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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 202?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 204?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 207? *[Agreed]*

Bill 207—The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 207, the delivery of goods and provision of services in Winnipeg outside the Perimeter, sponsored by the honourable member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Ms. Wight), that Bill 207, The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act; Loi sur la livraison de produits et la fourniture de services à Winnipeg à l'extérieur de la ceinture périphérique, now be read for a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gaudreau: It's a great privilege to rise today and to talk about a bill that's been brought forward by the people in my area.

By going door to door and talking to everybody—I'm on my fourth go-round now talking to people in my area, and this is something that was raised by all the people who live outside the Perimeter in my area. I represent an area that spans both inside and outside the Perimeter Highway, and the people on the outside of the Perimeter were telling me that they actually have to pay extra fees for certain things.

One of them, actually, I discovered myself, was The Brick was—wanted to charge us an extra delivery fee. I had a little discussion with them, and I ended up getting it waived, but some of the people inside the—outside the Perimeter inside of St. Norbert who are actually inside the city limits—the city limits are past the floodway—we are actually inside the city limits. The Perimeter is merely a road that passes through the constituency, just like in other constituencies. Bishop Grandin might cut St. Vital constituency in half; it's not considered a boundary as such. And the Perimeter is not actually a boundary of the city of Winnipeg. There are actually homes in the Seine River that are going to be affected by this. There's some people in St. Vital who live inside the city but outside of the Perimeter Highway.

And this is—this bill addresses that. All it's saying is that if people can get delivery for free inside the city, that they get the same service inside the city but outside of the Perimeter Highway. It's no different—if they do charge delivery fees inside the city, then that would apply to the same as people outside of the Perimeter Highway who are inside the city, they would be charged those same fees. But if they're not charged inside the Perimeter Highway, they shouldn't be charged outside when they're still within the city limits.

We do—all in St. Norbert, we actually do pay city taxes. We're—we have the city of Winnipeg police and the city school divisions. It—it's—it is part of the city of Winnipeg. I know that it's a unique community on the outside of the city that does have a really rural feel. I mean, that's what part of the beautiful part about living in St. Norbert is, is that it does feel like you were living in a small town and outside of the city, which is wonderful and it's right.

I mean, we—I have, you know, farms and horses and, you know, wild animals right at the end of my street, which is kind of the beauty of living in St. Norbert is that you get to experience the country with living—while living inside the city limits. And I just think that the people of St. Norbert should be extended the same privileges and rights as the rest of the people in the city of Winnipeg when it comes to delivery fees.

One of the fees that I was actually brought awareness of was, through some casework, was health-care fees. There's a health-care company that comes out and they actually require an extra fee to exit the Perimeter to cross the Perimeter Highway. And like I said, the Perimeter Highway is merely a road. It is not actually the boundary of the city of Winnipeg.

I know that sometimes we're accused of Perimeter vision, people in Winnipeg, and I would like to suggest that I don't have Perimeter vision because I actually went to school in The Pas and travelled from the Hudson's Bay 'til all the way down into the southern regions where the member for Morden and Winkler was gracious enough to show me around his area.

And, you know, I've been all over this province and I think that, you know, when I'm looking at a bill like this, it's just—it's a fairness bill for people who live literally house lengths away from each other but there's a road that crosses in between them. And we're just talking about having them have the same delivery fees as what everybody else has.

It doesn't cost that company any more to drive underneath the Perimeter Highway down Pembina than it would for them to drive from, you know, to some of the other furthest points in the city that are within the city limits, when you look at a map. We are actually fairly close to some of these companies, a lot closer than they would be if they had to cross the city, and yet there's a charge because it's outside of the Perimeter Highway.

So I think that it's just—this is just a matter of—it's actually kind of like a housekeeping bill when you think about it. It really shouldn't have had these delivery fees but I guess somewhere along the way people felt that the Perimeter is actually the boundary for the city of Winnipeg. It's not. And I just want to make sure that the people in my area represented and get this, a fair shake of paying delivery fees the same as everybody else in the city of Winnipeg.

This also actually kind of fits in with our consumer protection that we do throughout our government's mandate; we've done a lot of consumer protection. The car repairs, there's another good example, where now it has to be listed what the repairs are and it has to be—you have to have them notarized and they tell you that they're going to charge you a fee and if the fee is actually going to be more, they have to tell you before they do the work so you don't get there and have a sticker shock of a bill. I've actually experienced that myself years ago. I had a car repair and they said, well, it was going to be, you know, a few hundred dollars and it ended up being well over \$1,000 when I showed up and I was a little shocked at that. Now, at least, you get the notification where they phone you and you have a choice. You can say, I don't want the repair done or go ahead, but at least you get that—you're aware of what's going on. That's one of the bills we've done.

One of the ones that we've done that I think is fantastic, especially considering my area is growing and building like never before—I mean, the amount of homes going into my area since the last election are well over 1,000 now new homes, is we've done the new home warranty bill which protects the biggest investment you'll probably ever make, owning a new home, and gives them—gives consumers a little bit of peace of mind when they're buying, you know, homes that are coming up in South Pointe, in the new area, are well over half a million dollars, some of them are in the million-dollar range. And, you know, you would hope that you would have some protection when you buy these homes. And, you know, our government's put in place that kind of protection.

* (10:10)

And also the consumer loans, we've—the payday lending and loan companies, you know, they were charging a lot, and we've cracked down on them and we have legislation that now requires that certain amounts of interest can only be charged. And, you know, we're constantly looking for things that are going to help make lives better for Manitobans.

You know, we look at things; recently, we saw the minister, he had a great picture of him with—holding a cat at a vet's office—another consumer protection bill, just to make sure that the fees at vets are, you know, told to you beforehand, and if there is extra fees going to be, they would just call you. We're not saying that, you know, if there's a need for something that you can't do it. We're just saying that

you should notify the consumer and the pet owner on that case because it's only fair that you know that you're going to have a bill, and what you're looking at. You don't want to show up there and have thousands of dollars tacked onto a bill.

You know, we also did one last year, which was about the new cars, actually we did a little bit more this year on it, about the car advertising. Just because we all know that some of the small print that we see, it's—you know, you have this giant ad, full-page ad, and at the very bottom, the print is so small that you need a micro-magnifying glass to read it. And in that print it says, you know, the price is contingent on \$10,000 down and an extra trade-in of, you know, worth \$5,000. So the price isn't really the price. So we've made sure that that has to be transparent and clear and open.

We're not saying that you can't charge a fair price for a car, but we are saying that your advertisement has to reflect that, so when you come to a dealership, you're not coming under false pretenses where you think you're going to get a car for a certain amount and it ends up being much different amount when you show up. We just want people to know what they're getting into in the first place and to be able to be protected from that. When they get there, they should be able to get what they're asking for.

So I think that this piece of legislation, Bill 207, actually is a great fit for our consumer protectionism bill. It goes a step further on protecting people in a distinct community of people who live outside the Perimeter. It's not just mine, there's actually a few constituencies that have people who live inside the city but outside of the Perimeter Highway. And we're looking at just protecting those people.

We also have, you know, we've done a lot of things around rent protection and rent controls. And, you know, what we're just saying is that there should be a fair and balanced set of rules that everybody can play by and abide by. And this is—this Bill 207 speaks directly to that. It just makes sure that people in a certain segment of the population who happen to live outside of a certain highway actually have the same or are awarded the same fee delivery structure as the people who live inside the Perimeter Highway. They still live within the boundary of city of Winnipeg, and that's basically what the bill talks about, is that it's inside the city of Winnipeg, but it's outside of a highway, which isn't actually the boundary for the city.

And I just think that it's really important that we recognize that these people do have the exact same fees and structures of everybody else in the city of Winnipeg. They have city water, sewer, garbage, policing, and they pay the same City of Winnipeg property taxes. So they are part of the city of Winnipeg, even though it is a beautiful, distinct community just on the outside of the city, which I'm very proud, and blessed, to live in, actually, to have beautiful scenery and a great community. And I'm very pleased to be able to present this bill to help the people of St. Norbert, and hopefully save them a few dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member from St. Norbert, who brought in Bill 207.

I was glad to hear he's doing door-to-door. It's always interesting doing door-to-door, and I'm sure that he is explaining why they raised the PST in spite of the Premier (Mr. Selinger), in the last election, in 2011 election, calling the idea ridiculous to increase the PST, and then they proceeded to expand the PST. And I was actually talking to a couple of owners of a tattoo shop that—when I was doing some door-to-door, and they were very upset about the expansion of the PST to include tattoos, and then, of course, the raising of the 14 per cent increase from 7 to 8 per cent.

So I'm sure that the member is explaining that one away and how that happened, but in relation to Bill 207, I guess this interesting concept here—first of all, who picks up the costs? If you're going to regulate that businesses cannot charge extra for extra distance, then someone is going to pick up that cost, so who will pick up that cost of this?

And I guess, really, the bill brings forward more questions than answers because when you bring in a bill that imposes regulations on companies as to what they can charge and what they can't charge, you know, obviously, the first thing is who picks up the extra costs, but also who's going to regulate it, who's going to monitor this. Is this another bureaucracy to be set up to monitor this? And what about the person that ends up across the street from someone who is inside, and by the member from St. Norbert, his own admission, there are people who live outside the Perimeter but within the city of Winnipeg, but across the street from them they will be in one of our surrounding municipalities of the Capital Region. So who determines whether the price is not—the extra delivery cost is included or whether it is not

included? What about the person across the street? Do they have any consumer protection, as he calls it here?

And I think, unfortunately, what the member is doing is really interfering with the market forces here. Go to the company and negotiate with this in terms of delivery fees. If you are so adamant about this, that living outside the Perimeter but within the city of Winnipeg, this should be something that you can negotiate with a company. Setting up legislation, and then how to enforce it, if you cannot enforce it regularly, then how does it become fair to all consumers, and why, if you cannot enforce this, why do you try to bring in laws?

