

Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
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ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
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ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
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SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
Vacant	Fort Whyte	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 17, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 12—The Highways and Transportation
Amendment Act**

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 12, The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, now be read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: I am very pleased to introduce this bill today. The proposed amendments address two key issues, establishing a simplified administrative process for the removal of unauthorized signs, structures and other objects for the provincial highways system and updating antiquated penalty provisions for violations committed under the act. Essentially, Mr. Speaker, this is also part and parcel of one of the key pillars with regard to transportation and that is safety. Thank you.

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

**Bill 15—The Emergency Measures
Amendment Act**

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 15, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, this bill clarifies the role of the Emergency Measures Organization. It requires every government department to prepare an emergency management program and enables the municipal authorities to issue an emergency prevention order. It also has penalties for disobeying an evacuation order which are increased in the language in several provisions as updated.

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

PETITIONS

Coverage of Insulin Pumps

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Insulin pumps cost over \$6,500.

The cost of diabetes to the Manitoba government in 2005 will be approximately \$214.4 million. Each day 16 Manitobans are diagnosed with the disease compared to the national average of 11 new cases daily.

Good blood sugar control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50 percent, blindness by 76 percent, nerve damage by 60 percent, cardiac disease by 35 percent and even amputations.

Diabetes is an epidemic in our province and will become an unprecedented drain on our struggling health care system if we do not take action now.

The benefit of having an insulin pump is it allows the person living with this life-altering disease to obtain good sugar control and become a much healthier, complication-free individual.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba to consider covering the cost of insulin pumps that are prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor under the Manitoba Health Insurance Plan.

Signed by Anna Robinson, Lynne Bosc, Lilia Merluza and many, many others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

* (13:35)

Crocus Investment Fund

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Government was made aware of serious problems involving the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

As a direct result of the government ignoring the red flags back in 2001, over 33 000 Crocus investors lost over \$60 million.

Manitoba's provincial auditor stated "We believe the department was aware of the red flags at Crocus and failed to follow up on those in a timely way."

The relationship between some union leaders, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP seems to be the primary reason as for why the government ignored the red flags.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider the need to seek clarification on why the government did not act on fixing the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

Signed by Hermis Cabaniang, Ferdinand Juan and Nelda Cabaniang.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Quarterly Report for the three months ending September 30, 2005, for the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board, copies of which have been distributed.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I am pleased to table the Manitoba Family Services and Housing 2004-2005 Annual Report.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today members of the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba and Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Child Adolescent Treatment Centre Physician Shortage

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Child and Adolescent Treatment Centre in Brandon was forced to close its doors due to the departure of yet another doctor from the Westman region. The departure of the region's only child psychiatrist was a final blow to a unit that has been struggling to treat patients since the departure of the other child psychiatrist in the summer.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has turned a blind eye to this increasing health care crisis in Brandon. Why does he continue to put the health of children at risk? Why does he do that?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, a number of weeks ago, when the Department of Health became aware of this situation, they provided replacement coverage for the children in the Westman and Brandon region, and the Department of Health is working on a more permanent solution.

Mr. Murray: Talk about cold comfort to children in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, the Child and Adolescent Treatment Centre is only seven years old and has now been shut down as a result of this Doer NDP government mismanagement.

The departure of the first child psychiatrist in the summer should have been a wake-up call to this Premier, but, as we have seen, Mr. Speaker, in the past, with the departure of three pediatricians from Brandon, this Premier continues to ignore the health care needs of children of Manitoba in the Westman region.

Children are not able to access the care they need in Brandon. Children in Manitoba are not able to access the care in their regions. They are being shipped on Manitoba highways. That is health care for children under this Premier. Can the Premier tell the people of Brandon why he continues to ignore this health care crisis?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, we do have an additional, I think it is over 200 doctors now in Manitoba we have as opposed to a reduction in doctors. We have a lot more people now in the medical school which, of course,–

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:40)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members are, I am sure, aware that the requirement for a psychiatry degree requires a medical degree, Mr. Speaker, and—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This summer we signed a new health care agreement with the doctors in Manitoba. When we came into office, I believe the doctors' salaries were the second lowest in Canada. I believe now we are in the mid range and much more attractive. We do lose doctors from time to time on salary competitions, and we looked at all the areas of specialty in the last MMA agreement.

