide to those questions, it'll generate a few more questions and in a matter of seconds, in a matter of, well, less than seconds in fact, once they press enter, having answered all those questions, it'll establish a list of all of the forms that are required, all of the permits that are required federally, provincially and municipally, and the individual has the opportunity in some cases to download those forms, to print them off at home, to do them at home on their own time and have all the forms and permits that are required to start a new business or to expand a business in their community at the click of a button. So BizPaL is an excellent tool and this tool has been expanded to over 80 percent of the population of Manitoba thus far with other jurisdictions, other municipal jurisdictions, and economic development corporations that are currently looking at BizPaL for their communities.

So that's one very effective tool, and another very good news item for Manitoba small businesses is the fact that we will have videoconferencing linkages, where right now 49 communities will have the option or opportunity to have individuals who want to take courses and get—ask questions of business counsellors. Forty-nine different communities will have that asset available to them right now and the 50th will be coming on-line soon. So individuals who are in a small community who don't necessarily have the resources that they need to ask questions in the business environment or to improve their business environment will have an opportunity

to do that with courses being offered on-line. So there's a lot of really good things that are happening.

So that's part of Budget 2010 as well, our commitment to eliminate red tape, and we've made that commitment in a number of different ways. For a small-business person who is less than \$10,000 in annual taxable sales, for example, Budget 2010 has committed to eliminate the requirement to register and collect provincial sales tax. So this eliminates that requirement for businesses that are making less than \$10,000 in annual taxable sales.

Through our Web site at [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca), there are a number of different services that are available to the small-business enterprise that can provide the links that will get the individual to BizPaL, that can provide the links that will get the individual to TAXcess where they can actually file taxes on-line for their businesses as well.

So there's a number of things that we're doing: eliminating the sales tax filing requirements for up to 5,000 home-based businesses—that's what the initiative I talked about earlier will do; reducing sales tax filing requirements for up to 25,000 small businesses; implementing a single business number and introducing an on-line file and pay system for PST and other provincial taxes, the TAXcess that I talked about.

\* (10:20)

The other centrepiece of our government's efforts to improve the business environment for Manitobans is the Manitoba Business Portal. This is a very user-friendly Web site where businesses have comprehensive on-line access to business services and information, and by focussing on cutting red tape we're going to improve service delivery and accessibility through the Web, through the phone or in person. There are a number of different offices that we share with the federal government, the Canada-Manitoba business centres, the employment centres and service centres that provide a number of the services if individuals don't have Internet access, and, unfortunately, in some of the smaller rural communities, that's the reality; they don't have Internet access. But, where that is lacking, there is, of course, the traditional phone line, and they will get a person who will talk to them and talk to them about what they need to do and what regulations and whatnot that they might need to comply with and what forms that they might need to fill out, what licences and permits and whatnot. So whether it's on the Web, in person or on the phone there are a lot of

opportunities for people who are looking to establish their businesses and to expand their businesses here in Manitoba.

If there's duplication of licences and permits, we'll look at that. The past fall we announced the creation of the Manitoba Business Gateway and its new information and referral service for the Brandon area businesses, for example. And, according to a recent report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—and I'm not one to often quote the CFIB—that Manitoba's costs of regulatory compliance for businesses has decreased by \$127 million and nearly 12 percent over the past three years, and that's the fourth largest decrease among provinces, down to 945 million from 1.072 billion. So we are making significant inroads with respect to making it easier to do business here in Manitoba.

I mentioned BizPaL and the Fraser Institute's Provincial Investment Climate Report ranked Manitoba fourth best behind Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland-Labrador on regulatory costs. And to help entrepreneurs set up and operate business and to support communities in their business development efforts, the Province is working with the federal-municipal partners—as I said before—to expand BizPaL and make it more available across the province.

Using the Web-based question-and-answer wizard is a very effective tool. And a number of times that I've had the opportunity to announce and, if you will, cut the ribbon, the virtual ribbon on these BizPaL Web sites, the staff from ETT have been on hand to demonstrate the process and see just how easy it is to apply for the permits and to get a sense of what permits would be required and what regulations need to be followed, whether it's a signed permit, whether it's a permit to import cheese—which I didn't know we had to have until I looked at a mock exercise for running and opening up a bakery, for example. A federal permit on importing cheese if you're going to open up a bakery, that was one of the things that came up, and that was rather interesting. If I was so inclined to open a bakery, I would not have known that there was a federal permit, as such, to do that.

So we keep working with our community partners. We keep working with our federal partners, and we keep moving to have BizPaL become a very effective tool. It is now available in 31 communities. As I said, over 80 percent—80 percent—of Manitoba is

covered under BizPaL: Brandon, Dauphin, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach, Thompson, Winkler, Winnipeg, the municipalities of Dauphin, Dufferin, Ethelbert, Gilbert Plains, Gimli, Grandview, Hillsburg, Lorne, South Norfolk, Stanley and Victoria, Carman, Gilbert Plains—the town of Gilbert Plains, town of Grandview, Morden, Roblin, Treherne and village of Ethelbert. And the BizPaL pearl is also available in the villages of Notre Dame de Lourdes, Somerset, St-Pierre-Jolys, the R.M.s of De Salaberry, Montcalm and Ritchot.

So these are all very important initiatives to cut the red tape, and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that, as somebody who started a small business when he was 14, even 10 years into my business I did not realize some of the permits that I should have had. But working in a small town and starting a business when you're 14, the municipal councillors said, yeah, you needed a permit, but that's okay. We didn't bother with—you with that. It was rather interesting that, that small-town environment, that they didn't see it was necessary at the time.

But, as you know, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things that do govern the way we conduct business today. I got most of my advice on my business permits and requirements from my accountant at the time, but now government has been able to step forward and provide a very useful tool, through BizPaL, through TAXcess, through the Canada-Manitoba service centres—business service centres, through the employment centres, through the councillors, through the on-line and video conferencing that's available to support businesses and help them and answer the questions that they might have with respect to what business opportunities exist and how they can assist them in realizing the full potential.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** Mr. Speaker, and I truly do support the—this Bill 211, brought forward by the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

Again and again, we keep asking for less red tape, less cutting of the ribbons and more cutting of the red tape, I guess is the—sort of the line that goes with this bill.

And I do want to compliment the minister. He was out in my constituency, doing the BizPaL announcements. His former—the former minister was in Notre Dame, and this current minister was in

Carman and Treherne to announce BizPaL. And BizPaL is a good initiative. It's a start.

And the minister himself said about looking at duplication—and we want them to do more than just look at duplication. What we're after—what we really need to ascribe to is to truly reduce the red tape that's—that burdens small independent businesses, small businesses, particularly the small independent businesses, because often they lack the resources to comply with the unnecessary regulations that are out there. And, while this institution is good at passing bills and laws and doing and government, in general, making regulations, we need to put the emphasis on reducing regulations and not just creating more, but really putting emphasis on reducing regulations, unnecessary regulations.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

We all realize that there is a need for regulations to a certain extent, but it's a matter of going overboard and where it is—where is it necessary and where is it unnecessary. And we know from CFIB's research that regulations cost the Manitoban economy \$945 million every year, and that's a lot of money, particularly when it comes out of small business that really is the driver of our economy.

And many business owners—and the minister himself made reference to starting a business when he was 14 and not realizing the regulations and the red tape that he was not doing. And that becomes the goal, is to eliminate the unnecessary regulation. And that's what this bill is promoting, is accountability and transparency, so that the regulations that are required, that are necessary, are transparent and that the—that there is an accountability for those regulations and we can get rid of the unnecessary ones.

We have—this bill actually asks for several things, and it's publicly reporting on the number of regulatory requirements. So, in order to improve transparency, it's about reducing unnecessary regulations so that the province can focus on administering regulations that protect Manitobans and serve an important purpose, and get rid of those ones that are not necessary and just put a burden on business.