And I realize that this is—you know, the NDP is not big on understanding how market forces work and distance factors. If it is a longer distance to deliver something, it costs the company more, so perhaps they are using a physical barrier, calling the Perimeter Highway as their free delivery or discounted delivery, whatever it may be, and I realize he's feeling somewhat neglected living outside the Perimeter, but you should get used to the feeling of being neglected sometimes.

So if you're setting up legislation that's going to allow same cost delivery within the city of Winnipeg outside the Perimeter, what about Oak Bluff? What about Oakbank? What about all the surrounding towns, East St. Paul, name the towns around—Stonewall—are you going to then regulate that the delivery shall be the same cost as for the city of Winnipeg? Like, where does it end?

And this is the problem with legislation like this is that you haven't thought it through in terms of how it affects markets, and I know that the—from his comments, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) said that he had talked to a few people from within St. Norbert, but who else has he spoken with? Has he asked the companies what their policy is and how this legislation such as this would affect their company and their operations?

There's no reference in the legislation. There's no reference from his comments that he actually has spoken to companies, that he has investigated what it actually costs companies to deliver their product, whether it's free or discounted, whatever the sales pitch is on it. So what difference—how would this legislation such as this affect the company's costs?

* (10:20)

And, ultimately, consumers have to pay the costs. The company cannot subsidize. They've worked this in on a marketing plan, calling it—and I don't think there's many things that are free; I sort of tend to call it discounted delivery costs because there's no such thing as free delivery. You're paying for it in there somewhere. Someone's paying for it. So what happens when you do legislation like this? Does it then affect those consumers that are outside the catchment area? Do the—all the other consumers outside, and in this example let's use the Capital Region, are they now going to pay an increased delivery cost because of legislation introduced mandating it must be the same delivery cost within the city of Winnipeg? So we're—this legislation really does fall a lot short in terms of consultation.

We would like to know what the real costs of this are. Where is this great push coming from, or is this just an—another idea from the NDP to somehow be seen as consumer friendly where in real case it actually will cost consumers more because perhaps there's a marketing program that companies have, and then now they will withdraw that marketing program because it inhibits their ability to be creative in their marketing.

And there's—it's—this—unfortunately, this government always has the idea that they are the only ones who can protect consumers, and it's really a buyer beware out there. They—this government is not—we know from how they've—they treated Manitobans with the PST and with their tax and fee increases that they are—this is pretty rich calling them protecting consumers because we know that it continues to cost consumers in Manitoba more and more. They continue to pay more and get less from this government all the time, and now they're trying to impose a cost restriction onto marketing to the companies who are selling consumer goods.

So, unless there is a great outcry from consumers, there is some consultation with companies who will be affected by this type of legislation, there really is far too many questions—unanswered questions here, so that it would seem rather shallow to move forward with legislation like this until there actually has been some sort of significant research into what the actual costs of legislation like this would be, and costs not only onto the business community as—but also costs in terms of compliance. There is no mention in here how this government would intend to have companies comply with this is—as I stated before, I'm concerned about creating more bureaucracy trying to follow up on

poorly designed legislation, and if that's their real intent, then they're really not protecting consumers because ultimately, consumers will end up paying more.

So, until those questions are answered, until this member can come up with more comprehensive data as to why a piece of legislation like this is needed, I think it needs to be held back and until we see some more information on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the opportunity to talk in regards to Bill 207 introduced by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), and I certainly appreciate that he probably has some constituents on the outside of the Perimeter who are, in his view, being discriminated against because services that are offered to those on the inside of the Perimeter are not being offered to them. But the city of Winnipeg boundary, of course, is quite different than the Perimeter Highway, especially on the east side, and, again, on the north side. So the issue of who should be included in this certainly is open-ended and has not been well thought through.

And I'm particularly concerned—I view this as an unenforceable piece of legislation. Even if it was complaint driven, it would still have to have people involved in investigations that would have to do the follow-ups necessary to find out whether in fact there was legitimacy to the complaint.

In many cases, the delivery fees are often negotiable. And I'm concerned because many local companies, smaller scale, often use free delivery, and as the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) pointed out, there really is no such thing as free, but let's just describe it as delivery included in the cost in some other way as an incentive to attract local business. And you're taking away this incentive in this particular area, and then you get onto the slippery slope.

And it was also mentioned, you know, is La Salle in or should it be? In fact, I suspect that La Salle often gets free delivery out of many businesses out of Winnipeg already. Stonewall, is it in? Selkirk, is it included? Ste. Anne? You know, all of the small communities in the so-called Capital Region certainly would want to make a point around this issue.

But going back to the point of such a thing as free delivery, there really isn't. Somewhere else that cost will be absorbed. And as the 'mencher'—member for Midland mentioned, perhaps it'll be those that are further out that are paying a delivery fee who get a piece of that extra cost, it'll be transferred to that. But it might also be those that are inside the city that are now called upon to pay part of the extra cost that is viewed by the company to do delivery.

And I do know a local company that works out of Portage and has a store in Winnipeg and also one other community in Manitoba who make quite a bit out of the fact that they will provide delivery in all of those rural areas as well as the city of Winnipeg at no visible charge. At some point, of course, the charge has to be built into the cost. And, really, what are we doing here? Taking away their competitive edge in the marketplace? Are we making them now less competitive against the multinational companies, the large companies that actually are the ones that are imposing this?

And as the member for Midland has said, this is one that can be negotiated and often is part of the price, and certainly not accepting the hard line that some companies say, well, you're outside of the Perimeter, we want to charge extra for delivery, is not carved in stone. It is not in the purchase agreements all—that I have ever seen, and if it is, it would certainly be one that would be subject to some regional discrimination and probably could be challenged quite effectively in court if someone chose to go that route.

But even in the case of the member for St. Norbert, those in his constituency—and I'm aware his constituency includes some outside the Perimeter and some in—he's really transferring costs from those that are outside the Perimeter to those that are inside the Perimeter. He's going to ask them to pay a little bit more if they deal with this particular company because those on the outside don't want an additional charge. And, yes, if they want to do that, that's fine, but you didn't ask them. You have not actually gone to them and said, well, are you prepared to pool these costs and absorb some of these costs? And the answer, I suspect, in many cases, would be no. In fact, he hasn't gone to anyone other than a few people outside of the Perimeter who have—yes, they have a concern, absolutely, but they should certainly approach the company about that.

The marketplace responds to pressure. And if there's an issue in terms of losing a sale outside

in that region of St. Norbert that is outside the Perimeter Highway but inside the city of Winnipeg—and I respect that that's certainly the case—I think, you know, losing a sale or two will certainly change the company's viewpoint on what they're prepared to absorb and how they're going to pay for it, because the delivery cost is certainly legit and companies like I mentioned that actually are using it at competitive advantage—which are often smaller companies, yes, but we certainly want to support small business as well as large business in the community—are losing their ability to do that.

And, you know, I live outside of the city of Portage la Prairie, just a few kilometres, on a really good paved road, and I often have to negotiate whether or not delivery will be part of the charge. And, of course, being from a rural area, and many of us have our own means of moving items with small trucks and that sort of thing, I can also throw that into the mix. Well, if you're going to charge me too much, I'll come and get it. Well, that's certainly an option for those people as well.

And delivery service as a local delivery service can also be a competitive advantage, and there are certainly operations in the city that will move things, and that's how they make a living.

I can't help but think of pianos, in particular. There are a number of firms in the city here who make, actually, quite a good business out of moving pianos because most firms that sell them themselves do not get involved in moving them, and so they would recommend you to one service or the other. And whether or not you're inside the city or whether or not you're some distance from the company is directly related to the cost that you will pay. It is not hidden in the price; it is something that is openly negotiated, and I think that's far more where we should be heading with this than this type of bill.

* (10:30)

This is a slippery slope to get started on, both in the location and the fact that you are entering into the marketplace trying to say to some particular companies that they can and can't do in terms of what services. What's next, a set-up fee? Some people are quite capable of setting material up when it's delivered and, of course, use that as an ability to buy something that is disassembled. Certainly, IKEA is a key player in that sort of thing, but they will set it up for a fee and deliver for a fee depending on the location. Are we going to venture into that

marketplace as well? Is set-up the next thing that we're going to hear?

So, certainly, I'm very concerned that this bill has not been well thought through in terms of the impact on not only his own community but other communities, because as government we have to be representative of all communities, all interests, and so this one, specific to one area in Winnipeg, would become a precedent.

For instance, the city of Brandon has a number of small communities around it. Will they be the next to say, you know, we don't want to pay delivery fee for the town of—the village of Kemnay, which is just outside of the city of Brandon, and probably, from some firms, would be called on—called to pay a delivery fee, if, in fact, they did that. But I think what happens in most cases out there, it is simply something that is negotiated upfront as part of the sale.

So I would encourage his consumers that he's concerned about to become more aware of their own rights and their own ability to negotiate rather than look to government for legislation on every little thing. Because that's—certainly once you start down that particular road there really is almost no end to it.

I certainly support consumer protection, but I see this as taking away the ability of some firms to actually be more competitive and to have an advantage and to survive in a marketplace that frankly is pretty tough. The furniture sales business contains a number of very large players that are very aggressive in the marketplace and certainly have made it difficult for small firms to survive.

So we want to give them every opportunity to sort of level the playing field by dealing with a cost that—in a different way than the large firms. And frankly their ability to do it for a lower cost may be, in fact, reflective of their ability to be closer to the consumer in terms of geographical location or to have less investment in terms of infrastructure.

So I would encourage the member from St. Norbert to go back and rethink what he's asking for in this bill, and see if, in fact, he's doing what he intended to do.

So thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 210. Are we ready to debate Bill 210?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, okay.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: We'll move on to debate on second readings of public bills.