We also look at specific strategies to deal with recruitment and retention challenges for specialists, and I am sure the Department of Health will use similar strategies to ensure that the pediatricians who are required in Brandon, the positions are filled, because we said before that we needed four and we still are determined to get that amount in Brandon. Secondly, the children's psychiatry program is extremely important for people of the western part of the province. I was aware of this five or six weeks ago, and I know that the Department of Health was as well.

Physician Resources Westman Region

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, aware of it, Mr. Speaker, and doing nothing.

In Brandon they are short three pediatricians, two child psychiatrists, an anesthetist, an internist, emergency room doctors, a surgeon and physicians with specialties in urology, dental surgery, obstetrics and gynecology and ophthalmology. The only thing that this Premier is not short of is political rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, people in Westman are saying to this Premier wake up and do something. The problem is that Brandon is our second-largest city in the province of Manitoba, and this NDP government's health care services are in a decline. They are deteriorating.

My question is how many more doctors are going to have to leave the province of Manitoba. How many more patients are going to have to be shipped on highways until this NDP government wakes up to this health care crisis?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The member opposite said that doctors are leaving Manitoba. I would point out 95 less doctors in the nineties, over 200 more doctors in the last five years, Mr. Speaker. The members can twist and turn any way they want but there is a bottom line. There is more money available for specialists, including child psychiatry, in the latest MMA agreement. The child psychiatry weakness in Brandon, the shortage in Brandon, is serious and we will deal with it.

Just like last week, the sky was falling in Gimli, and we said we would have a strategy to deal with the emergency ward and the five doctors that are there. I am happy to report that a Gimli emergency services agreement is reached, and this is very, very positive news. We will use the same kinds of results that we put in place for the Interlake and Gimli for the child psychiatry in Brandon.

Physician Resources Westman Region

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier should talk to the Minister of Health who has already stated that they are having a problem retaining doctors in this province. The problem is they are not doing anything to address the problem. The doctor shortage in Brandon and the Westman area has reached crisis proportions. The government stood by as two pediatricians in Brandon attempted to do the work for four this summer. As a result, one pediatrician will be leaving at the end of this month, leaving only one to serve the health care needs of the entire region.

Why is this government not taking this crisis seriously? When will this Minister of Health address the real causes for the mass exodus of doctors from Brandon and the Westman region?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the member recognize and the House recognize that there are more doctors in Westman than there were in 1999. For example, we recently opened a world-class heart and stroke program in Brandon, Manitoba, staffed by Dr. Tamayo, supported by what will be the best CT scanner in Manitoba, a 64-slice scanner which we just announced there last week. They have added 12

doctors to their ER rotation through their good work. They added and appointed an internist, Dr. Penner, as their chief of medicine very recently. They have recruited obstetricians and gynecologists. Yes, we have an issue with pediatricians, so does all of North America.

* (13:45)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There will be lots of time for questions and answers for the members that are trying to shout back and forth. We have lots of time left in Question Period. Let us let the people that have the floor so that way we can hear them because I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there is a breach of a rule.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, on one hand, the minister says that he is having a problem retaining doctors in the area and, on the other hand, he is now saying that there is no problem, there is no doctor shortage in the area. Well, I dare him to go into the Westman region and tell the patients who are waiting and who are being shipped to Winnipeg for services that they should receive at home.

Doctors are leaving because they are stressed out and overwhelmed by their workloads. The rhetoric and empty promises of this Minister of Health do nothing to address the workloads and working conditions of doctors in Manitoba. This government stood by as one child psychiatrist attempted to absorb the patients left behind when her only colleague left. Now she too has quit citing the heavy workload.

Why is this minister content to stand by as doctors continue to leave, and when will this minister fulfil his responsibility to provide health care services to all Manitobans and, indeed, specifically to those in the Westman area?

Mr. Sale: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to just go back to her office and check the Web site. The College of Physicians and Surgeons shows, not the Manitoba government, the College of Physicians and Surgeons shows over 200 doctors more in Manitoba today than in 1999. In 1999, it showed 116 fewer doctors than there were at the beginning of the 1990s when they were in power.

In terms of what have we done, we have opened a new hospital. It was promised five times and cancelled. We put in the best CT scanner that there is made in the world today will be coming into

Brandon in a few months, the first MRI outside of Winnipeg; hips and knee volume increases because we have done arthroscopic surgery in Minnedosa and acute rehab in Rivers; a new chief of internal medicine, a chief of medicine, Dr. Penner.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I did go on that Web site the other day and it froze up, and we were not able to access anything on the Web site so I certainly hope it is working now because it is no way to attract doctors back to Manitoba.