It certainly would allow business owners more time to focus on their core business activities, the creating employment to do business in Manitoba, and that's where the real driver for the economy is. There's not a driver in—for small businesses to be

sitting there filling out endless forms that really aren't going anywhere, that don't serve any useful purpose. And that is a duty for government, to look at those that are not required and to make it easier for businesses to operate. And that's really the heart of this bill, this private members' bill. And I urge the government to really take it seriously and be more than just looking at duplication, but really, really get into duplication.

I know in the gallery this morning we have Vic Polsom. I've enjoyed his restaurant, food at this restaurant, and Vic has certainly been very adamant about the level of bureaucracy, the level of regulations, that he faces and it's not just—what he faces in his restaurant is three different levels: There's City level, there's provincial level and there's federal level of regulations.

And while we can't deal with two out of those three in this particular institution, it really is incumbent upon us to try and do our best. And if nothing else, at least show the example for other levels of government and how to reduce regulations and how to be business friendly.

\* (10:30)

This legislation is—this—the member from Morris is—had first introduced this in 2008. It was reintroduced this past—in December, and it's really time now for this government to stop talking about reducing regulations and really get to work and actually reduce regulations.

We have massive deficits in this budget that was just passed yesterday, and the government could—they have to realize that reducing red tape does not cost government. This is not a cost to government when you reduce red tape. And it actually enhances everyone's bottom line, from the business owners to government, because it makes Manitoba more competitive. Businesses will flourish. When businesses flourish, they pay more taxes and they help the bottom line of both their own business and that of the province.

So it's time that we really get serious about this. I have suggested before that there should be a committee of both government and opposition members having a look at regulation—redundant regulations. One of the members, who has a lot more history in this place than I do, is suggesting there is something like 1,600 regulations. I have no idea what the actual number is, but let's sit down and get rid of those that are redundant. That would help

business—not only help business but help government, because as long as those regulations are on the books, then the government is responsible for enforcing them and then you're enforcing redundant regulations. So it's a vicious circle and we really need to address this and this bill goes a long ways towards addressing these concerns.

Again, one of the ways that this government could reduce regulation—the impact on the farm, agriculture, is on the education tax. It could be, instead of having to fill out the form to send back, why don't you just do it at the source. And that would reduce—it reduces the paperwork required by the farm—by the landowner and it's a very simple thing. It could be done very simply but yet it's something that this government refuses to do and refuses to look at.

So there is lots of—well, there's lots of ways that this government could be creative on that and this bill here is one of the—is probably the best way to, at least, address this, to really start this. The last thing we need is more regulations and more redundant regulations that are on the books for business owners to have to spend hours and hours doing paperwork.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I urge the government to support this bill. This is a good bill. This helps Manitoba. It helps Manitoba businesses. It helps Manitoba taxpayers and it's a good bill, and the government should give serious consideration to supporting this. Thank you.

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors):** I'm pleased to put a few words on the record for The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act.

I'm pleased to be part of a government that has moved the small-business tax rate from 9 percent to, this year, zero. And I think part of the whole looking at small businesses is you have to look at the whole list of services. I think moving the tax rate to zero is an important step. Why? It's because small businesses generate jobs. Small businesses invest in the economy. They are the fastest growing group in the economy. And I think that it is really important to look at this group, work with this group. And I'm pleased, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was Minister of Industry, to have many, many meetings with different organizations, groups and businesses to discuss issues, all of the issues, and I'm very, very pleased that we've moved forward on them.



I would like to request from the opposition—they've said there's many, many examples of red tape and where things are redundant. I would like examples because six years ago, when I met with the deputy of, at that time, Industry, et cetera, what he started to do was he started to work with the federal government and the City to do exactly that—not rhetoric but actual action. So BizPaL came out, and I was pleased to make the announcement downtown with a federal Tory Cabinet minister who praised us for the initiative to bring the City, the Province and the feds together.

And I'll tell you what BizPaL did. One, it brought all the organizations together, and each organization had to have people at the ground floor to reduce the red tape. They looked at the forms that were necessary; they looked at reporting. And they actually started to work together for the first time. And I'm pleased that an NDP government was participating in an exercise that made things easier for small business.

And I know I've only owned four or five small businesses and had the opportunity to fill out forms at nine or ten at night. So, I was pleased to hear what different organizations had to say about it. And some of the things that they had to say was that it was a very positive step because what happened on BizPaL when you're filling out a form, the forms all can be saved so that you don't have to do different business numbers and different codes and different—and it used to drive me crazy where you used to have seven or eight or nine or 10 different business numbers, and now you have one business number. And most times, they use a business name as the business identifier. And so you have the business name, business identification number and that makes it easier for business.

Now, I know that effort was started about 10 years earlier and no long-term results ever came of it. I am pleased that the deputy of the time took it on as a challenge and actually got the feds and the Province to establish the BIN, the business identification number, and use it. Because I can remember filling it out and there'd be one number for Workplace Health and Safety, another number for tax, another number for the feds, another number for the Province. It used to drive me crazy, because every once in a while I'd put the wrong number in my form and then they'd send it back and send you a nasty note.

So I'm very, very pleased that we have a single business identification number. I know it took us two years to go through all the parties, but it was a positive step.

I'm also pleased to see that BizPaL is up there running. We were one of the first provinces up there with the feds. We took it on and, you know, it's interesting because we started saying, okay, how do we stop putting a stamp on these forms and sending them in? That's the way we did business up 'til about seven years ago, and I'm sure my friend up in the gallery remembers that, where you had to send—fill out the forms all separately and mail them back in. And when I was operating a business out in Norway House, I was always late. Why? Because the mail service was late and then you get these fees and fines.

I'm pleased that now we can pay most of the things on-line. I'm pleased that you can have Google save so that you can have all your information saved and automatically submit it. I'm pleased that we have it where we are having single-window approach so you don't have to go to 12 different organizations and different forms. I think that's a step, and when you're looking at these steps, it is improving customer service. And, as my friend and colleague from Gimli has said, it makes it easier for businesses to access services because part of it is that the Canada-Manitoba Service Centre can offer services.

It's also that most business people, all business people, want to do the right thing. They want to make sure they have the right permits. They want to make sure they have Workplace Health and Safety insurance and all the things that are essential to running a good, safe business.

So, I think it's really good that we have one form. So if you're a day care, you do have certain regulations that are necessary that are found in one place. You can link right to the appropriate documentation. You can understand what's involved in starting the business so that when my friend and colleague from Gimli's sons start up their business at 14 years old, they will then know what the appropriate regulations are and, hopefully, Madam Chairperson, they'll be fewer and they are fewer. They're simpler; they're simpler to navigate. There's one-stop shop.

\* (10:40)

And I think the department of industry should be commended, the deputy should be commended and

the people who are working in the City, feds and the Province who are getting—looking at each of these forms and saying, is there duplication? And when there's duplication, their mandate was to remove the duplication. Their mandate was to look at each form and say, do we need it? Do we need this information? Is there a way of taking multiple forms and putting them into one and sharing it between the departments? Is there a way of sharing information between these different levels of government? That's their mandate and they're working on that and they are making progress, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also think that it's also important not just to focus on business, although businesses are very, very important and it's good that we have good transparency and accountability. We also have to make sure that the public has it. So simple things like applying for day-care assistance on-line makes sense. Making sense that we apply for provincial park or student aid or tax accounts or all that stuff has to be done on-line and the more we can offer on-line, that's important, but I'd also like to temper that with we need to continue to focus on expanding the broadband. I know we've gotten it to about 90 percent of the population. That's an expansion from about 30 percent of population; it will continue to be expanded. I think that's really important.

I think it's incumbent to all of us as members, not to sit there and set up another bureaucracy to deal with the bureaucracy because I think that's kind of an oxymoron. What I think we need to do is we need to look at working with businesses, working with members opposite to say if there's an example that you have, please bring it towards the ministers. Bring it towards the different organizations because it's their mandate to move towards getting rid of bureaucracy but not getting rid of things that we need, like health and safety. And so we need to do that.