Are we ready to debate Bill 205?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: We are. Okay, we'll proceed with that in a moment.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: But first I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this morning from Collège Saint-Norbert 90 grade 9 students under the direction of Vanessa Joe, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau).

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

Bill 205—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 205, the workers' compensation amendment act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), who has seven minutes remaining.

Is it the will of the House to allow this bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Is there further debate on this bill?

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about Bill 205, and I think the member has got some good ideas of bringing the bill forward. But, you know, I kind of have to point out that, you know, every time we bring forward safety legislation, they vote against it.

Last year, we brought forward a bill that was going to protect the road workers in construction zones, Bill 31, and it was a bill designed and—to protect the road workers with the construction zones having to slow down, and what did the members opposite do? They held it up and then they vote against it.

So when we talk about protecting workers in the workplace, I think that our record speaks very clearly that we're the ones who really look after workers in the workplace. We've—since taking government, we've actually tripled the inspections, more than tripled the inspections. You know, we have worked very hard with all of our worker—workplaces and all the companies to make workplaces safer. We've actually brought down the loss-time injury rate by 43 per cent since '99. In 2014, only 1.8 days were lost to a workplace 'illnury' and 'injress' for every full-time worker. And this has been on a steady decline for the last five years.

Is it low enough? No, absolutely not. And that's why we have new laws coming into place, and we work very closely—I know the minister works very closely with all of the work—with all the companies and all of the construction companies and workforces. She was out at an announcement with them and talking about the Workplace Safety and Health program that we have in place.

I was honoured last—a couple years ago to be—to lead up the five-year workplace health—worker health place and safety review. Went around the province and over 100 meetings within a few months with stakeholders across the province from all the way from up north in Thompson, The Pas, Flin Flon, all the way down south to Morden and Winkler where I met with companies down there talking about what kind of workplace health and safety rules we needed to protect workers. And we came up with a really great, robust five-year plan that is going to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, so, you know, in—when they talk about wanting to protect workers, when they were in government they had 1,600 workplace inspections a year. And you know what we've done since then which actually does help protect workers? We've increased that by eight times. We're at 12,000 workplace inspections per year, and it's going to continue to increase because we put the resources in place to allow those inspections to increase.

The members opposite want to talk a big game about putting resources in place and helping

workplaces, but they want to cut a half a billion dollars from the budget. So how would you fund all of those workplace health and safety inspectors? How would you fund these work programs? How would you fund all of that? They would say, oh, they won't cut it out of safety. Okay, well, what about schools? What about all the schools in my area, Mr. Speaker, that are getting expansions and new science labs and new gyms? Would they cut it out of that?

They talk about safety in one hand, but then when we have a budget put in place that actually implements safety, they vote against it every single time.

It's just—I can't believe that the members opposite don't see the hypocrisy in this, that every time we say we're going to bring forward stuff in the House to protect people, that we're going to build things, we're going to build on schools, we're going to build on our health-care system, every single time they vote against it. Then they come forward with an idea that isn't so bad overall, but it actually probably doesn't go far enough. And, you know, when it comes down to putting the resources in place, they certainly have voted against those resources every single time.

So it's interesting, you know, that when we put forward all of our bills that have things like the new Chief Prevention Officer and dedicated 'prown' cross-Crown prosecutors for workplace health and safety, what did they do? They voted against those budgets that funded those prosecutors. We can't have the workplace health and safety inspectors without the funding to do so. We can't have the prosecutors in place without the funding to do so.

And I believe it was their past leader, maybe it was their past, past leader, who said that workplaces can police themselves. That was during their election where they said, we don't need workplace health and safety, we don't need inspectors because workplaces can police themselves.

Well, we saw how that worked out, because when they were in government that's exactly what workplaces did, because there was only 1,600 inspections and the injury rate was 43 per cent higher and people were getting injured and hurt at work at a much higher rate. So, obviously, the plan to police themselves, like the members opposite would suggest, doesn't work, Mr. Speaker. You have to have some regulations in place, and you have to

have the inspectors in place who go about inspecting these workplaces to make sure they're safe.

Coming from a shop environment, Mr. Speaker—that's where I was before I got elected to this Chamber and honoured to serve my constituency of St. Norbert—I had those workplace health and safety inspectors come into my workplace, and they worked with us to work to make our workplace healthier and safer so I could go home every day to my family.

* (10:40)

We wanted to reduce the time-loss injuries, and to do so we put in place—this government, before I was elected, had put in place things like having the joint health place—workplace health and safety committees where the employer and employee had equal representation on those committees. And those were put in place before I was elected; I'm not going to take credit for that, but I know that our—people in our government did that, some of my colleagues on this side. They put that in place and that gave the worker a very powerful voice in the workplace to say we need to make some changes because now we were on equal footing with the employer. And you know what came about from all of that? Better, safer workplaces, Mr. Speaker.

And every single time, the members opposite voted against it. Now, I wasn't here, but I know that they voted against it, Mr. Speaker, because I kept track of that as a worker because workplace health and safety was important to me. So I would watch—I know I'm a little bit of a politico, but I would watch QP. I would actually tape it, and I would watch QP and I would hear these members opposite vote against stuff that mattered to me in the workplace.

You know what we've also done? We've put in place SAFE Workers of Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. SAFE Workers of Tomorrow are a young group of people who go around this province and they talk to all of the students, like the students here in the gallery, and they talk about workplace health and safety and their role in it and their responsibility in it and their responsibility to report a hazard and to talk to their employer about how they should make the workplace better.

It's not all about, you know, cracking down; it's about working collaboratively with the workplaces to point out hazards, because a lot of times when you work in a workplace, you get complacent. You think that's just the way it should be done. But then an outside pair of eyes come in, like these inspectors,

and they can say, whoa, that might not be the safest way to do that, have you tried it this way? And you work with those inspectors to make the workplace safer.

And I know with the Chief Prevention Officer, the—he's—I know that's his vision. I worked with him very closely on the review when I—we were going around the province together and got to know each other really well when we were doing a lot of driving around this province, and I know that's his vision. His vision is to work collaboratively with the employers to make the workplaces better, but you also need to have the resources in place to do so.

And if the member's opposite plan with—were to come in and to cut a half a billion dollars from the budget, those would surely be the positions that would be eliminated, which would sacrifice safety of workers, Mr. Speaker. And it shows, because the last time they were in, that's exactly what happened: 1,600 workplace inspections compared to now 12,000 and growing.

We have teams that work with the WCB. They go out to workplaces that have seen higher injury rates in their workplace, and they work with that company very closely, and they spend a lot of time working with that company at no cost to the company to bring those workplace injuries down. That's our vision and that's what we do on this side of the House is we put those resources in place.

Now, those teams couldn't exist if we slashed the budget and we were to just balance the books but slash everything out of the budget. We wouldn't have the workplace health and safety inspectors. We wouldn't have the WCB teams to go out to these workplaces and work with them, so that way they reduce their rates. Obviously, that's part of what the companies would like to do, but in the end, they also want their employees to go home safe every day, because a safe, healthy employee makes for a really good workplace.

So I think that while this is on the right track, I think that maybe the members opposite want to look at—maybe talk to their leader and talk about what they want to do when it comes to voting for the resources that these ideas come up. Because we consistently see ideas that come up and we put them forward and then the members opposite vote them down because there's—they think that we should slash and burn and all we have to worry about is focus on balancing the budget.

We will balance the budget, Mr. Speaker, at some point. The budget's going to be balanced in the next few years, but we're not going to do it by slashing workplace health and safety inspectors. We're not going to do it by cutting schools and firing teachers and getting rid of SAFE Workers of Tomorrow, which go around to the schools and talk to the students to create safe workers from the beginning. When they come into the workforce, they know their rights, they know how to just communicate with the employer and they know how to make their workplace safer for them for their whole working career. Now that would certainly suffer underneath the half-a-billion-dollar cuts that are being called for.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to put a few words on the record.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just have to thank the member from St. Norbert for his speech on the importance of safe workers. And I look up at the young workers of tomorrow up in the gallery, and the member from St. Norbert is really stressing that they want to come home from work and carry on their life as—on a everyday thing.

But what I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, is I'm standing here, I look across at the opposition here and every one of them, every one of them voted against workplace health and safety legislation, and that is shameful because I come from a community where there is accidents. And I want to go over a few accidents that changed my life. And if it wasn't for our party and workplace health and safety there would be more accidents. We've stood up for the workers of tomorrow, but the workers of today.

And I have to tell you a story as I was a teacher, it was grade 5, and I had a spare because my class went to phys. ed. I was in the teachers room and I get a call, and it was a mother and she was crying on the end of phone, and she says, Clarence, can you get my two kids—she had two kids, they were twins in grade 5—could you get them ready? And she was crying, and I said, what's wrong? She says, my husband was killed in a mining accident and I'm coming there to pick them up. And all of a sudden, there's my spare, the whole world just changes.

I went down to pick them up in phys. ed., and it wasn't quite the end of phys. ed., and I looked through the window and I see the kids playing, I see the kids who are playing some basketball drills,

whatever, and I see the brother and sister there and in a matter of minutes their life is going to change completely. And sure enough, actually the mother didn't make it; it was her sister that came. And the two kids, I went, talked to the phys. ed. teacher, I say, I have to take these two, and they were red-faced, taken out of the middle phys. ed. class and, you know, the aunt just came there and hugged them and they said come on with me.

And I realize that the importance, and the accident that happened in mining, of course, through workplace health and safety they studied it, they found out what, if it could have been prevented, and, yes, it could have been prevented. And that's what workplace health and safety, why it's so important because we can prevent accidents. We can make sure that that husband can get back home to his kids. We can make sure that kids that are working in part-time jobs get home to have another day and have hope for their future. We can do that, Mr. Speaker.