This government has failed children. It has failed families. It has failed health care professionals in this province. Manitoba services the health care needs of four of the province's health regions, or Brandon does. With each passing week, more emergency rooms are closing forcing patients to be shipped on highways to access health care services that are no longer available in their regions.

Why is this government standing by as Manitoba's highways become makeshift hospitals? Unacceptable.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, now the member insults the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the work that they are doing to make physician profiles available in Canada and North America, the only one that is required to do so in Canada. She insults the doctors. That is not a very protective, proactive approach to securing physicians. She also appears to believe that if you say something often enough it will make it true. The reality is 200-plus more doctors during the last six years, 116 fewer during the 11 long years they were in power. The truth is that, in Brandon, while we have a definite problem with recruiting pediatricians, we have provided secure coverage for Brandon with pediatricians from Winnipeg and from other centres who have provided continuous coverage. No one has had to come to Winnipeg for service.

* (13:50)

Manitoba Developmental Centre Community Living Option

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this NDP government advocates for the institutionalization of vulnerable people. The cold-hearted Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities even said she would have no qualms about placing a child of hers in the Manitoba Developmental Centre.

Will the minister now admit that this Doer NDP government is moving backwards when the rest of the world is moving people into the community?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, again, when we talk about vulnerable people we have to make sure that we have options that are best for the vulnerable people and that we do not put vulnerable people into one category or into one response to their needs. That is why we are committed to community living as I have mentioned many times in this House.

We also know that the Manitoba Developmental Centre provides much-needed services for people, both when they are residents of MDC and when they are in a community-living situation. It is my responsibility as the minister to ensure that the options are available for the vulnerable people of Manitoba which will best suit their needs and not the needs of individuals who want to slot them into one option.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this minister believes institutions are better than living in the community. When she said she would place her own child at MDC, she said that she would want what was best for that person.

Does the minister admit that this government believes institutions are best for the vulnerable in our society?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, again, we have the creation of a one-solution strategy from members opposite. They are not recognizing that it was this party, when in power during the 1980s, that began with the Welcome Home program. We followed through with closing down Pelican Lake after they had failed after their 11 years. We are continuing to move people into community living. We are accelerating the pace of individuals who are ready, from MDC, to transition into the community, but that will be done based on the individual's readiness and the availability of the services they need in the community. I will not be backed into a corner, forcing vulnerable people to make a transition they are not ready for, by members opposite.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, the advocates for community living are outraged at this government's support for institutions. They are outraged at this minister and they are outraged at this Premier (Mr. Doer) for their backward thinking. A recent FOI indicates there are 387 people in MDC, and after they inject \$40 million into the redevelopment there

will still be 350 people there. There is no plan to move these people into the community. They have no plan and no intention of moving them into the community, keeping them in institutions.

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, we have also heard from many loving and caring family members who have relatives and friends who are residents of MDC. These people are, in fact, very pleased that we are re-investing, that we are creating a safer environment, that we are creating a healthier environment and that we are creating an environment in which people will be able to live with more dignity and with more satisfaction, which is something members opposite neglected to do during their 11 years. We are up for the challenge of providing the options that vulnerable people need, and we will continue to work with the community living people for individuals for whom the best choice is community living.

Crocus Investment Fund Legal Proceedings Costs

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Crocus shareholders have launched a \$200-million class-action lawsuit against 23 defendants, one of which is the Manitoba Securities Commission.

I ask the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau) will this NDP government use public money to cover the liability attributed to the Manitoba Securities Commission from this class-action lawsuit.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Securities Commission is an arm's-length body from government that has quasi-judicial powers. It raises its own revenues, and it will undertake to put forward the defence of its own case in this matter as it would have done under any government.

*(13:55)

Public Inquiry

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): The class-action lawsuit alleges that the Manitoba Securities Commission breached its duty of care and acted in a grossly careless and reckless manner. More than 33 000 shareholders in Crocus lost more than \$60 million. Now 1.1 million Manitobans could lose \$200 million more because the Province is ultimately responsible for the actions of the Securities Commission.

I ask the Minister of Industry to demand that the Premier (Mr. Doer) call an independent public inquiry into this Crocus scandal.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the class-action lawsuit in this province is only possible because of the first-ever, historic introduction of class-action legislation by this Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and by this government. This legislation gives consumers and citizens the power to take action as a collective group of people where they feel they have been wronged.