Now, I would ask the member opposite that—she says there's many, many, many redundant forms. Well, if there's many, many, many redundant forms, please bring the examples forward. When she talked on this last year, I know I asked her to do that. I haven't seen any yet, but if there are redundant forms, I ask businesses or individuals to come forward with those so that we can deal with them. And we will try to deal with them.

And as far as transparent regulations, absolutely. I think it's funny that the member opposite's asking for transparent regulation when the members

opposite didn't put things on-line, didn't move forward on BizPaL, didn't move forward on getting rid of regulations, and it's an NDP government that did that. And I think it's great because a lot of us on this side have started small businesses and have filled out those forms and we think it's important.

And I think when you're looking at the Speech from the Throne in 2006, which set up the Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade of which I was a minister at one point, it said, it will lead a campaign to reduce red tape in government, focussing on the creation of a single-window service to business. We've done that; we've moved forward and we continue to do that.

And I think it's really important to note that, under the members opposite, we had one of the highest business taxes for small business in the country. We've increased the threshold for small business. We've actually dropped it from the highest in the country to the lowest tax rate in the country, and we'll continue to work with business to make it a very pro-friendly business climate in here in Manitoba. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) for bringing forward Bill 211. She has brought this bill forward, I think, a couple of times, and is very much a believer in small business and trying to help small business as much as she can, and I believe that by bringing this bill forward again, and hopefully, getting the government side to support it and move it into law, would be a great effort realized for the member.

Bill 211 requires the government to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent and also requires government departments to develop regulatory reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint in making new regulations. Both the government procedures and the department plans must be made public.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what we're looking at from this government is their support on this bill because we believe that what is required is a more formalized approach. We need a commitment from this government to further reduce redundant and time-wasting red tape for small business, and I believe that this legislation would address that.

The minister opposite asked for examples and we have Vic Polsom in the gallery from Juliana Pizza who is looking at this government to pay attention to his request that we do look at reducing the red tape and make his life easier as a business owner in our province. He is continually dodged by red tape and issues that take him away from what he believes is important in dealing with his customers and his clients within his business. He's frustrated with a lot of the red tape and is frustrated that he's been classed a high-risk category, because he prepares food on site.

So, you know, these types of business licences go up, you know. Sometimes we wonder about the logic on things. Sometimes we appreciate the logic on things, but, you know, need to have government pay attention to how this is an added burden to businesses. And we need them to appreciate and understand that this does cause hardship on small businesses. I read somewhere today that there are 500 less restaurants in Manitoba than there were 10 years ago. And I do believe that that has a key factor in the amount of red tape that businesses are faced with, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The member opposite asked for an example, and there was an article in the *Winnipeg Sun* in January that was a quote from Mr. Polsom, and he indicated that, I get a statement from the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission saying you bought this much alcohol. Well, I already know I bought that much alcohol, and I have invoices that tell me that I bought that, and I turn over—turn that over to my accountant, said Mr. Polsom. So I'm not sure why that paper is generated. So there's an example for the member opposite, and it's a legitimate concern, and I believe it shows just how redundant some of this red tape is for a small business.

In the communities that I represent, I have some female friends who run businesses in communities. Debbie Butler runs Plaza Petals in Souris, and, when we get together, we often talk about the added burden, the added stress that she faces in dealing with her paperwork. Some of it is just, you know, ridiculous. And I believe that she runs an excellent business and would appreciate having more time in, you know, making the beautiful flower arrangements that she does and being able to talk to the clients that come in and do appreciate all that she does for them.

Colleen Robbins owns Fine Foods in Souris. She is a great talker and really does appreciate the conversations that she's able to have with her

customers and hearing about the products that they would like to see in her store. And, again, Colleen is often taken to the back area of her store, working through the paperwork that is required by government. And often it is paperwork that was just requested the month before, and there's been no change, and it is a redundant type of process.

Beth McNabb in Minnedosa, who owns the Fashion House—her and her husband, Ray, do a great business and would look at this type of legislation as a great benefit to their community or their community efforts. Beth is, I believe, one of the busiest people in the community of Minnedosa, on all the boards that she sits on and all the things that she's involved in in the community. And I think that by giving her that extra time to do the things that she likes to do, by helping her community grow, it would be a great asset.

By having this legislation accepted and supported, Mr. Polsom made a great observation just a few minutes ago in indicating that this point—this legislation would be a cost saving to government as we would be reducing paperwork, and I totally agree. I know that the government no longer publishes the book on who—how many civil servants there are—within government. We used to have a book that you could flip through and find the person or the department that you needed to find—[interjection] On-line, yes, but I'm saying, here's a document that is no longer paper—exactly what we're trying to say. We're saying the same thing here. The government has moved forward on putting the civil service on-line—for people who may need some assistance can go on-line.

\* (10:50)

As he has indicated, not everybody has high-speed Internet. So, my parents who have no high speed, it takes a heck of a long time for them to get through the list but they eventually will find the number. But they—you know, the government has taken steps and we want to applaud those efforts.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

But, again, here we have another situation where regulatory accountability and transparency would assist business owners and help them with the costs associated and their time associated in running their businesses.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business research shows that regulations cost Manitobans' economy—Manitoba's economy—

\$945 million every year. And that's a huge amount of money that is costing our business owners. Twenty-six percent of business owners indicated that they may not have gone into business if they knew how much red tape was involved. And you hear that, over and over again that—from small business—that they just feel they don't have the ear of government. And I think that there's an opportunity for government to show their support by, you know, supporting Bill 211 and showing that they do actually understand and appreciate the hard work that small-business owners do take on.

Other jurisdictions have taken steps in reducing red tape. They've made a formal commitment, Mr. Speaker, to reducing red tape. In 2009 the federal government met their goal of reducing red tape by 20 percent. Nova Scotia has reduced it by 15 percent, very close to getting to the 20 percent reduction target that they have put out there by 2010. Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta have all moved forward and, again, Manitoba seems to be lagging behind.

So I encourage this government to take responsibility for providing supports for small business. And I think that the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) has a very important bill before us, and I encourage the government, because we really didn't hear much from the government side against this bill, so I would encourage them to pass this bill quickly, move it through committee and make this law before summer.

So, as the people of Russell say, get 'er done, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put a few words on this particular bill.

Being an owner of a small business and an engineer by profession, I would like to say the intent of this particular bill, I have no idea what you intended to do, but we are already doing some of the things that you have mentioned about, in the BizPaL and other things.

Question that I heard from the opposition members several times: unnecessary. Unnecessary according to who? And this is what I would like to experience. When I came 40 years back—and some of the business owners, if they're here, they would understand—being a small-business owner I also wanted to make sure that my efficiencies are there, productivity there, but regulations are meant to be safety and welfare even for the business and for the

workers. So these are some of the things that we cannot play with and say that it's not necessary.

And I'll give you one example, Mr. Speaker. First job I had as a training engineer in versatile and then my office was still going to be made ready, and then I was asked to go in the shop; I was saying, I need to do something. So the foreman said, please go and start doing some drilling. And, typically, on a drilling machine you take—put the load and put the drill like that. I have never seen that. We wanted to have a clamp because there are some disasters happen if you don't follow the regulation of how to mount an equipment before you drill with a clamp.

He said, you don't—it's not necessary, just do it. So, not necessary was according to the foreman, and I said, no, it's not safe. And I was, you know, given the stamp of being a troublemaker. Same thing happen when I was working the small plant in rural Manitoba. The welders came and they would weld—not put the glasses. This could hurt their eyes, so I said, put the glasses, welding glasses. Well, it's not necessary. So this is what I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker.

We do here in this Chamber—we do design regulations and by-laws that is for the good of the people and also for the business. As far as how friendly are we with business, this is very obvious in terms of the small-business tax that the minister spoke—and both ministers—and the Minister for Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau), who had the portfolio would throughout the history have seen how our government has been very, very pro-small—particularly all business.