The other story I have is about my two daughters. Not too many people in here know that we, in Flin Flon, live kind of right on the border of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. One year I had one daughter working for the highways branch in Manitoba, and the other one working for the highways branch in Saskatchewan. Of course that summer, I was always blamed for the potholes in both sides of the border. But they had good jobs. And I think in reference to their jobs, they were flag girls, go out and that and they would also go and break up beaver dams, stuff like that.

But then that girl was killed in Winnipeg by a person that didn't see her, she was a flag girl, and I thought that can happen any time. And I couldn't believe.

But now when you drive throughout Manitoba, and believe me you see because of our investment in infrastructure, you see the amount of work that's going on in different roads throughout the—and you see these people, they've got orange suits on, they've got everything going and thank God. And what we've learned from that is, you know, we've got to make them more visible, even though I thought they were. And we've doubled the fines for people that are speeding in those zones. And that is all important because we've learned the lesson.

And any time workplace health and safety, like I said, I liked the member that introduced this, but we have to go further. You know, she's saying for emergency workers, PSD, we want to, you know,

work that, well, there's more people than just emergency workers that suffer from this; it's the people that are in the mine that have to go collect their friends body that fell down four or five storeys. It's people that are working in construction that see a young girl, a young boy that was killed on the highway. This all—this affects everybody. It's not just emergency workers.

* (10:50)

And I think that's what we want to do, and the Minister of Labour, I'm sure, is coming up with a better version that's going to be all-encompassing, because it's just not emergency workers that suffer from this and I think we've got to realize in life and everything there's always a situation where people need some help, and we want to help everybody in that situation.

Continuing on, when I look at the different things that we've offered in workplace health and safety, we've strengthened many things. And I know in the mining aspect, we've got tougher regulations in the investigation and also in the penalties because we want to make sure that everybody that goes to work can come home to their family, and I think that is important.

Also I'd like to say that in—the Leader of the Opposition's party have a record of putting workers at risk by opposing measures to create safer workplaces and protecting working families. And when I look at them, yes, they have; they've not voted for anything that would help. And like the member from St. Norbert said, they want to cut—they want to cut. And what are they going to cut? They're—they'll cut the Workers Compensation Board. They'll cut the people that are going around and checking for unsafe working conditions. They'll cut that; that'll be the first thing to go. And when that happens, then all of a sudden you're going to see a spike in accidents, you're going to see a spike in deaths. And we don't want that.

I look up at the children of tomorrow or the young adults of tomorrow and I say, you know what? I want to make sure—I want to make sure when they go to work that they can come home safe. And I'm sure they want to do that, too, but stand up for what's right for Pete's sake. I can't handle this, oh, I'm not voting it because it's not our political idea or whatever. It's the idea of what's best for the people of Manitoba, and I think the Minister of Labour will introduce something that's all-encompassing for that, and I thank her for that.

Just last fall, the Opposition Leader and his party tried to block legislation to protect highway workers in construction zones. Why would you do that? They tried to eliminate speed reduction for cars passing emergency vehicles and emergency staff in residential areas, and they would have put the safety of first responders at risk. This hurts me, because I—like I say, when I look around, this could be some of our kids, this could be some of our relatives that could be hurt in or put in danger.

They voted against amendments to The Workplace Safety and Health Act that allows safety officers to stop work at unsafe work sites. It gives workers the right to refuse unsafe work. It creates a new Chief Prevention Officer and requires an annual injury and illness report.

Another example I want to give you is everybody's probably shingled roofs and all that, and at one time you'd go on a roof and, you know, there was no safety belt or nothing. And I see now, I think you can by law still shingle your own roof, but when a contractor or company comes in they have to be all belted up and everything. And I had one of my students that was working for a small contractor. He didn't follow the rules, and the student, you know, hurt his back, and that lucky he wasn't crippled for life, but he was in the hospital for many months.

So, just simple little rules like that, that are put in, is looking after the future of Manitobans. It's looking after our young adults up there. Each and every one of them deserves to come home, Mr. Speaker. Each and every one of them deserves to have a family. Each and every one of them has the chance to be sitting in this Chamber, whether it's in the NDP or the Conservatives, they have that chance to come in here. And we cannot take this lightly. We cannot be—we cannot take this lightly, because when I look up there I see my own kids. And when I see my own kids, I look up there and I say, I want to make sure that conditions are put in place that are safe, conditions are put in place that we can actually improve the working conditions and make sure that when everybody goes to work they are going to come home to a family or come home, like I say, to their wife and kids.

And I thank you for giving me this time for putting a few words on, and, yes, you can call me the angry man today, but I'll tell you—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time—for Flin Flon—has elapsed.

Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I'm honoured, as always, Mr. Speaker, to get a chance to speak in the House on this bill. I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing it forward.

We did commit, of course, in our Throne Speech, to bringing forward new legislation that speaks to PTSD, and so I'm very excited about that coming forward. It will be a broader range than what is in this bill, so I can assure the member opposite that, in fact, we will be taking care of this very soon.

To proceed with the presumption that only emergency workers would need this kind of coverage is mistaken, of course. So that leaves out a large majority of workers who are suffering from PTSD due to workplace incidents, Mr. Speaker. So just so that that's clear and on the record, I think they get, actually, about 10 per cent of the PTSD claims come from emergency workers. So many more come from people like correctional workers and health-care aides and social workers. And having been in—working with kids involved in crime myself as a youth-care worker, I would think there's probably a number of folks from that area because you do tend to hear sometimes horrendous story after horrendous story for year after year after year on end coming out of different folks' lives. So that can really affect you, and so I just want to be clear that we are going to do this and we're going to do it in a much broader scope.

An Honourable Member: When are you doing it?

Ms. Wight: Very soon, so that's very good.

I also wanted to just mention some of the things that I—the member from St. Norbert brought up because I think it's just so important, Mr. Speaker. The idea that workplaces can police themselves, as is the view of the members opposite, is terrifying to me. Injury rates were 43 per cent higher under that plan, and inspections for workplaces were about 1,600, I understand, compared to 12,000 now. And this doesn't help just only the workers when you bring in these kinds of safety plans; it helps everyone. It helps the businesses as well.

To have a healthy workplace is obviously good not only for the worker who gets to go home alive at the end of the day but also for the businesses. So it's not just helping one side; it's helping everyone. But members opposite have never seemed to be able to get a hold of that concept and have not supported things to do with workplace health and safety.

I have a very personal connection to this as well, and I—and something that I hope that we will also be working on, and that is with regard to the farming community and workplace health and safety. And I think—I know my dad was killed in an accident on the farm, and all the times—it's interesting because I went to those events where you light the candle for the people who have died, and it didn't go far enough back, but I had never thought of that as being a—stupidly—a workplace health and safety thing for farmers. Like, at that time, we didn't think of it that way. But it is no less that. We're in—it was June 9th, and—sorry. I didn't really mean to be talking about that. But I'm hoping that we can also really do more to get out the message to farmers as well that we want them to be safe on their workplaces and we want them to be able to work and end their day alive.

So this is very close to my heart, workplace health and safety, and just thinking about it in every sort of capacity that it could be in. I feel silly that I didn't think of—anyway, you think of sort of people working in big manufacturing plants and things like that, but—and I know now, of course, when we go to those, farmers are all counted. But I don't know that anyone—that we really do enough to get the message out to our farmers that you can be safe. And Dad knew that. In this case, he did something—he was hurrying to get to an event in Clear Lake at the time because he loved to go there and he played the piano for all the people at the thing. He was a great pianist. And so he was hurrying and he left out that safety moment to put what he needed to put into place on the truck. And so I would just ask people to, you know, always be taking the time, and maybe we can do more in that field to get people out in our farms working safely—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member—Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Ms. Wight) will have five minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 7—2015 Year of Sport

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it is time for private members' resolutions, and today we're considering the resolution sponsored by the honourable member for St. Norbert, and the resolution is entitled 2015 Year of Sport.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): I move, seconded by the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Ms. Wight),

WHEREAS 2015 is the Year of Sport in Manitoba to promote, celebrate and recognize the valuable role sport plays in our communities across Manitoba; and

WHEREAS is an essential part of fun, active and healthy lifestyle, over 300,000 Manitobans make sport part of their daily lives; and

WHEREAS Manitobans know the value of sport and show in participating in everything from playing organized sports, coaching, managing, volunteering or cheering from the sidelines as a parent or a fan; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is committed to supporting support—sport by providing over \$11 million to Sport Manitoba to help community organizations run quality sport programming across the province and \$1.5 million to fund inner-city-neighbourhood youth recreation programs; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is partnered with the private sector, the City of Winnipeg and the federal government for phase 2 of the Sport for Life Centre that will benefit at use—risk—families, community groups, provincial sport organizations and athletes of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is investing in the Year of Sport by providing over \$43 million in funding to local, regional, national and international sporting events; and

WHEREAS more than 200,000 people will enjoy marquee sporting events right here in Manitoba, including the FIFA Women's World Cup, the Grey Cup and the RBC Cup in Portage la Prairie; and

WHEREAS the events—these events will generate well over \$100 million in economic activity and also represent tremendous opportunities to promote tourism and to showcase Manitoba and the province.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the incredible value sport provides Manitobans and the Manitoba economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the legislator Assembly—Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate all the athletes, coaches and volunteers of all the sporting events held across the province.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), seconded by the honourable Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Ms. Wight),

WHEREAS 2015 is—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed on today's Order Paper? [Agreed]

WHEREAS 2015 is the Year of Sport in Manitoba to promote, celebrate and recognize the valuable role sport plays in our communities across Manitoba; and

WHEREAS sport is an essential part of a fun, active, and healthy lifestyle and over 300,000 Manitobans make sport part of their daily lives; and

WHEREAS Manitobans know the value of sport and show it by participating in everything from playing organized sports, coaching, managing, volunteering, or cheering from the sidelines as a parent or fan; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is committed to supporting sport, by providing over \$11 million to Sport Manitoba to help community organizations run quality sports programming across the province and \$1.5 million to fund inner-city neighbourhoods youth recreation programs; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has partnered with the private sector, the City of Winnipeg and the Federal Government for phase II of the Sport for Life Centre that will benefit at-risk youth, families, community groups, provincial sport organizations and athletes of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is investing in the Year of Sport by providing over \$43 million in funding to local, regional, national and international sporting events; and

WHEREAS more than 200,000 people will enjoy marquee sporting events right here in Manitoba including the FIFA Women's World Cup, the Grey Cup and the RBC Cup in Portage la Prairie; and

WHEREAS these events will generate well over \$100 million in economic activity and also represent tremendous opportunities to promote tourism and to showcase Manitobans and the province.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the incredible value sport provides Manitobans and the Manitoba economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all Members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate all the athletes, coaches and volunteers of all the sporting events held across the province.