The member identifies allegations against a quasi-judicial, arm's-length body of government. Allegations are just that. They are not proven in a court of law. They are not final. They are not a final decision in a court of law. The Manitoba Securities Commission will fulfil its functions. It will make its own defence of case with its own resources, raised through the fees they charge to the industry they regulate.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau), all gleefully declare that the Province is not named in this class-action lawsuit. What they failed to acknowledge, however, is that, if the Manitoba Securities Commission is found responsible, even 1 percent responsible for the Crocus scandal, all Manitobans will be forced to pay damages even up to the full \$200 million.

Will the Minister of Industry demand an independent public inquiry not only for the more than 33 000 Crocus shareholders but the 1.1 million Manitobans who have to pay?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have had under the unique powers, unique in this country, of the Auditor General and powers that the federal Auditor-General does not have, our Auditor General—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Auditor General, under unique legislation in this province, unparalleled in any other jurisdiction in this country, has concluded a 445-page report. The member seems to indicate a concern for the taxpayer on the potential exposure in a lawsuit. On the next breath, he wants to spend millions of dollars to replay what the Auditor General has just done.

Which is he really out to do? Is he out to protect the taxpayer or spend more money replicating work that has already been done?

CAIS Program Amendments—Minister's Support

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Alberta government announced a \$224-million pilot project to augment the CAIS program. Alberta has recognized the provincial government cannot just sit back and watch while farmers struggle with multiple disasters. When is this government going to realize that the present CAIS program is not working for farmers? Will the Minister of Agriculture and this NDP government step up to the plate and support our struggling farmers?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I want the member opposite to recognize that this government has in fact supported the farming community. We have put additional money into the CAIS program. We have cut taxes for the farmers. Members opposite had 11 years to cut taxes. They raised taxes for the farmers.

We have reduced the Education Support Levy by 60 percent, Mr. Speaker, and we have put money into the CAIS program. We will continue to work on that CAIS program to make sure that it meets the needs of the producers. The member opposite has to recognize that the Agriculture Policy Framework is a national program, and it is not fitting for provinces to run off and do pilot projects on their own.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, for the past few years, Manitoba farmers have faced a number of challenges including the BSE crisis, drought and flooding. A series of disasters has battered the ... of many producers and resulted in a lower support level than was expected when the CAIS program was launched.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has committed millions of dollars to making the CAIS program more effective while this government has done nothing. Where is the support for our farmers when they need it so desperately?

* (14:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that our government is there. Members opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember when the members opposite were encouraging us to sign the CAIS program so it would

work for farmers. We signed the CAIS program. We added additional money into the CAIS program, and we have made changes. There is a review going on to make further changes, and I would encourage members opposite to make suggestions on how the program can be improved. There is a national committee, and I would encourage them so that farmers make application because there is money available for farmers.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has refused to sign on to a transition program that would have put \$40 million in the pockets of our farmers. Farmers are left to struggle on their own and have been totally abandoned by the Doer government and this Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister today commit to following Alberta in providing meaningful support for our farmers?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to recognize or look at what we have done for farmers with the tax reductions that we have made, with the money that we have put into the various programs. In fact, when members opposite were in power they wanted to work on ad hoc programs. This government wants to put in place long-term programs like excess moisture insurance that has paid millions of dollars out to farmers, like improvements to crop insurance and the additional funding that we have put into the CAIS program.

What we have to continue to work at, Mr. Speaker, is value-added for our producers. I would like to see members opposite show some support instead of criticism when there are announcements of the addition—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

CAIS Program Amendments—Minister's Support

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, we would not be having these questions if this minister had provided some leadership and had not been too timid to show some leadership in this province. It has been the hardest hit of the three western provinces and they are doing nothing. Will she consider entering into future changes in CAIS that will assist the agricultural community in this province?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, there have been changes since the CAIS program was brought forward. When those changes were brought