I had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, last night to attend the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) economic summit, and that is an environment you would enjoy to see, where the businesses, labour, and everyone together, working together to solve and look at the vision how we build Manitoba with business enterprise. So, it is not something that we are talking about having unnecessary regulations. We are talking about doing things which are right for the people, for the business and for the society.

So I would say that the intent of this particular member from Morris might have thought to ease, and I think we are working on that. As the minister said, we have BizPaL, we are improving on some other things that—but the wording here says that regulatory reform plans to eliminate unnecessary regulations and encourage restraint in making new regulations, and this is absolutely ridiculous to say. When the

society evolves, technology evolves, we need to have a look at the regulations and change the regulations for improvement, for better, for safety.

So I think that my comment would be to say, look at some of the things we have done and feel confident and pride that we are very pro small business, particularly we encourage small business because that is how the jobs are created and I see every small business struggling to keep their, you know, work going and look after employee productivity and growth, and I'm very, very much supportive of anything we can do to, you know, help the business.

Taxes are one issue that we would like to say we have now, in fact, introduced on-line a pay system for PST, and other provincial taxes. That is now on-line, Mr. Speaker. Technology is improving. We have a single business number that can be used to cut all that red tape, and I see here that 2006 Speech from the Throne announced the establishment of Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade, indicating we will campaign to reduce red tape in the government, focussing on the creation of a single-window service, for red tape and regulations are two different things. We are not going to be playing with the safety of people and safety of lives by making things with the window that will be dangerous to be interpreted and becomes a law. So, we—I would definitely not agree with anything that is vague and unsafe for people.

Secondly, as far as we are concerned about improvements, yet we are continuing. We will continue to have improvements, and I am pretty sure the minister will be very happy if the members and the small-business community brings a particular type of proposal that is good. We are going to work together. It's not that we are going to say no to everything that you ask for, but we will definitely say no to the resolution that is very, very unsafe to pass the way it is.

So I would say that we look at some of the things here on the record that we have done including the reduction of taxes—

**An Honourable Member:** Keep going, Bidhu.

**Mr. Jha:** —including—do we have time?—including things that we have done for small business, and now I think we are working on making, you know, some of the things that, as an example, we had a Statistics Canada, Manitoba, says it's the leader in real business-labour productivity growth with an increase

of 9.5 percent over the five years to 2008. This represents annual growth of 1.8 percent, second best among provinces and well above national average increase of 0.6 per year.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going in the right direction. We are improving. We are working hard and I would encourage all of us to work together to make sure that we bring these issues—*[interjection]* Thank you very much.

**Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is one of the most affordable places in Canada to live, work and raise a family.

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

\* (11:00)

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 1—Denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour now being 11 a.m., we will now deal with resolutions, and we'll deal with Resolution No. 1, in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo, Denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I move, seconded by the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) that,

WHEREAS Israeli Apartheid Week takes place annually on Manitoba university campuses; and

WHEREAS all students, staff and visitors to Manitoba campuses should feel safe; and

WHEREAS Israeli Apartheid Week may promote anti-Semitic opinions leading to the harassment and intimidation of Jewish students and staff; and

WHEREAS the use of the word "apartheid" is offensive to victims of apartheid in South Africa and ignores that Israel is a strong democracy that respects the rule of law where citizens of all backgrounds vote and serve in elected office; and

WHEREAS despite differences of opinion, public debate in Manitoba should be reasoned, informed and respectful of all Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to denounce Israeli Apartheid Week as divisive, promoting intolerance and

undermining a balanced debate of the Israeli-Palestinian question.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo, seconded by the honourable member for Springfield,

WHEREAS Israeli Apartheid—Dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** It is with mixed emotions and feelings that I stand before you and feel compelled to bring this resolution forward on behalf of my constituents in Tuxedo and, indeed, all Manitobans and people across Canada. I think it's unfortunate that we are in a situation where we have to bring such a resolution forward in today's society that should be promoting tolerance in our society and should not be promoting hatred, and so it is unfortunate that I feel compelled to bring this forward today.

As the MLA for Tuxedo constituency, I've heard from a great many constituents who are strongly opposed to the notion of any event called Israeli Apartheid Week and with good reason, Mr. Speaker. I am here today to give a voice to their concerns in this House.

It is also worth noting that there are representatives of communities and faiths other than the Jewish community who have denounced Israeli Apartheid Week. We are debating this resolution during Shoah Week when we remember the persecution and systemic murder of six million Jewish men, women and children at the hands of the Nazi regime during the Holocaust. Along with them, we remember the five million other lives lost during that time, people persecuted for their race, their religion, their sexuality and their mental faculties. It is incumbent upon us today to confront this tragedy by remembering those who perished and work to eliminate the divisive violence that continues to plague our world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset in this debate I want to put to rest any notion that this resolution is an attempt to limit free speech in any way. It is not an attempt to silence dissent. My support for the right to free speech is unequivocal. Here in Manitoba, here in this Legislature, we engage in free speech and informed political dialogue on a regular basis, which I wholeheartedly support. However, I believe that Israeli Apartheid Week goes beyond the expression

of free speech. The rhetoric surrounding this event serves to marginalize the Jewish community. It is divisive and it creates fear and distrust. Put simply, it engenders anti-Semitism.

It is for that reason I cannot endorse Israeli Apartheid Week and that's why I've introduced this resolution. I think there are more effective ways to debate issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it's incumbent upon us to have respectful debate around that. This is not—that was—the Israeli Apartheid Week is not respectful debate, Mr. Speaker.

Neither is it my intention to debate the Israeli-Palestinian question in this Chamber. Though I'm sure every member of this Chamber would like to see peace in the Middle East, we cannot do justice to an issue that complex in an hour of debate in this Manitoba Legislature. Rather, I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong opinion that Israeli Apartheid Week has no place in a reasoned, respectful and informed debate on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

Israel is, in fact, a strong, parliamentary democracy where citizens of all backgrounds vote and serve an elected office and on the judiciary. It is a society that is governed by the rule of law, social justice and the protection of human rights. The rhetoric surrounding Israeli Apartheid Week ignores these important facts, Mr. Speaker.

But what is of primary concern to me and to others in this Legislature is the fact that, in Manitoba, Israeli Apartheid Week takes places on our university campuses. My primary concern is for the safety and well-being of students, staff and visitors to our university campuses and in the greater community.

I think all members of this House can agree that safety is a primary goal. All students, regardless of their background or religion or political beliefs, are entitled to attend class and participate in campus life without fear of being marginalized or targeted.

Israeli Apartheid Week jeopardizes those goals. Events held in conjunction with Israeli Apartheid Week do not allow for debate of the issue. There is no room for discussion or dissenting opinion. The language used is more than inflammatory, Mr. Speaker. Whatever the stated goals of Israeli Apartheid Week are, this event will never have the effect of promoting or encouraging peace. The results can create animosity and a culture of fear and

divisiveness on campus. I cannot endorse an event that marginalizes any group in our community and that's what Israeli Apartheid Week does. By targeting Israel, Jewish students, staff and visitors become the target of this propaganda campaign.

Our universities should be places for spirited informed debate. No student should have to fear for their safety while trying to get an education. No one should be judged first and foremost on the basis of their religion or ethnic background. No one in Canada should have to consider their relative safety when choosing what school to attend. Jewish students in high school may feel uncomfortable attending a university where events such as Israeli Apartheid Week take place. Our universities should value diversity, including diversity of opinion, but those who promote Israeli Apartheid Week do not value diversity of opinion. Rather than facilitating an informed and balanced discussion of the issues, it attempts to raise the Israeli Apartheid Week campaign uses inflammatory language and incites fear.