Mr. Gaudreau: A pleasure to rise again today in the House to talk about sport.

This is hugely important to the economy of Manitoba, and we are going to see hundreds of millions of dollars brought in to Manitoba because of these events. In fact, driving here today, I was looking at the signs on Pembina Highway that are already up about the FIFA World Cup, and it talked about, you know, the dates and the times and we're—how to direct traffic and what's going to be happening around there. I'm sure I'll experience some delays with the thousands of people going there to enjoy these World Cup soccer events.

And I know later on one of my favourite things is going to be happening, which is later on this season will be the Grey Cup, and I'm hopeful that the Bombers will be there this year. Maybe, you know, I know that some of the members might be a little green, on the other side, with envy, but I'm hoping that the Blue Bombers will be in the cup this year, and they're going to get to enjoy a world-class facility for the FIFA World Cup and for the Grey Cup that is coming in. And if—and, you know, we're even talking about having the Winter Classic at some point, which would be another phenomenal boost to the city of Winnipeg and to the province of Manitoba.

When people come here, you know, they don't just come just to the city, they try to experience the province, and it leads to tourism in the areas for—well, the member from Morden-Winkler, for example, his area has the nice 'dinoscaur'—dinosaur discovery centre, so people can—you know, they'll come here for the FIFA World Cup and they'll read the top attractions, the star attractions, and hopefully they head down to Morden and Winkler and they check out that wonderful discovery centre that's in Manitoba.

And, you know, we talk about the sporting events in Manitoba—not only do they provide the economic boom for Manitoba, but they're also the—we're talking about some of the smaller sporting events around with our community clubs. I coached my son's soccer team at Waverley Heights Community Club for a few years, and, actually, in a couple of weeks from now, I'm going to do some volunteer coaching for the same club again. They've asked me to come out and do a couple of nights of volunteer coaching for the kids on their team. So I'll be out there with a—you know, a case full of freezies and hopefully we'll have some nice weather and volunteer coach those kids on the field.

It's so important that we stay active. We look at it from the health point, the benefits to staying active and being involved in sports show right through your entire life. What's something that's interesting, too, I saw on the news this morning that Winnipeg is actually the—Manitoba is the No. 1 city right now for the Commuter Challenge, which is going on right now as we speak. They said that we are outdoing all the other cities almost—some of them more than double, actually. We—I think they said there was 5,600 people participating in Manitoba, and in BC there was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 3,000, and I think there was 1,800 or something in Alberta.

So, that just shows that how active Manitobans are and how we take our health and activity really important in our lives, that we look at it as something to really pay attention to and that we work towards that. So I'm really proud of our government for, you know, funding sports, funding things like, you know, we looked at the swimming pool, and the Sherbrook swimming pool. When they needed a little bit of help, you know, we threw in some—*[interjection]* Yes, we threw in \$900,000 for the swimming pool to help repair it so we could get it up and running so the kids can have access to that facility again, and swimming lessons, you know, very important. And just the activity too; the seniors of the area like to use that.

We—you know, we put a lot of money into health and wellness in our province. The phase 2 of the Sport for Life Centre, where we're partnering up with the City of Winnipeg and the federal government on this project and we're going to be, you know, helping them build another great facility for Manitoba.

And if you just look at the last, you know, 14-plus years at how much has gone on in Winnipeg and how much building has go on and how much

sport has gone on in Winnipeg. We went from a city that actually lost the NHL franchise to a city that now has probably the best NHL franchise in the league, in my opinion. I know that might differ for some others, but we definitely have the best fans in the league. When you go to our MTS Centre, which our government had a part in helping build to bring back the Jets, when you go to that centre and you see how many people are there and the money that comes in, the revenue that's generated, the people who are working good jobs and all of the fun that people get to have, it's really changed the face of our downtown, and it's really changed the face of our province. We are, you know—we're a world-class city that is building on that. You look at the stadium and, yes, I know that there's some, you know, a little bit of issues with the concrete in the stadium, and that's being worked out right now in court against the builders but, overall, we have a world-class stadium that has attracted FIFA World Cup.

If we wouldn't have helped invest in that stadium, if we wouldn't have been part of that project, we would not have the World Cup coming. We also wouldn't have had Taylor Swift and Paul McCartney and many other of these big acts that came here just because they wanted to play in such a amazing new venue.

I, for one, being a Bomber fan, have been to the stadium many times. I actually bought my tickets yesterday for the Banjo Bowl which is in September. I have some friends from Saskatchewan who come every year. We have a good exchange. I go to Saskatchewan for their Labour Day Classic and then they come back here and we have the Banjo Bowl. And this year I'm convinced it's our year for both. We're going to take them both, and the ribbing's already started.

But, you know, I go to Saskatchewan and I took my lovely wife. We went to the stadium a while back, a few years ago, one of our first times we went over to visit our friends there, and she—we went to the stadium and she said, is this really their stadium? She said, this is unbelievable; like, the washrooms are nothing but porta-potties in a back field, the stadium is in disrepair, it's falling apart. And she said, it's nothing like ours. She said, this is crazy, she said. I can't believe that this is actually their stadium.

And I said yes, well, that's because there's a difference. We made a project happen. We said that we wanted a new stadium and we made it happen. We built a new stadium, and it's unbelievable

difference from what they have to play in. And their stadium's under way and it's going to be built in the next few years, but ours is already up and running and we're seeing the benefits from that. We're seeing FIFA World Cup, we're seeing the Grey Cup coming here, and possibly the Winter Classic for the NHL, which all of that brings in tourism, revenue, money and fun for all of our residents here in Manitoba. We want people to be able to have a great lifestyle here. I mean, we know that we're the most affordable province to live, so we also want to give them fun things to do, which is like the Jets games and the World Cup and the classic games that are going to be played outside.

You know, I'm very proud to say that the splash pad that—it's part of recreation. I know it's not exactly running around a soccer field, but it's getting the kids away from the computer screens and out and doing something, and I've made sure that the splash pad in Waverley Heights, it's going to be open in the next few weeks, and I'm hoping to be there for the grand opening in my bathing suit to cut the ribbon and run through the splash pad with all the kids.

* (11:10)

But that's the kind of thing you get on our side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we build and invest in Manitoba. We don't just go and cut for the sake of cutting. We are building in Manitoba. We are building things like splash pads, we built the stadium, we built the arena, we helped—we had a big part—a hand in that. And, actually, to speak of the arena, we actually also got back our AHL team. So now we not only have world-class hockey in the NHL, we have the AHL team here which is fantastic hockey at an affordable rate. So, you know, Manitoba and Winnipeg have seen a huge renaissance and turnaround because of investments that this government has made, and sport is a huge part of it, and tourism is a huge part of it.

We want to bring people here, want people to come to Manitoba and see what we have to offer, everything from up to my friend the MLA for Gimli, up in his area, in Gimli there's some beautiful things; my friend from Thompson and further north up into Churchill there are the beluga whales.

So we have so much to offer in Manitoba and the world is going to come here now and see it because we've invested in things like the new stadium, and the World Cup is coming and people are going to come here and invest in that.

And we've also seen lots of improvement in health, Mr. Speaker. You know, when people are out enjoying these facilities, playing soccer and playing football and baseball and going to the splash pads, they're not sitting around the home just in behind the TV screen, they're out doing all of these wonderful activities that keep them healthy.

And, you know, it's sad to say that, you know, the members opposite, they don't support all of the initiatives that we've done and all of the building; we wouldn't have the Jets with this, we wouldn't have a new stadium, we wouldn't have the FIFA World Cup, it's just that's fortunate that, you know, that they've gone and they vote against all of these budgets in place.

And I have to say that, you know, a couple of weeks ago I heard the member for Brandon over there saying that he was, you know, that there's cost overruns on construction and no private industry does that. I wonder how he feels about his federal masters, the Conservative government, and the cost overrun of \$200 million to the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre that was a P3 done underneath the federal Conservatives. So a \$200-million cost overrun on their part and voting against budgets that put in place great things for Manitoba on our part, Mr. Speaker.

And with that, I thank you very much.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It's an honour to get up and speak to a issue that I have great passion for. I have, on occasion in this Chamber, mentioned my love for youth sport and what it means for young people and for families and for healthy communities. And one of the points in the resolution states, and I quote from it that, "Sport is an essential part of a fun, active, and healthy lifestyle." And how true that is. In fact, we have seen a lot of studies coming out now that not just is it youth sport, not just as physical activity, but it's also diet. And what you see now with a lot of youth sport and a lot of sports officials and people who are looking at the impact of sport on society, is that they're going to start talking not just about a healthy lifestyle as far as exercise, but also far more healthy lifestyle in regards to how we eat, what we eat and when we eat it. And in fact, I'm sure many of us have seen the debate should juice actually be on the healthy lifestyle menu that's put out by Health Canada, and there's some discussion whether it should even be there because it's such a heavy concentration of sugars. So we've seen a great advancement coming.