forward, Manitoba signed on to them, but those changes were made at the national level. This is a national program, and I believe that there should be changes that are made on a national level. One province should not make a unilateral change. So if the member wants to know if we are willing to accept change, we have done it in the past when changes were proposed to make improvements for farmers.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, what rural Manitoba farm entrepreneurs are facing is a loss program with a declining loss coverage, insurance program with a declining loss coverage. This minister needs to demonstrate some leadership. At the very time when the resources of this province are at their most buoyant, they are abandoning rural Manitoba in terms of providing any kind of meaningful relief to world prices, yields and weather conditions that are beyond the control of our agricultural community. Stand up and do something.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, in fact we have been listening to producers, and we have been making changes to meet the needs of producers. If you look at the crop insurance program and the changes that we have made to crop insurance to better meet the needs of the producers, producers are happy with the changes.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is this government that has done far more consultation with the producers to make improvements to crop insurance than the members opposite ever did. This Province committed to CAIS, and when there were changes to the program we signed on to those changes, and we have put additional money into the program. The members opposite talk about world prices of wheat. Well, the members opposite know full well that provincial governments and even federal governments do not have the ability to control the price of wheat. What we have to do is look—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, this minister has just demonstrated why the majority of Manitoba farmers have lost confidence that this government would even consider doing something in a meaningful way to deal with the crisis that we have outlined.

The CAIS program works on a declining balance. A loss last year creates lower coverage this year, and a loss this year creates lower coverage next year. Will she look at amendments in the manner that

Alberta has? This is the most important industry in Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Alberta has brought amendments in a unilateral way and they are outside the national program, Mr. Speaker. I can tell members opposite that they encouraged us and I signed on to a national program, and I will work within a national program in the best interests of our producers.

The members opposite talk about the low prices of grain. I am disappointed in members opposite. When we talk about alternate uses for grain like ethanol, or alternate uses such as biodiesel, or alternate uses such as value-added processing for the pork industry or the beef industry, the members opposite are not there. They want to be friends of the farmer, Mr. Speaker. They are not delivering.

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier (Mr. Doer). Over 33 000 Crocus shareholders lost in excess of \$60 million. Millions of tax dollars were used to subsidize the Crocus Fund. This government's incompetence has destroyed the Crocus Fund because this Premier did not act when he should have acted.

The question is why. Why did this Premier not act when this government had the chance to make a difference on the Crocus Fund? Why did you not act, Mr. Premier?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I think the member may have forgotten the earlier response I gave to the question. The tax credits originally offered to labour-sponsored venture capital funds were federal tax credits and provincial tax credits. This Province brought in class-action protection for consumers. This Province brought in an Auditor General's Act which allows every dollar that goes to a labour-sponsored fund to be checked into and investigated by the Auditor.

This Province agreed to have the Canadian revenue collection agency trace down to see if anybody was not paying their taxes. They launched an RCMP investigation, and, of course, the Manitoba Securities Commission is following up. There has been timely action every step of the way. Perhaps the member forgot there was new legislation introduced this spring that he did not support.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I have not forgotten anything. What I see is a Premier (Mr. Doer) that is a

coward that does not want to deal with the issue. That is what I see—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is the Manitoba Legislative Assembly we are sitting in right now. We will treat each other with dignity, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw that word right now.

Mr. Lamoureux: I withdraw the word, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Continue on with your question. I accept the withdrawal.

Mr. Lamoureux: I withdraw the word, Mr. Speaker, but the silence from this Premier on the Crocus file is deafening and it sends a powerful statement. It is because of the relationship that this Premier has with selected union leaders. He has put the union people's interests ahead of the interests of Manitobans and the Crocus shareholders. I say shame on this Premier.

My question to this Premier is when is he going to have the guts to do what is right and call for a public inquiry.

Mr. Selinger: You know, Mr. Speaker, the behaviour of the member opposite speaks volumes for the kind of character that he is. That is what I would say to the member opposite. The kind of behaviour we have just seen from the member opposite, in my view, does not meet the standards of conduct that we are called upon to perform in this Legislature. He asks legitimate questions. If he wishes to ask legitimate questions, we are willing to give him legitimate answers.

* (14:10)

I just listed the proactive measures that have been taken in this province to protect consumers from any kind of corporate misactivity: class-action legislation among the best in the country, legislation which is supervised by the courts to control costs in terms of contingency fees, legislation which requires everybody to be opted in not opted out. We have done measures in this province that give consumers the best protection in the country.