Mr. Speaker, I also take strong exception to the use of the word "apartheid" in this context. The word "apartheid" has only been used in reference to racist South Africa regime, before Nelson Mandela, and the systemic oppression of black South Africans. To use the term "apartheid" in reference to Israel diminishes the tremendous suffering of black South Africans under the apartheid regime. There is no comparison between what happened in South Africa and what is happening today in Israel. Israel is not an apartheid state. As a society, we can never forget the suffering and the consequences of apartheid in South Africa, and as legislators, we must strive to prevent systemic racism from taking root ever again. The use of the term apartheid is intended to incite fear and to vilify the state of Israel and its government. The term is used in this context not because it is accurate but because it is such an inflammatory, charged word, that it incites fear and distrust of the Israeli state. For those reasons, I strongly object to the use of the word apartheid in this context.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, this resolution is not an attempt to limit free speech; rather, I am using my right of free speech to express my views and those of my constituents on this important issue. It is not an attempt to address the complex history of political situation in the Middle East. My concerns with Israeli Apartheid Week are much closer to home. I fear for the safety and the well-being of Jewish

students, staff, visitors and other supporters of Israel who are marginalized by this event and made the target of fear, distrust and anti-Semitism. I oppose the use of the word "apartheid" in the context of Israel, which is an open and democratic state, where people of all backgrounds vote and hold office and where the rule of law is respected. I oppose the propaganda campaign associated with Israeli Apartheid Week. It is not a campaign that will ever lead to peace.

My hope is that through this resolution, this House can send a message that it does not condone divisiveness, intolerance and fear. This House does not tolerate harassment and intimidation of any group. This House does not support unbalanced and inflammatory propaganda and this House does not support anti-Semitism.

\*(11:10)

Rather, this House supports balanced, reasonable and respectful debate. This House supports the fostering of an environment on our university campuses that promotes learning and mutual respects. This House supports a vision of our university campuses as places for spirited and informed discussion of many issues, above all, as safe and inclusive institutions where students from all backgrounds, Mr. Speaker, can feel safe.

I hope that all members of this House, today, will stand and join with us in denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week, and stand in support of efforts to work with people from all backgrounds towards safety, inclusivity and tolerance on our university campuses and, indeed, a safer and inclusive and more tolerant world, Mr. Speaker.

So I hope that all members will join with our members on this side of the House, today, to denounce Israeli Apartheid Week, support this resolution and make sure that it passes today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would like to remind our guests in the gallery that our rules state that there is to be no participation by our guests in the gallery, and that includes applauding. Just a friendly reminder to our guests, please.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing the resolution. I welcome the opportunity to speak in this Chamber.

I'm proud to be a Manitoban and to have grown up in the '50s and gone to a North End school where

we were all called DPs—even us who weren't DPs. Every week on the school playground yard, a bunch of new DPs would come in. We'd have the DPs playing the Americans on the soccer field. My point is Manitoba is a province of immigration, tolerance, understanding.

I'm blessed to have been to Israel twice. I'm honoured that I used to sit and watch the documentaries with my mother, my very learned mother, about the Holocaust. And I believe the Holocaust is the single-most pivotal, historical event of the 20th century, and they'll look back many centuries from now and say, how could such a civilized people be involved in something like that? It's a tradition that we, in the last century, should never forget, and ought to be ashamed of.

I believe this resolution was brought forward with the best of intentions, but I think the resolution is an error and a tactical error on the part of the member. And I'm not criticizing anyone's sincerity, but let me outline the two reasons why I believe this resolution is a mistake in tactics.

Firstly, the A-word, which I won't even use in this Legislature, to talk about Israel is inaccurate. Notwithstanding the—in fact, Jimmy, when Jimmy Carter used that A-word I was disgusted. It's the wrong word. It applies inaccurately. It does not apply to Israel in no shape or form. It diminishes what happened in South Africa and all the efforts the Canadian and other governments did to get rid of the A-process. And the problem with the A-word is it's inflammatory, and it causes difficulty. So I won't even state that word in this Chamber.

But my second reason relates to that. My second reason why I believe this resolution is a tactical mistake relates to that, and that is the process that the member talked about failed. It didn't get off the ground. It wasn't a major issue here, Mr. Speaker. I'm not questioning the member's right or any of our rights to speak, but the process failed. It failed because of the place Manitoba is. It did not become a big issue. By us raising this as an issue, and voting on this in the Legislature, we give a platform. Now, the member should—we give a platform for those who failed, for those who put in process a process that was a non-event, was bad publicity. We give them a forum.

By—[interjection] Unbelievable, the member may say, but think about it. We've taken the event that blew in and blew out, caused some controversy but was a non-event. But now standing up and giving

those people the right to put out more press releases, put out more news information about an event that failed, we have given a failure a platform. And that's why I think, tactically, this resolution is a mistake. It's a mistake to bring this resolution forward to the Legislature. The tactic did not work.

And we in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, are a strong enough province and a strong enough community to ensure that that kind—[interjection]

I allowed the member to speak. The member talked about how important this is to herself, and this is important to me and my community, as well. So I beg the member to allow me to speak my opinion on an issue that I, too, have lost sleep on.

And I've thought a lot about this. And you don't reward failure. And you don't give a group that wants to rise up and wants to cause controversy and wants to use the A-word in connection over and over and over again with Israel. You don't give them a forum to say, wow, the Manitoba Legislature, now vote on this. There's going to be a press release. There's going to be a controversy. There's going to be probably some people out there with protest signs saying, the Manitoba Legislature is against free speech. That's not what we're saying, but that's what they're going to say.

And that's why I think this resolution, as well intentioned as it is, and I'm not disregarding the intention, I think can be used as a point of divisiveness, not as a point of unity, which is what we've done very well in this Chamber. We've done Yad Vashem collectively and as a group. I've—we've attended regularly for over a decade. But, I think, by making this a resolution or an issue in this Chamber, we do more harm than good.

First, do no harm. On this very sensitive issue, someone who's read widely, travelled widely and is a strong supporter, historically and otherwise, of the most oppressed race in the history of human civilization, be it in England, be it in Spain, be it in the—Poland, be it in Ukraine where my parents come—my father won't even go back to Ukraine. You know why he said he wouldn't go back to Ukraine? Because the whole place was wiped out and the people he knew and dealt with were all gone. And he wasn't talking just about Ukrainians.

So I come to this issue saying I think it's a tactical error in this Chamber for us to make this a resolution, to give a platform for a group that failed, for a group that keeps trying to use the A-word,



which it had no association whatsoever with Israel. And so it's my view that we ought not to pass a resolution of this kind. It's my view that the purpose of this Legislature is well known, that our support for the people of Israel, for the Canadian, the Manitoba, the universal position of a two-nation state, at some hopeful future point and peace can prevail.

But, by taking elements of discord and divisiveness that try to make publicity issues, we only magnify the issue. And we're doing that on the floor at the Legislature and I, unfortunately, think that that is a mistake for us to do that. And I think it's—reckless is not the word, because I don't think the member brought this about recklessly. I think it was thought as deeply as we thought about it, but I think it's an error. And I don't think we ought to do more than discuss the merits and not give credence to a cause that failed in fact. It was seen as failure in fact. That we don't allow it to come out of here, that we can—they—someone can spin out another press release or another press conference based on this.

And I want to close—you know, members opposite, I want to close with a saying from Sufi mysticism, and Sufi is a form of Islamic mysticism. It's a word that I've used very much in my life. What do you do with a whirling dervish? You let it whirl.

And, in this case, we had a group and an organization that used the A-word. It didn't get it off the ground, and we ought not to use this Chamber and this floor in any means to give them any credibility. And we're giving them credibility by virtue of talking about this, by virtue of providing a platform.

\* (11:20)

And, as well-intentioned as the resolution is and as much as people may disagree, I think that is the right position. And, on that basis, I think we ought not to support this resolution. I think we should just accept the resolution, discuss the issues of peace, discuss the issues of our support, discuss the issues of free speech, but not give a platform for people to go out of here—not people out of here, but people from outside of here, to use this as an opportunity to make the issue more than it was. It was a publicity stunt aimed at garnering more publicity and we ought not to support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** I wish to briefly put some comments on the record. I was fortunate in my youth to be able to attend the University of Manitoba

where a lot of issues were debated. At the time I was going to university, free trade was a very big issue, and as a student activist, I participated in that debate.