When we talk about youth sport it's far more encompassing than just having individuals go out and run on a field, or play basketball, or whatever it is they do. We also know that it's not just youth sport, Mr. Speaker, but also we know that a lot of our senior citizens keep active. We are in a winter climate and it's great to see that in shopping centres and now increasingly in the sportsplexes, there are tracks where our seniors can get out and walk. For any of us who have gone early waiting to have—buy something from a store and they don't open until 10, you see all the walkers in the mall, and that's all very healthy, all of that helps us.

And when we are in a nation that, you know, stands very proudly behind its health-care system, but we also know that the health-care system has—very costly. And the more we can do to save money to be pre-emptive in the way that we deal with people's health, the better it is. And I would make the argument again today, as I have on numerous occasions, that we're better off putting \$40 million into a new sportsplex where we keep people healthy, and of all ages, not just young people, but keep all ages healthy. We're better off putting \$40 million into a facility like that as compared to \$400 million having to build new hospitals. And the more we can be holistic, the more we can get individuals to keep themselves healthy and keep themselves fit, the better it is.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be having just a dynamic show coming to town; I believe there's going to be six FIFA World Cup games coming to Winnipeg. And what an honour that is, indeed, for all of us who have been very active and worked very hard over the years promoting soccer in Winnipeg and across the province. We're very proud of that. I'd like to point out, and there's always a danger when you mention one name, then you have 20 people who feel that they should have been mentioned as well, but I'd like to mention Christine O'Connell. And that's Christine O'Connell: C-o-n-n-e-l-l. She was very involved with the women's soccer league. We have one of the strongest women's soccer programs in the world. For our size, Canada does exceptionally well with soccer. We have placed very well, and because of our placing at the World Cup and at the Olympics, there's a lot more money that's come to Canada for our programming. We've turned out some amazing soccer athletes, many of them right here from Winnipeg, and today's Free Press highlights, again, one of the individuals who is very excited to be playing in front of a home crowd for her team.

And the women's soccer program is absolutely outstanding, and I hesitate to venture here, but perhaps the men's program could be a little bit better organized like the women's program. They do a great job in the way they organize it. They've taken a lot of the drama out of it. I would say to the men's league that perhaps they should cut a little bit of that drama out and maybe they should fight less and play more soccer. And the women have done a fantastic job in this province. And for anybody who knows the various programs, I would say that we should be incredibly proud. And it's not just Christine O'Connell, but there are other individuals, and we thank all of them for what they do because it's so important to get out and exercise. It's really healthy that you're part of a team, and I know they—and then they go out for coffee afterwards, and it's just a really good opportunity to get out. We've got some great fields and great facilities, Mr. Speaker, and there's a reason why Canada gets to host the FIFA Women's World Cup here because, you know, we have such a strong program. I understand that ticket sales are very—are doing very well here in Winnipeg, and it's going to be very exciting, and it's actually going to put Winnipeg and Canada on the map in soccer. And that's going to be very exciting, and I know we're all going to be very proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to present at the 34th Canadian regional seminar of the Canadian parliamentary association. That was in Edmonton on October 13th, 2012. And I even had a paper published in the Canadian Parliamentary Review, spring of 2013, volume 36, No. 1, and it was government involvement in youth sport and the role government should play. And it highlights that because we have a very dynamic health-care system, we, too, should be looking at how we can offset some of the costs of our health-care system by using good sports programs.

Not just is it in soccer, though that is one of the stronger programs; we've got a very, very good hockey program. And for anybody who's gone out and watched some of the juniors play and even the younger kids, it's very exciting. It is really exciting to watch them play and really fun, and we've got some just amazing athletes going out there. And, unfortunately, we always hear the negative about what's—you know, there was a fight there or parents go over the top, they get a little too emotional. But, by and large, it's a real positive thing, and great to see parents out supporting their children and supporting their programs.

* (11:20)

There is a lot of fundraising, there is a lot of travelling that goes on, and kids get to understand a bigger picture in life, to be part of a team that travels together and plays others. I always said to my kids, you know, be careful how you play other teams because it might be next year that you're playing with a whole bunch of kids off of the other team, because they always mix them up, so, you know, careful that you don't become retributive on the field, or whatever sport you're playing, whether it's on the court or whatever the case may be, because next year you might just be playing with that individual on a team that you seem to have it in for this time around. And I think it teaches a lot of positive values.

I'd like to point out we've got a very strong basketball program. Our Philippine community absolutely loves basketball, and they have great tournaments. They do a great job organizing themselves.

And volleyball is very strong. In fact, it's supposed to be one of the faster growing sports programs.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, Ultimate Frisbee, which is one of the fastest growing sports and does exceptionally well. In fact, I was at a sports meeting last night, and I said the Ultimate Frisbee people tend to like the times in—on fields and in the pitches after—like, usually after 10 o'clock, and I said it might have something to do that they sneak other libations in—I don't know that—but they love to play late at night, and they'll play 'til 1 and 2 in the morning.

There's a—I don't know if the Chamber knows, there's a really good dodge ball association in this city.

And last but not least, one of the fastest growing sports in North America is pickleball, which is played by a lot of our seniors, and has an amazing league. In fact, they're going to start picking up more of those here in the city.

So a lot of exciting things happening—I know that we, as a Chamber and as elected officials, support it. We do have a role, with a country that has a health-care system which we're very proud of, offsetting it by getting people involved, we actually can save a lot of health-care dollars.

And I always want to be there and always supportive and love going out and watching sports, in particular, watching the FIFA women's soccer. I'm

very excited that I will be there, as well, and appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I have to say that there's no motion I would rather get up to speak to than one that's on the question of sports. I want to thank my friend for—from St. Norbert for putting this on our agenda, our collective agenda today so that we can talk about it.

And I always say, as a kid, that my life was defined by four seasons, and those four seasons were hockey, baseball, football and golf. I'm not very good in any of those things, I have to say, but nevertheless, they defined who I was as a kid and they continue to define who I am as an adult and as a dad and a parent and a community member, at that.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, this has been the year of sport for me personally, as my team, the well-known team called the Puckheads won our—and I want to emphasize the P there. The Puckheads won our city championship in the IMOHL, a well-known league to about five of us across the city. But I can say that my team finished sixth in, I think, in the regular season, and then out of nowhere, went on a stunning, stunning roll in the playoffs. I was absent for two of the three games and only came back for the championship game, but nevertheless, we went on to win a championship. And I can still say that even in my advancing years, winning anything, but especially winning a hockey championship, is about as sweet as it comes. And so it gives me great pleasure today to talk to this particular resolution, as it is the year of sport.

And I have to say, in speaking about just the year of sport and what it's meant to me personally, I think it's worth acknowledging that Canada went on a fabulous 10-and-oh run at the world hockey championships just a few weeks ago. We steamrolled pretty much everybody there was to steamroll in the world in the context of international hockey and any time we can win a world championship or a gold medal, which we can—tend to do from time to time, it makes me particularly happy, but I know it makes Manitobans and Canadians very happy, and it tends to unify us.

And that's the thing about sport, Mr. Speaker, is that it does promote unity among individuals, among community members, among neighbours and, in the largest sense, among Canadians. And it's a form of nation building that I think very highly of.

And I have to say, just while we're in the context of great things about Winnipeg, I should note that the Blackhawks made their way into the Stanley Cup final just on Saturday night, and led by whom? None other than a Winnipegger, the one and only Jonathan Toews, the captain of the Blackhawks and an outstanding Winnipegger, an outstanding Manitoban, an outstanding Canadian who makes me proud when he wears 19 for the Blackhawks and makes me especially proud when he wears 16 for Team Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's lots to celebrate when it comes to sports, and my friends on both sides of the House have referenced, of course, the FIFA World Cup about to start in a matter of days. And then we have, of course, the Grey Cup set to come here in November, and I won't say too much about the Grey Cup. Let's hope that the Bombers are somewhere in the mix. And I know that there are others of us who didn't grow up in this particular province, have different football allegiances, but nevertheless we know that the game itself will be spectacular. It'll be great for Winnipeg. It'll be great for Manitoba, and as another example of the way in which sports not only builds communities but it's—it also provides for nation building as well.

But those aren't the only great events that are coming to Winnipeg, or in Manitoba, over the course of 2015, and I have a list of them. There's the 2015 Telus Cup Regional Tournament, which—and I also think the Portage Terriers went on to win the RBC Cup, which was fabulous and for those of us who were watching—hockey fans, I certainly spent a good portion of Sunday afternoon watching that team play fabulously. We had the 2015 junior and under-23 badminton championships, and I don't think there's any more exciting sport in many ways than watching people play badminton. It really is a glorious, glorious sport. There's the 2015 national trap shooting championships which doesn't—is not something that I do personally, but I know takes an enormous amount of skill and dedication. We have the 2015 disc sport nationals, which sounds fantastic.

We have the 2015 national paddling championships and, of course, in my constituency, we have one of the central locations, in Fort Garry-Riverview, for the Manitoba Paddling Association. And you can go down to Churchill boulevard pretty much any night in the spring, summer or fall and see paddlers out there every day of the week. It's a fantastic facility led by my—by, frankly, my neighbour, and it—the dragon boat racing down at the paddling club, in

particular, is awe-inspiring in terms of its 'partation'—participation in—and of the competitive character of the events. But more than that, those folks, when they come and do—participate in the dragon boat racing are also making a tremendous contribution to CancerCare. And so there's that direct link that my friend from St. Paul made between active living, the fun and enjoyment of participation and then what it does in terms of ensuring healthier, active citizenship across the province.

I don't need to say that, of course, our government has been at the core of making sure and promoting Manitoba as a great sporting destination. I think it's fair to say that we took a sizeable risk but, nonetheless, one worth taking in turning Eaton's into the MTS Centre. And the logical consequence of that is that the Jets came back to Winnipeg. And as my friend from St. Norbert noted, now the Moose are on their way back. And I spent countless hours with my kids watching the Moose back in the day both in the IHL and the AHL, and I think that's absolutely a spectacular thing.