Legal Proceedings Costs

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, \$60 million is not a laughing matter, and we do not have a Premier that is even prepared to address the issue. I think that is shameful, and I believe Manitobans deserve better from their Premier of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Minister of Finance, because the Premier will not answer the

question, is what sort of guarantee is he going to give to the taxpayer when we have a Crocus board that has \$5 million in liability insurance yet there is a lawsuit that is in excess of \$150 million. Is the taxpayer going to have to pony up with more money in order to cover some of his friends? What is the government's intent in regard to this lawsuit?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises no new questions from the questions that were raised and answered by the government following the Auditor General's report of May 2005.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General reported in 1998 that Crocus was to be treated like a mutual fund. It was transparent. The Auditor General then reported in 2005. He accurately reported that the board was established through legislation that was brought into this House in 1992, approved by the federal Liberal government to provide for a labour-sponsored fund. I remember at the time, Mr. Filmon, then the Premier, advised us that the NDP had never brought in a labour-sponsored fund. It took a Conservative government to bring it in. So let the history show the facts. The facts are in the Auditor General's report not the rhetoric of the member opposite.

Red River College Medical Technologist Training Expansion

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Given our recent announcements of expanded diagnostic equipment and improved health services, could the Minister of Advanced Education inform the House of the steps her department is taking to meet the demand for more trained health professionals?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the expansion of technological training at Red River community college means that the medical radiologist technologists will move from 28 to 40. The med labs will move from 25 seats to 40 seats. This will be funded by a million dollars from CEI but perhaps most important, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) made very clear this morning at our announcement, it means that the costly diagnostic equipment that this government has purchased will be fully used by these graduating students so that it will be both medically and economically beneficial.

I also want to point out, as the president of Red River College said, 97 percent of these students will get jobs in Manitoba and 97-

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Highway 10 Safety Concerns

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, in a letter dated November 3, the town of Rivers shared its concern with the safety risks associated with Highway 10. The Rivers council states, and I quote, "This highway, as I am sure you are aware, is extremely busy and, due to conditions in width, has attributed to many accidents." Unfortunately, less than a week later, this concern became a reality when yet another Rivers citizen passed away as a result of an accident on Highway 10 north of Brandon.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation. This government has indicated that this capital highway project is currently under consideration. Will the minister clarify today where on the list of priorities is No. 10 highway?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, every year we get in the order of about \$2 billion worth of requests, two billion. And, Mr. Speaker, there are many challenges, as we all know, and we are working very diligently to take a look at a lot of these challenges that we have. Safety is paramount for us and is a key pillar with regard to our transportation vision. We take matters of safety on our roads very seriously.

Mrs. Rowat: I received an e-mail from a Forrest resident, Carla Chamberlain, Mr. Speaker, who has also voiced her concerns with the safety of the highway and fears that her children, who attend Forrest Elementary School, are also at risk. Mrs. Chamberlain shared, and I quote, "The government needs to look at this as a larger investment in the lives and families of those in the area."

Mr. Speaker, again, I ask the minister: Will the Minister of Transportation assure Westman families such as the Chamberlains that he will give fair and timely consideration to the safety concerns on Highway 10?

Mr. Lemieux: Obviously, we are going to give fair consideration to all projects. There are many projects that deem to be looked at in a serious way and we will do that.

I have to mention, Mr. Speaker, that currently we are looking at Highway No. 10, as was mentioned by the member opposite, and we are looking at approximately \$150,000 put aside to take a look at

the challenges along Highway No. 10. I must note, since 1999, we have put approximately \$14 million into Highway No. 10, around the Brandon region, and we certainly will take a look at all the challenges related to No. 10 in years to come.

Mrs. Rowat: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, this minister gives consideration to projects other than the one I am asking for.

This was the third major head-on collision this route has had this year. I do not know how many more red flags this minister needs. Carla Chamberlain expresses the frustration felt by many Westman families. She states, and I quote, "Government fails to understand that investing in infrastructure is investing in the safety and well-being of our families and our communities."

When will this Minister of Transportation share his plan? Where is Highway 10 on his list of priorities?

Mr. Lemieux: The only flags that are up are all the highway projects that we currently are doing. You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you, with all due respect, the opposition did very little in the 1990s. Let me take a look. For example, we addressed all the concerns throughout the province of Manitoba. Alone, in northern Manitoba, which they know nothing about, we quadrupled the budget in northern winter roads. They spent approximately \$2 million on winter roads. We are now spending \$8 million on winter roads in northern Manitoba.

You know, Mr. Speaker, they yap and they talk a lot about highway transportation safety yet we increased the budget by \$16 million. All they did was vote against every initiative that we had.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the 20th anniversary of the St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park this past summer on August 13. This anniversary celebration coincided with the Group'Action St. Norbert annual community walk, as well as the start of the Red River Métis Heritage Group's three-day Red River floodway ride.