And we travelled along the campuses in Manitoba and put forward our side of the issue, but it was always staying on the issue. We debated the issue of free trade. What troubles me about this debate—and I'm a university graduate and participated in a lot of these—is the fact that the argument is already placed as a biased argument. You start with denouncing. How do you start a debate, a fair debate, an equitable debate, when automatically it's called denouncing? Already, you've predicated where the debate is going to go.

The second term used right after that is Israel and then it goes "apartheid", and I will use the word because it's used denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to talk about apartheid. What does apartheid come up with? It conjures up racist hate and oppression, and it sets a debate that—that's so negative—negatively loads the debate against Israel that you can't really have a fair and open debate.

Israel is basically guilty until proven guilty when you get into this debate. It's one-sided and it basically leads to an uninformed negative and passionate debate against another group on campus. It's negatively loaded, and I would suggest that when you have a debate where you're denouncing Israel, where you've got apartheid as part of it, that you can't have fair and open debate on it because you've already set where the debate is going.

I would suggest to the students there is nothing wrong—nothing wrong with debating, for instance, you could call it the issue of Israel and Palestine in the Middle East—great, great place to debate on. You have people on different sides of the debate. You have a healthy debate. It doesn't load anything negatively. It doesn't take a position automatically with its title against one group or the other, and it doesn't rise up a lot of passions immediately before you even get into the debate.

You can have those debates, but the fact that you've already started this with calling a nation as being an apartheid nation is very unfortunate, and I would suggest to all those students who e-mailed us—and a lot of us got those e-mails—that actually this is part of that debate. And we should have this debate.

Folks, to stick your head in the sand and say that we are not going to debate these issues is not where I

would like to be as a legislator. I would like to join in on this and say, this is not where we should be going as a modern and civilized nation, where we attack another nation with the word "apartheid" as the title of our debate.

And I would suggest to members of this Chamber: Anybody who's a student of history knows full well that we must never be the Neville Chamberlains of the year 2010. We should take a stand and we should do it in this Chamber. This is where healthy debate should be. This is exactly where we should be talking about this.

And I would suggest to the students who e-mailed us—and I fully intend on responding to them—yes, this is part of the debate and this is healthy, but I would suggest to them that the fact that they start their debate by already calling Israel apartheid basically says to them: You are guilty until proven guilty. That is not a fair debate, and that we have students that go into our campuses and are uncomfortable, physically uncomfortable, with being on the campus, then already there's something wrong with that debate.

We should be doing something a little bit differently on the campus, and this Chamber should be encouraging our students to be careful with the way they choose their words. They should be careful with the way that the debate is predicated. And folks, we as legislators have a duty, have an obligation, to step in and have a free debate here, and say to our students and those on our campuses, whether it took off this year, whether they were successful this year, we know that this is something that's being driven and being driven across North America

We should stand up, not be Neville Chamberlains, and say, this is not appropriate. It actually does drive up negative feelings towards our Jewish students, and we know the kind of dangers when we get into that kind of a realm. And I would suggest to members of this Chamber, let's pass this, let's move it forward. It's the right resolution, and Israel Apartheid Week is not what we should be encouraging on our campuses. That's not the right kind of debate. I would suggest to all those students that they look within themselves and perhaps take to heart what's being said in this Chamber and look at framing the debate in a much different manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it's important, through this debate, to both stand up

against any manifestation of anti-Semitism and, in this particular situation, characterizing Israel as an apartheid regime. Calling Israel an apartheid regime, while likely protected under the Charter, does nothing to move toward greater understanding, peace and social justice. Applying the term "apartheid" to Israel is profoundly inflammatory and most unhelpful.

Now, as a government with a mandate for positive leadership, unlike opposition, it's our duty to search for what unites us, Mr. Speaker, as Manitobans so that we can move ahead and actively pursue causes that can lead to a secure Israel, in a peaceful region, with respect for Jews, most important, of course, among all nationalities including Muslims or Palestinians. This is, in fact, though, the record of our government.

Now the event that led to this resolution has come and gone, and few took notes. It deserves no extraordinary attention now. To that end, well, I will always support those with Middle East peace as their vision and a secure state of Israel through reconciliation amongst their borders. I refuse to now elevate the status of a marginal and most disrespectful hindrance to that vision.

As more than a footnote, Mr. Speaker, and aside from the particular issue at hand, I do question the resolution's intention to—not just a statement from the Assembly, but require the Government of Manitoba to formally denounce—that's the wording—the speech of certain Manitobans on campus or anywhere, through unspecified means—[*interjection*] I ask the member to allow me to speak—[*interjection*]

The resolution asks the government to take a formal role in 'denunciating' the speech of certain Manitobans, whether on campus or other places. That's what this resolution does, and that resolution is speaking outside, then, of the existing civil and criminal laws and the Human Rights Code of Manitoba. The wording of the resolution signals, in my view, Mr. Speaker, that Conservatives would do this as they see fit if they governed. You know the application of our civil and criminal laws are backed up by well-established processes, checks and balances to pursue safety, justice, remedies, to change behaviour.

But to create a new function for provincial governments of the day in Canada to formally denounce and chill unwelcome speech—and this is unwelcome speech, I can tell you—from time to time should be very thoroughly and carefully debated in

this Chamber. I am then at risk of being their next target. Manitoban supporters of Israel are then at risk of becoming a target and we should not be a party to that.

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the resolution introduced by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson). And I thank her for the resolution, one that is drafted carefully and with much consideration as to the implications of the passage of such a resolution in this Chamber.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I don't doubt the sincerity of members opposite. And I appreciate the fact that they have indicated similarly that they do not doubt the sincerity of members on this side of the House in terms of the issue before the House today.

But I will say, in response to both members opposite, with the greatest of respect, that we believe that they're mistaken in terms of the approach to this issue for a variety of reasons. Mr. Speaker, the state of Israel was created out of the recognition of the Jewish people's historic ties to that sacred place, as well as the recognition of the need to guarantee the security of people who, as recently as 65 years ago, were the victims of systematic tragic and horrific genocide.

Mr. Speaker, that state, through its history—the state of Israel has made an incredible contribution to our world, including to the province of Manitoba, in areas of health care, economic development, science, arts and so many other areas that have enriched the—both the Israeli state but the world as well, including our province of Manitoba.

And I know that as recently as this year, members of the government participated in exchanges to discuss the issue of water management, such a vital resource for all people, such great expertise both here in Manitoba and in the state of Israel. And I commend them for that co-operative relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I have yet to personally visit Israel, although I look forward to doing so this coming October as part of a mission, but what I do know is that this is a state that has made great contributions to our world. And one of those great contributions is its contribution to and commitment to democracy. It is a place where people are free to speak. They're free to disagree as they do on virtually a daily basis.

That citizens who are not delineated based on any cultural or religious lines—if you're a state—a citizen of the state of Israel you have the right to participate in elections, to choose the leadership of the country in an open and democratic way.

So it is important—and I think there's no disagreement in this House, to be very clear, about the fact that Israel is a democratic state. There will be many who will have differences and disagreements on Israeli policy when it comes to security. The Israeli people themselves are engaged in vigorous debate, on a daily basis, on the individual policies of individual governments, at various points in time, related to security policy, and related to other issues that are pressing on the people of Israel with respect to their own security, and their own progress as a people and a nation. And that, Mr. Speaker, is indicative of a healthy vibrant democratic government and society, where people are free to disagree on approaches to security and approaches to—on approaches to settlement, and a variety of other areas that are contentious issues but are freely and openly debated.

And so we agree, in this House, Mr. Speaker, that the use of the word "apartheid" is an inflammatory, false, dishonest term designed to stir up certain emotions, designed to stir up a certain sentiment and an attitude toward Israel. And, in the end, what it's grounded in is, among its proponents, a belief that the state of Israel has no right to exist as a state. This is the agenda of the people who are using the word "apartheid," and we need to use the word because they are the ones who are using it, and we need to push back against it. And we need to expose the fallacy and the falsehood of that sort of language as it's applied to the state of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe differently or we disagree with members opposite, in a respectful way. We all agree that apartheid is a hateful, false, inflammatory term, and I'm pleased that we've all agreed on that point. Where we disagree is whether we, as elected members in this Chamber, should speak out within this Chamber on an issue of this nature.