And it's worth noting that friends across the way weren't all that enthralled about the idea of building the MTS Centre in the same way that they weren't all that supportive of building the new football stadium, which is going to house the FIFA World Cup soccer in just, as I said, a matter of days.

So it does reflect at least from—some pride in our own government that we have played a critical role in not only bringing the world and Canada to Manitoba and Winnipeg, but at the same time also doing it from a grassroots, local level by making sure there's every opportunity for local communities and local neighbourhoods to have good athletic facilities regardless of the sport, ensuring the most we can in terms of participation of youth, of adults, old guys like me even, and even as making sure that seniors are participating in all kinds of activities.

* (11:30)

So it has that beautiful connection between, on the one hand, promoting local participation which promotes active, healthy living; on the one hand it builds character, it promotes dedication and commitment. We all know that a healthier body makes for a healthier mind, and so it helps to promote mental health strategies as well. And, at the same time, we can bask in the glory of really outstanding international and national events coming to our city and our province where the eyes of the world and the eyes of the nation will be on us and

we'll be able to show them all the amazing things that Winnipeg and Manitoba has to offer.

So, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I endorse this motion most hardily. Again, I want to thank my friend from St. Norbert who has, frankly, dominated the morning here in the House, putting issues on the agenda and making sure that we debate them here in this most important Chamber. And that in thanking him, I want to remind all members of the importance of our work here that we do day in, day out, on behalf of Manitobans to bring their views into the Chamber but then to make sure that their views are reflected back out into our communities regardless of where we come from so that our Manitoba can be one not only that we're all proud of, but one in which we all participate in, and much—one in which we're all continue to participate as citizens, as athletes and as building happy families, productive families, and strong, safe and sustainable communities.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, thank you to my friend from St. Norbert for putting this on the agenda today. I couldn't be more supportive of this motion if I tried. Thank you very much.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I'm proud here to be here today to put a few records on the records on the—on this House about the 2015 year of the sports in Manitoba.

Sports in our family was so important as we grew up. As growing up as kids, we, my brothers and I, all played hockey in Roblin, Manitoba. I give my dad credit who actually took us 27 miles every day of—almost every day in the weekdays to—for us to play hockey. And what dedication my dad had for the game of sports and hockey.

And here in Manitoba we should be so proud of all the different sports we're having right now. The opportunity—the biggest opportunity that we hear right now in June, coming up here this month, is FIFA Women's World Cup soccer and we also happen to have the CFL Grey Cup coming here, too, what's going to be held at the Investors Group Field.

So important events that we have here, especially the soccer. You know, last year we had the—last time the Olympics were held in London for the Summer Games, the women's team had won bronze. They almost won—beat Americans there, but—on the last goal, and that was so amazing to see that. And I think it really brought a lot of youth, young girls especially, wanting to play the sport.

And, again, it's so important for youth in our province to take that opportunity to—for healthy living.

And, again, when it comes to living in small towns, it's so important to have all the facilities that will actually be able to have these young individuals be able to play different sports in our communities. It's so important right now. I've been in Virden, Manitoba. I'm so fortunate that we had a brand new arena that was built two or three years ago. Again, it's more considered not arena, but more of a wellness centre. Because that wellness centre houses different hockey—sports—hockey to—actually, we have a walking track for seniors who can walk, or anybody in their community who can take up walking and not have to be out in the elements, especially in the wintertime or during the hot summer days, they can actually walk in the—at the Tundra community centre.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we have facilities like that, we also attract different sporting events. And one thing that I remember the PC Party did back in the '90s was they decentralized departments. And I remember Virden receiving the petroleum branch, Russell receiving the education branch and Roblin receiving the conservation branch.

But what was nice about the hockey team what came from Winnipeg was the—our own Virden Oil Caps who were relocated here from the—from Winnipeg, and this gave us opportunity. It really boosts the attendance to the games, and right now in Virden I think the average attendance in—at an Oil Cap game is almost 11 to 12 hundred people. Especially this past year, we were fortunate enough to actually make it to the playoffs and actually went a long ways. We actually beat Winkler. My—the member of Winkler is not here to—Modern-Winkler is not here to listen to this, but we did beat them. *[interjection]* Okay, sure, okay. So anyway—sorry about that.

And, again, I just wanted to also—with the new facility, we also—during my election campaign, my by-election campaign, we actually had we had Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Again, other important events that we have is curling in our province of Manitoba, and again we—the facility that we had in Virden was so great that we had such good responses that they said next time we have the men's competition. It's not going to be if, it's going to be when. So that's important to have.

But we also have all these great facilities in the—in our province like the Investors Group Field. Again, with the Grey Cup coming here it's going to bring a lot of opportunities for economic development, you know, the—you know, more people coming into our city. They're going to spend money on hotels and they're going to spend money on restaurants. It's great—be a great celebration. And also, too, with this FIFA Women's World Cup here, we're going to have a lot of tourists who are coming from the United States. Because, again, soccer's become a very big important sport in their culture, too, in their country. They've actually—again, their women's soccer they—I believe they won gold at London. And it's going to be good.

One other thing, too, I was fortunate—when I was young I played sports. I played hockey. My brothers were older than me. They were better hockey players. So going 27 miles to town—I sort of gave it up early. I started curling, but also, I was probably more interested in entrepreneurs and politicians actually. My brothers were more into hockey, and I was also a hockey fan. I enjoyed going to hockey games. I couldn't wait for the first time I went to—my first time I came to Winnipeg was when I was in grade 10. I came to the Winnipeg Jets game and—against the Edmonton Oilers. That was a great experience for myself, and now I'm here in Winnipeg all the time.

So, again, these are sort of memories of my—of growing up. And the one thing I was fortunate enough, because I wasn't in a hockey arena at the—later—like, when I was at more of a—in high school. I was—when I married my wife Michelle she came from a athletic family. Her sister—Michelle actually played basketball in high school and in university. But her sister actually played volleyball and she was, like, a very good volleyball player that she actually made it to the national team. And by just listening to her, she actually went all over the world. She played in Japan, Korea. Their team didn't make it at that time to the Olympics, but they played in the—in Korea right after the Olympics, 1988 Olympics.

Her brother actually was a—and he's right now coaching the Utica Comets, which is now in the semifinals. Hopefully, the next step if they can win, beat, their—the opponents they'll be going on to the Polar Cup which is going to be I'm hoping next week. He was—actually played hockey here in Winnipeg. He went to Notre Dame to play sports there and that was a really—was drafted by the New York Rangers. He played with the Rangers, I think

for the farm team, and then was traded to the Minnesota North Stars where he played most of his hockey career in Kalamazoo as—with—for the Kalamazoo Wings. And then he went on to play with Hershey Bears, and to this day he actually has a legacy there.

* (11:40)

He—they won the—I believe they won the championship because he went to see the President. And after he became a coach for the Hershey Bears under the direction of Bob Hartley—which, again, has become a very good family friend. My son is so thankful that my brother-in-law's network of friends was Bob Hartley for so many years. He actually—when Bob Hartley was in the—coaching the Colorado Avalanche, my brother-in-law became the video coach for Bob Hartley.

And to this day, Bob Hartley has done a hockey school in York, Pennsylvania. And my brother-in-law always invites—because he had two daughters, so he didn't have a son who played hockey, so he invites my son every year to go to the Bob Hartley hockey school in York, Pennsylvania. And one year, I was—we took it as a family to go down there, and it was such a great drive to go to York, Pennsylvania, and we actually stayed in the Amish country of Lancaster, and we stayed on a homestead surrounded by Amish farms. So opportunity that hockey has—sports has created for our family was great because my brother-in-law lives in different parts of the—of North America, and we were actually—saw so much of the United States, especially.

So, this year, my son is going to—for two weeks to Bob Hartley hockey school, and he gets to see a lot of some of the players that play on the Calgary Flames, which is very exciting to him. And he just cherishes the time that he spends with his uncle. Unfortunately, his grandfather died before—my mom—on his mom's side before he was born—just as he was a year old, and my father passed away when he was only five. So this is an opportunity to have that other male role model besides his father, to have that bond that he doesn't have with his natural grandparents. So that's so important for him to stay.

So that's why I'm saying today that—how important sports is to youth because, again, it's—they're the future of our province. And, again, little bit of competition—they can be next—in their lives, they can be here at some point, competing with the opposition or vice versa, and I think it's all about competitiveness and, again, in this world of going—or

economics, we need to be competitive. And I think this is—opportunity with sports gives us that edge.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli): I'm absolutely delighted to rise in the Chamber today to speak on this resolution brought forward by my good friend from St. Norbert, and I think it's a great opportunity to celebrate sport and the importance of sport in our communities.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, just last week, I was at an event representing my good friend, the member of—or the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Allum), and when they introduced me with my biography, they talked about having—how I had coached volleyball and basketball, and that was—seems like a lifetime ago, but my—you know, it was actually a—I had to think about that, and it was actually 754 chicken dinners ago, you know, when I was coaching volleyball and basketball. And I wish I had the ability to continue to do so, but that was a very important part of my job as a teacher, was to coach. And it was also a very important part of my high school career to be involved in high school athletics. And the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association does say that sport is the other half of our high school education.

And while we're on this topic, I think it's important to recognize the very good work of the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association and the leadership of Morris Glimcher, who has been the steward of the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association for a number of years now. And, recently, they actually included a policy on transgender athletes, which I think was among the first high school athletic associations to do so in Canada, if I'm not mistaken, to make it clear that the transgender students should not be discriminated against in their choices to participate in high school athletics. And I wanted to applaud them for that. It's very progressive policy.

And they also have a cross-mentorship program, Mr. Speaker, where the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association encourages and identifies athletic leaders in high schools and gets them to go to grade 5 students and talk about peer pressure, life choices and talk about the value of athletics in high school as something that students should consider participating in.