With the help of all the volunteers and the participation of community residents this day of celebration, commemoration and outdoor activity

was a big success. The St. Norbert Provincial Park serves to illustrate the traditional ways of life of the first Aboriginal residents of the area and demonstrates how the Métis adapted those ways of life in their own fashion. It also preserves the heritage of the French Canadians who farmed this land before World War I.

With the help of the Fort Garry Historical Society, the rich legacy of this part of Manitoba has been preserved for future generations. The Fort Garry Historical Society has saved three St. Norbert pioneer homes from demolition. Two of these homes, Bohémier and Turenne homes, have been restored and furnished and are featured prominently at the St. Norbert Heritage Park. The park embodies the founding peoples of Manitoba; Aboriginal, French and English as well as Métis. Its preservation is a testament to our common past. For their important work, I want to thank these organizations.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the Red River Métis Heritage Group who participated in the anniversary celebration and led the annual community walk. This was the start of the three-day journey for them in their traditional horse-drawn wooden carts to lower Fort Garry where they participated in the Red River descendants' reunion.

Their participation provided an important and needed historical and cultural dimension to the day. For this they are to be commended. In sum, Mr. Speaker, this day allowed all residents of St. Norbert to recognize their rich history while enjoying the community that they live in today. I would like to thank and recognize all those volunteers and organizations that helped make this event such a success.

* (14:20)

Louis Riel Day

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize yesterday, November 16, as Louis Riel Day. Louis Riel is a man who shall be remembered and honoured as a founder of Manitoba and a proud leader of the Métis people.

Manitobans gathered yesterday to pay tribute to Louis Riel's personal sacrifices and courage when struggling for his beliefs. Following a moving church service, wreaths were laid in Louis Riel's memory at his gravesite. I would like to thank the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) for

attending this service on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Louis Riel's impact on Manitoba's history cannot be denied, nor should it ever be forgotten. His strong convictions and dedication helped establish a provincial government, bringing national attention to the Métis people and western Canada.

He faced countless challenges, including exile from his homeland, trying to bring freedom, democracy and autonomy to the Métis people. Louis Riel left all Métis people, Manitobans and Canadians with a lasting legacy. He helped to lay the foundation for multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and bilingualism. Understanding the time and society in which he lived can help us appreciate our heritage but also where we want to go in the future.

Je suis Métis et j'en suis fier. Les Métis ont joué un rôle décisif pour bâtir cette province. Non seulement hier, mais aujourd'hui, nous fêtons Louis Riel qui demeurera toujours dans nos coeurs et dans nos pensées. Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président.

Translation

I am Métis and I am proud of it. The Métis people played a decisive role in building this province. Not only yesterday, but today, we celebrate Louis Riel who will always remain in our hearts and in our thoughts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize yesterday, November 16, as Louis Riel Day. Mr. Speaker, this day marks the unique and historic role played by Louis Riel as a founder of this province and his contribution to the development of Confederation.

As part of this year's ceremony, Mr. Speaker, at the St. Boniface Basilica, the Premier (Mr. Doer) laid a wreath at Riel's grave in honour of the historic defender of minority rights.

Mr. Speaker, when he was only 25 years old, Riel and his supporters established a provisional government and drew up a list of rights protecting all residents of the then-Northwest Territories. This list included an elected Legislature, representation in the federal Parliament, official language status for both English and French. These points became the basis of The Manitoba Act of 1870 and became Manitoba's Constitution. In recalling his life, we remember a man who gave his life for his people and for this province, and, as a result, helped shape an entire nation.

The efforts of Louis Riel and all Métis people, both Anglophone and francophone, laid the groundwork for our province and our country, Mr. Speaker. All Manitobans recognize the contributions that Riel, the Métis and all Aboriginal people made and continue to make to Manitoba.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to bring attention to World COPD Day. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a silent and generally unknown condition that causes the airways of the lungs to become obstructed or blocked, making it difficult to breathe. It could be compared to what it is like to breathe through a straw.

One Canadian will die every hour from COPD. In North America, COPD is the only leading cause of death that is increasing in prevalence. More than 750 000 Canadians suffer from COPD and hundreds of thousands of Canadians have the disease and do not yet know it.

Within five years, COPD will replace breast cancer as the leading cause of death among women, and within seven years, COPD will be responsible for one out of five deaths among men. New drug therapies are available and have been found to reduce lengthy hospital stays.