And, Mr. Speaker, we believe that we should speak out for all of the reasons that history has laid before us on such issues. We know that there is a principle of law that members opposite will know well, usually applied in the realm of contract law, called, silence is acquiescence, Mr. Speaker. But that

principle can be applied, not just in the world of contracts, but also in the world of politics and public discourse.

And that, if we choose to remain silent as others in our society go out spreading hatred and attempting to stir up a false perception of the state of Israel with the ultimate objective of seeing the demise of that state, Mr. Speaker, then we are failing as members of this Chamber. As democratically elected members of this Chamber, we're failing democracy, we're failing the people of Israel, and we're ultimately failing to learn the lessons of history.

Now, I heard the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) making reference to the failure of this movement. Mr. Speaker, it is far too premature to declare the defeat of this movement. We have seen the hateful actions at York University; we have seen this propaganda based on falsehood being trotted out at university campuses across the country. We've spoken to students of—Jewish students and others, who have expressed their sense of intimidation and their sense of being marginalized and the targets of hateful, false comments. And we have a duty in this House to speak out against it.

The resolution doesn't propose that we ban such speech, Mr. Speaker, and that is a misinterpretation of what this resolution does. All that it does is calls on members of this Assembly to urge the government to denounce, and denunciation, is not the same as legislation or as banning.

Denunciation, Mr. Speaker, is simply a group of elected officials coming together to speak freely, as we have the right to do in this House, and as we do each and every day. And we've had many debates to—in this Chamber, in the four years that I have been here, we have debated many important and contentious issues, including many that have related to failed regimes and failures of history.

We have, in this Chamber, denounced the policies of the Stalinist Soviet Union which is a failed regime, Mr. Speaker, and yet we continue to speak up and denounce it because we don't want to repeat the mistakes of history. The greatest mistakes that have been made were when good people, people of good will, remain silent in the face of such hatred action. And when hate is unchallenged, we know from history that it gains momentum, that it grows, that it can have an impact on the thoughts, actions, attitudes and policies of people, governments, and organizations everywhere.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to speak out and denounce, not to ban. And we know, members opposite have made comments about the role of government in a democratic society. I would remind them that we have a legislation in place related to defamation that restricts people's ability to say whatever comes into their mind. We have legislation that restricts hate speech. We have restriction on communications that is designed to harm others when that speech is based on falsehood. And that is exactly what Israeli Apartheid is about. It's about falsehood, it's about hate and it is part of an agenda, a broader agenda, to discredit and ultimately destroy the Jewish state.

So we stand today in support of this resolution. We believe that it's important that people speak up. I acknowledge the common ground that we all have in this House and I appreciate the comments of members opposite that we agree that this is a mischaracterization and a falsehood. And I appreciate the fact that they put those comments on the record. I encourage them to take the next step, Mr. Speaker, to put their money where their mouth is. Stand up today and support this very thoughtful, important and relevant resolution.

\* (11:40)

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I want to bring another perspective to this resolution, not the least of which as someone that's been honoured to be a member of this Legislature for some years and seen many debates and watched strong words said back and forth.

I want to speak as someone that believes fundamentally that one of the great aspects of this Legislature in this province is, really, our ability to speak freely. I want to speak also as someone that has attended the University of Manitoba and Lakehead University and seen very much the great tradition of freedom of speech at our universities. And Mr. Speaker, I believe fundamentally that is what is the essence of a democratic society, and whatever we may say or not say about a view that is expressed, even strongly held views, that is the essence of freedom of speech. It's a human right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And I find it ironic, perhaps, in this context, too, that I don't think there's any institution I've ever seen that probably has greater freedom of speech than the Israeli Knesset, and it's the Israeli politics, as unique as it is.

So I start from the premise that freedom of speech may mean at times listening to views that are different—and I expressed concern privately, and I'll put this on the record, at the right-wing commentator that was prevented from speaking at the University of Ottawa. To my mind, that violated the very principle of freedom of speech in our universities. So I do believe—and I'm very concerned by the way even some of the tone in debate, that the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) said the students should be very careful how they choose their words.

We all know that there are proscriptions against hate speech and there are very specific protections and there should be, particularly when it comes anti-Semitism, and I think we should always be aware of that. But I would say to the students who are debating this very contentious issue: We should never, in any way, shape, or form, do anything other than encourage freedom of speech. And there may be times when we object to phrases. I remember when I was at university, there were phrases that were used and expressions. There's a very different situation between objecting to something and, in this case, saying that people should be careful how they choose their words. In what sense? Careful that it should not be hate speech? Absolutely. Careful in terms of not agreeing with a certain perspective or view? That is the essence of freedom of speech.

But I also want to reflect on something else, Mr. Speaker, and I have actually been in Israel and I've been in Palestine, and I—post-Oslo Accords, at the invitation of the former speaker of the Manitoba Legislature, Myrna Phillips—went to Palestine. By the way, if anybody's thinking that I was contributing towards Middle Eastern peace, it was to give a proposal—or presentation on constituency relations.

What struck me when I was there, by the way, is how few Canadians outside of—Canadians have direct contact with the Middle East, have a real organic sense of what is at stake. Three great world religions, all with various strong historic and religious ties to that area, a geographic area that just—it boggles the mind by Canadian perspectives. We're talking, in a matter of hours, we're talking a series of states, all of whose very security and existence is at stake. And I came out of that with an appreciation of the aspirations of Palestinians, of their very real fears of Israelis in terms their own security, and I came out of it with an 'unbiding' desire to do what I could to contribute towards peace.

And some people will know in this Legislature that in my office I have a picture of Mahatma Gandhi. I'm very influenced by Gandhian perspectives in terms of peace and conflict, and I realized at the time, by the way, that part of what you need if you're going to put forward that discourse is to recognize that there are often many sides. There are often many legitimate interests and sometimes what appear to be competing interests.

But I am convinced, after having seen what I saw in the Middle East when I was there, that we all need to be working towards a two-state solution that protects the security of the state of Israel and develops a new era in terms of rights for the Palestinians. That was the essence of the Oslo Accords. That has been the essence of most and maybe of all discourse since that point of time.

And I also came back with one other key thing that I want to leave with people. You know, any time I see conflict in the Middle East, I think of the people who are there. And I also came back with one other key thing that I want to leave with people. You know, anytime I see conflict in the Middle East, I think of the people who are there. I remember it hit home when my son was going to be attending—was going to Lebanon to visit friends, and he was scheduled to leave within a few days of the most—more recent conflict a couple of years ago.

But, you know, anytime there's conflict there, I think of the families here and the people that have direct connections—whether it be to Israel, Palestine, Lebanon or Egypt. And I'm struck by the way of how we all live together in this great province of Manitoba and this great country of Canada and I'm struck by the fact that if we can do one thing when it comes to the Middle East, in my mind, it is not to stir up the passions that already exist but to apply that uniquely Canadian perspective, where we bring together people from all over the world that work, building with Aboriginal people, dealing with a diverse society. And that is why I want to say I would urge all of us to do whatever we can to promote peace in the Middle East. I saw it directly. Many families have much more direct contact than I will ever have.

And, yes, I do believe in freedom of speech. But, you know, fundamentally, I also believe that even in the tone in this debate, I would urge all members of the Legislature to remember that if we can do one thing, it should be to promote peace in the Middle East, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

### House Business

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on House business.

On this side of the House, we're in favour of this resolution and I would ask that you canvass the House to determine whether there is sufficient leave to have the House vote on this resolution.