And I reflect on my own experiences in high school where many of my best friends are those that

I had the pleasure of playing volleyball and basketball and, yes, we even played soccer back in the day. I think we hit a goalpost once, and that was the exchange student from England that played on our team. We played soccer to get in shape to play basketball. That was our basketball coach's idea; play soccer so that you can be in shape for playing basketball. And it was a very important game for me to participate in, too, because my brother, who's a few years older, he and I got to play on the same team in high school for the one and only time in—when I was in grade 9 and he is grade 12, we got to play on the same soccer team.

But high school athletics are a very important part of our program. And, again, I want to applaud the efforts of the teachers and the volunteer coaches from the community who continue to make it a very important part of our school program.

Now with respect to this particular resolution and the fact that we have a lot to celebrate here for athletics in Manitoba and the year of sport; as an avid Bomber fan who has had season tickets on and off for a number of years, I've really been thrilled to watch the games in the comfort of the new stadium. I think it is a world-class facility as many of my colleagues have said and one that we are very proud of, and, of course, the fact that we have the FIFA World Cup coming, we've had many concerts there. One of the events that hadn't been mentioned though was actually the largest art display that has ever been staged here in Manitoba with the students from Pembina Trails. I believe the member from Charleswood did a members statement on that—having the art display at Investors Group Field as well under the leadership of Cameron Cross, who I coincidentally graduated with from University of Manitoba faculty of education, and just an incredible experience for students to stage that in that facility.

So it's not just a sports facility, it's a community facility, but it's a community facility that has highlighted the artwork and the talents of many international stars as we'll see with concerts. I understand AC/DC's coming again to Investors Group Field. I'm not sure I'll go; I've seen them several times. But at any rate, the facility is one that we should all be proud of and one that has attracted many, many different sporting events, but also cultural events and pop-culture events as it should be.

And, of course, we've talked about the arena, and, of course, my first memory of the old barn, as

we affectionately call the arena, was going to watch my cousin, an original Jet, playing in his career from '72-76, Duke, Freeman "Duke" Asmundson was his name, number 21, which is why I wore the number 21 for all of my high school games; I was—tribute to my cousin. He was a mucker and a grinder who played on the original Jets from '72-76. But I'll never forget watching those first games when I went to the old arena, and I'll never forget the heartache of seeing the Jets leave our community after being an avid fan since I was eight years old that first game in 1972 and having attended many, many games and having our hearts broken by Gretzky and company many, many times in playoffs. And, of course, lots of fond memories of the Jets in the first incarnation and I'm glad that they're back with this investment that we've worked with our private partners to assist them in the arena, and I'm really happy to be able to take my children to see Jets games again; mind you, I think I attended about 25 Jets games for the cost of one game today, but that's another story. But at the same time we're able to take my children to the games, they've become really avid hockey fans.

But it's also impacted their choices as well in terms of my older son now. He's decided that he wants to play football, and for the first time he set foot on the field and played football, an opportunity that wasn't afforded to me growing up in rural Manitoba, but one that he's certainly seized the moment and taken advantage of suiting up for the Dakota Lancers as he has.

So I think it's important that we celebrate sport, we celebrate the great facilities that we have here, we celebrate the great games and memories that we have here, but I think it's also important to celebrate our athletes, our coaches and the volunteers, which is essentially what the resolution says at the very end, that it's a time to congratulate our athletes, our coaches and volunteers for all the sporting events held across this province. And sport doesn't know any boundaries, it is something that is celebrated throughout the province, and I've certainly seen that in my own community when we've co-hosted some of the events for the Pan American Games and western Canadian games.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I do know that other members would like to speak, and I would hope that we can pass this resolution and celebrate the year of sport in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to put a few words on the record this

morning, and I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this resolution. I know that we on this side of the House are in support of this resolution, and I know that many of my colleagues are hoping to get up and put a few words on the record this morning as well, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:50)

I'd like to echo the—a couple of the words that the member from Gimli had shared in regards to the resolution, and that is the BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED portion that all members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate all the athletes, coaches and volunteers of all the sporting events held across this wonderful province of ours.

I know that the member from St. Paul mentioned earlier in regards to the role that sport plays in our—not only in our children's health, but all the way from birth to death, Mr. Speaker, in regards to helping people be a little more proactive when it comes to working on their health and well-being. And I know the member from St. Paul will also put on the record a few points on our health-care system, and that if we all spent a little bit more time being a little more proactive in regards to our own health and taking our own health into our, sort of our own hands and becoming a little more responsible for it, it would alleviate some of the strain put on our health-care system that we see today.

I guess the 2015 year of the sport resolution, again, we're talking about all sports in Manitoba and the significant role it plays on each and every person's lives, whether they are participants or they're fans. We have many opportunities in this wonderful province of ours to share in a lot of those events that are held right across this great province of ours.

We've got the Women's World Cup which is going to be starting in the next few days. It's one of the biggest sporting events in Canada this year and, of course, we've got the Grey Cup coming to the stadium, the Investors Group stadium, later on this fall.

And I would like to mention a few of the other things that are going on across the province. I know that June 16th right in my hometown community of Beausejour, we are hosting the 55-Plus Games which does get kicked on—does kickoff on the 16th, and I know that probably members on this side of the House—and also on the other side of the House—there

are a few members that might be able to be in that age range to be able to come and participate. So I look forward to seeing many of my colleagues coming out and visiting and cheering on a lot of the participants.

I know the member from St. Paul mentioned pickleball. Had an opportunity last fall to participate or to take part in one of the games of pickleball. They were demonstrating it in some of our community centres within the Lac du Bonnet constituency and had a chance to play some pickleball, which is a combination of badminton and tennis. *[interjection]*

And I thank the member for asking me how I actually did. It was a demonstration sport. So we took it easy on each other. We played pairs so there was two on two, and it was quite a bit of fun and I see why it's catching on so widely across the province and just what a great—great—invention and I think it's going to just continue to expand.

I did also want to mention within our community of the Lac du Bonnet constituency the sport of curling. I know that this past year that Winkler held on—held the 2015 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in January in 2015. In 2016 Beausejour has been granted the opportunity to host the Scotties event right in Beausejour.

And I know that the member from Selkirk, I'm sure, will be speaking to this resolution, the now new Finance Minister will be speaking to this resolution as well. But just in case he doesn't get up to put a few words on the record, I will put a plug in for the community of Selkirk. The City of Selkirk, they're going to be hosting the 2016 Safeway Championship which, you know, many of us in this House—I know the member from Dauphin, the member from Minto, the member from Spruce Woods and, of course, our leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), has also—have all—either have curled in the Safeway championship event or we've aspired to curl in that Safeway championship event. So who knows? Maybe one day we'll be able to put a non-partisan team together and compete in something like the Manitoba Open or something along those lines. There's always a chance.

So with that, I'd also like to mention a few of the grassroots programs that we have, and that I speak to hockey. I know that the member from Arthur-Virden mentioned that his two brothers were very, very good hockey players, and I have the pleasure of knowing one of his brothers and he is, indeed, a very good

hockey player as well as his boys. And I'd just like to put a couple plugs out there for my own boys who play minor hockey in the Manitoba system. And our league—I just want to mention the dedication not only to the boys, but also to the parents, and in regards to my wife Tracey who puts on countless kilometres on our vehicles every winter. Our league, our minor hockey league goes from Sagkeeng in Pine Falls to the north all the way down to Emerson by the American border, and then goes, of course, into Ontario, into Kenora, and then we travel west all the way to Holland. So each and every weekend we could be travelling, you know, two hours either direction of our home community.

But it's important, Mr. Speaker, to show the dedication and the commitment to team sports, and it is very important because what ends up happening is you end up—those are life-long skills and if you show the dedication and the commitment at an early age as you travel through life, as you get older, you take a lot of those skills into everything that you do, whether it's education or whether it's into your job later on in life, very—those are life lessons.

I know that in the upcoming months there's going to be many Manitoban athletes working hard throughout 2015 to secure their opportunity to compete as part of Team Canada at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio. Mr. Speaker, 2015 will be a trying time, as these athletes train tirelessly for the opportunity to represent their country at the world games. In previous years we've been fortunate to see Manitobans standing on the podiums at the Olympics, an event that always energizes local and national pride, as audiences get to cheer on hometown heroes as they compete on the international stage.

This summer Manitoba will also send three athletes to Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles. The Special Olympics is an essential event as it demonstrates the importance of accessibility to sport for people of all abilities and showcases the capacity for persons living with physical and mental disabilities to be world-class athletes.

And while it's easy to focus on these major professional events, it's important not to forget the integral role that recreational sports play in our lives. Sports have provided us with many of our most memorable, most enjoyable and most trying and most educational moments. I'm sure that all members of this House and, indeed, most Manitobans recall

many significant experiences that they have had thanks to sporting teams and events. Because of the crucial contribution that sports makes to the healthy development of children, it's important that we continue to support programs and encourage and enable community sporting initiatives for our kids.

We should acknowledge and continue to support the great work of organizations such as KidSport Manitoba, the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council, and Special Olympics for their dedication to supporting and maintaining community sporting opportunities for all Manitoban children, including those facing intellectual, physical and socioeconomic barriers.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to have put a few words on the record to this

very important resolution. I know that we're, on this side of the House, we're supporting this resolution and we're going to be giving other members a chance to put some words on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 12—or, pardon me, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Spruce Woods will have nine minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY	Pettersen	1365
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	Wight	1367
Second Readings–Public Bills	Resolutions	
Bill 207–The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act	Res. 7–2015 Year of Sport	
Gaudreau 1357	Gaudreau	1368
Pedersen 1359	Schuler	1371
Wishart 1361	Allum	1373
Debate on Second Readings–Public Bills	Piwniuk	1375
Bill 205–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)	Bjornson	1377
Gaudreau 1363	Ewasko	1378
	Cullen	1380

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