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, I can ask the House if the House is willing to put the question but I'm sure—but if there's other—*[interjection]*

Order. I can put the member's request for asking the House for leave to—for me to put the question for a vote.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The practice in this House is—the rules have long stated that we have private members' hours allotted for private members in order to allow them to be able to speak. It's very unusual for the leader—for the government leader—I don't think I ever did it during my tenure as government leader, nor did I ever think I saw an opposition leader stand up and ask for leave to vote on a resolution because as I understand it, the House rules are that members get to speak because it's the only opportunity that members have in the Chamber to all speak freely on a particular issue. So this is—it's not only in violation of the usual rules, Mr. Speaker, but I've never seen this done in this Legislature during the period that I was House leader. I don't think we ever interrupted our own resolutions or those of the oppositions and ask for a debate in order to force debate and not permit members to speak. So, it's not only unusual, I think it's against the rules.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I notice that the member from Concordia—or from Kildonan—didn't bother to quote any rule to indicate that it's not—that it's out of order to ask for leave. I believe that it is in order to ask for leave at any point in time whether it's in private members' business or whether it's in government business. And I'd simply ask the Speaker to ask for leave to have a vote on this resolution.

**Mr. Speaker:** The request that has been put forward is, the honourable member is asking for—when we do something that is out of the ordinary business of the House or departs from our procedure and practice, a member can ask for leave for us to deviate from that and that's all the member is doing, is asking for leave.

**Mr. Chomiak:** On the same point of order, I understand that any member can stand up at any time

and ask for leave, but we have established rules for members of the House to allow them to speak on resolutions. We establish that as party leaders in agreements. We agreed. We agreed as party leaders, to allow hour-long private bills and private resolutions. So I think it would be unusual and inappropriate to grant leave in a situation like that when it's against the rules of this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The request—I'm going to put the question—this is turning into a full debate here. All the member is asking is for us to depart from our rules of the House. If there's other members, and I'm sure there's other members if they wish to continue debating this, all you have to say is no, because we do have freedom of speech in this House. And every member in this House has the right to speak to any resolution or bill that is put forward. That is our rule. Every member has that right, and if there's other members that wish to continue speaking, all they have to do is say no.

I've just been asked to just ask the House if there is leave to stop debate of this resolution to have a vote. So, is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. It's been denied.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** So we will continue on with the debate.

The honourable member for River Heights stood up first.

\* (11:50)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution. I acknowledge it's a difficult subject because it deals with basic questions of free speech, which is an absolutely fundamental part of who we are as Canadians. On the other hand, we are dealing with an approach which is being taken which infers or calls Israel apartheid, and this is a very serious matter because apartheid is defined in international law as a crime against humanity, and Israel Apartheid Week is being viewed by many as a deliberate attempt to portray the Jewish state as criminal. In my view, we should be building bridges instead of trying to look at people in the most negative sense.

When Naomi and I were in Israel in early 2006, we had an opportunity to visit various parts of the country. We found it notable that in old Jerusalem

that the people in the four quarters, the Armenian quarter, the Jewish quarter, the Christian quarter, and the Moslem quarter, were living peacefully side by side, each worshipping in their own institutions, and what a wonderful opportunity it was to see how that can happen.

When in Tel Aviv, we visited the Eretz Israel Museum, which is a site where on May the 14th, 1948, David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Our guide, who was Avi Ben-Yosef, emphasized again and again to us the importance of this declaration. It specifically provided for guarantees for equal treatment regardless of race or religion or sex. As Avi told us, here in Israel we still don't have a constitution so the Declaration of Independence is very important because it sets out people's rights. I'm going to quote briefly from the Declaration of Independence: it, the State of Israel, "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

During our time in Israel, we were to see many examples of these guarantees of the freedom of religion in Israel, and the efforts which have been taken and are being taken to safeguard the holy places of all religions. For example, we visited with and talked to members of the Druze community, and there are about 110,000 in Israel who have this religion. It's a religion which has its origins in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and is based on a vision of truth, peace, justice and a belief in God.

We visited also the shrine of the Báb in Haifa. Báb is considered by Baha'i to be an independent messenger of God and the Herald of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i faith. Of note, the golden dome of the shrine was designed by Canadian architect William Sutherland Maxwell and completed in 1953. And the 18 terraces were designed in 1987 by the Canadian architect Fariborz Sahba. Baha'i includes principles which include abandonment of all form of prejudice, full equality between the sexes, elimination of the extremes of poverty and wealth, and a recognition of the common source and essential oneness of the world's great religions. It was interesting that the Baha'i Palace was there in Israel because of the guarantees of freedom of religion and the guarantees of holy places.

I also met while I was there with Dr. Yossi Leshem, who directs an observatory in Latrun. He pointed out to us that Israel is one of the best places in the world for watching migratory birds. Many birds prefer to migrate over land so they travel over Israel instead of crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The thermals generated along the ridges are particularly favourable to hawks and eagles, and large numbers can be seen passing this site each spring and fall. He's trying to build bridges among people in the various countries of vastly different backgrounds along the birds' migration routes.

I saw, also, in the restoration of the Hula marshes and in the efforts at irrigation in the Negev, a wonderful care for and attention to the land and the environment.

In my view, there is so much that is being done and can be done to build bridges to help people, that we should put far more attention towards efforts to work together than efforts which divide people.

That being said, I can appreciate that Israel Apartheid Week is attempting to have a dialogue on difficult issues. I can appreciate that the University of Manitoba—there were indeed Jewish speakers, like Mordecai Briemberg. And I've heard the calls for many for free speech and open dialogue and I, too, believe strongly in free speech.

But in my view, open dialogue does not start with unhelpful labels, like the labelling of Israel as apartheid. We need to start from the view of seeing the positive qualities in each other, whether Christian, Jewish, Islam, Buddhist, Druze or Baha'i, or any other religion. And we need to emphasize the need to build bridges, to have tolerance and understanding among peoples.

And for this reason, though I would have worded the resolution somewhat differently, I support the principle of this resolution, and I support this resolution today.

### House Business

**Mr. Hawranik:** Obviously—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Are you up on a point of order or House business?

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Pardon me?

**An Honourable Member:** House business.

**Mr. Hawranik:** On House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** You're on House business?

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, on House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, obviously, leave was not given to vote on this resolution, and the excuse given, obviously, was that others wanted to speak to the resolution.

So I now seek leave that we not see the clock until everyone who wishes to speak to this resolution does, in fact, speak to the resolution, and then a vote is held on this resolution. So I seek leave for that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave for the Speaker not to see the clock until all members that wish to speak have had the opportunity? Is there agreement on that? *[interjection]* No? There is no agreement. So we'll have the next speaker.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), who has brought this resolution forward, and I'm honoured to be able to speak to it.

I speak as one of the 57 members of this House. I also speak as the Attorney General of Manitoba which, perhaps, puts some additional responsibilities on my comments. And, certainly, the resolution that's been brought forward by the member for Tuxedo certainly raises a debate about the outer limits of freedom of expression in our country and in the province of Manitoba.

And this week, Mr. Speaker, some of those limits are certainly called into question. This is, of course, Shoah Week, and we began our week recognizing the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust, which was perhaps the lowest ebb of human rights in our history. Yet, by the end of the week, we'll be celebrating Law Day. I'll be at the Law Courts building. I hope many other members of this Legislature will. Law Day celebrates our Canadian Constitution, celebrates the protections set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the freedom of expression.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first time, in my experience, that I've had to hold these various thoughts together. And I had an opportunity to visit Israel in 2007, and one morning we toured Israel's Supreme Court, and I was quite surprised, astonished, to walk by the library of the Israeli Supreme Court and to see the *Dominion Law Reports*—very distinctive-looking set of books—front and centre in the library of the Israeli Supreme Court. And I asked our tour guide why Canadian law reports would be so—displayed so prominently in the highest court in Israel. And the guide told me that Israeli jurists, Israeli judges, Israeli scholars see our Charter as one of the world's foremost constitutional documents.

And, certainly, Mr. Speaker, that made me very proud to be a Canadian, but also helped me to understand, so strongly, the sense of common values we have between Canada and Israel, which for me has only grown over the past number of years.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have eight minutes remaining.

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 15, 2010**

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