COPD is treatable, although not curable, and advocacy groups have been calling on the provincial Health Minister to adhere to the Canadian Thoracic Society guidelines by approving preliminary coverage for innovative medication called Spiriva. This medication is available in formulas in almost every Canadian province. The application for coverage in Manitoba was made back in January 2003. As well, opportunities to introduce standardized COPD information should exist. However, no such mechanism for a co-ordinated approach to treatment and rehabilitation exists in Manitoba. Such plans are in place in British Columbia and Alberta.

I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me and the Progressive Conservative caucus in supporting the application for coverage for this drug Spiriva so Manitobans suffering from this debilitating disease can receive the necessary treatment they deserve. COPD should not be the common cause of death that continues to increase in North America. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Siloam Mission

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform all members that tomorrow evening I will bring greetings on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Doer) to Siloam Mission's third annual Warming up the Homeless Benefit Dinner at the Ramada Marlborough Hotel. This event will raise funds to help Siloam Mission continue their important work with disadvantaged people in the inner city and raise awareness about issues that affect homeless people.

Siloam Mission has been working in the inner city providing meals, clothing, counselling services to Winnipeg's less fortunate since 1987. In that time, they have become one of the leading service providers to our community needs. Last year alone they served 86 700 meals, hosted 4200 visits to their clothing bank and provided 2800 other physical and emotional support services for the inner city. Each day 350 hungry Manitobans come through their doors and they are never turned away. For that we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the executive directors of Siloam Mission, John and Brenda Mohan, for their leadership in raising awareness about homelessness in Winnipeg and for their commitment to improving the lives of less fortunate members of our community. I would also like to extend a thank you to the many volunteers of Siloam Mission for the hard work that they do in assisting Winnipeg's homeless. I would also like to recognize the many donors, Manitoba businesses, churches or religious organizations, major funders who contribute to the Siloam Mission.

Thanks to these individuals, this organization is able to continue to help disadvantaged people make the transition to healthy and self-reliant lifestyles, which is a benefit to all members of our community. I invite and encourage all members of this Legislature to attend this fundraising dinner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): In terms of business today, under Government Business, Mr. Speaker, would you please call second readings, that is Bill 10?

We are just waiting for the minister to come back and then call debate on second readings, and that would be the bills in the order they appear on the Order Paper. *[interjection]* I cannot speak any slower.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for the House to give the honourable minister a chance to prepare? Is there agreement?

An Honourable Member: There he is.

* (14:30)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 10—The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 10, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to this committee of the House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This bill proposed amends some requests that were made by the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Convention Centre, and to change the composition of the board of directors of the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Currently, the act provides for the board to have 15 members. Presently, it is four from the City of Winnipeg City Council, seven Winnipeggers appointed by the City Council of Winnipeg, two appointed by the Province through OIC, and two appointed by the Convention Centre board.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment to the bill will reduce the number of City Council representatives presently of the 15 from four to two city councillors and to increase the Convention Centre board appointments for citizen appointments from two to four, allowing for greater public input into the running of the Convention Centre. This is a positive move in the board's mind. allowing them to balance board competencies by selecting more citizen members based on specific skills and experience such as areas in marketing, areas in tourism and areas in financial management.

Mr. Speaker, other minor updates to the language of the bill are proposed as well. The Winnipeg Convention Centre certainly is something that every Winnipegger, in fact, I would suggest, most Manitobans realize is very, very important for

the city of Winnipeg. When you go back on the history of this building, the positives of it being located obviously in the downtown centre here in the city of Winnipeg go back to when the Convention Centre opened up in 1975. There has certainly been an economic engine generated by the Winnipeg Convention Centre, and a good board is very imperative to the management of that economic engine, if you will, for citizens in Manitoba and for citizens of Winnipeg. The Convention Centre has spun off well over a billion dollars in economic activity that has been generated over that period of time.

Mr. Speaker, currently the Convention Centre employs over 650 people, which is very significant in Winnipeg by any comparison, with a payroll of over \$4.5 million per year. When you look at the building built some 30 years ago it certainly was a massive undertaking at that time. It is a unique building on a five-level facility, featuring two levels of underground climate-controlled parking spaces of over 560 vehicles and over 160 000 square feet of meeting and trade show spaces on the three levels.

Mr. Speaker, the economic spin-offs to the city and province certainly are very significant. When you look at every year between 500 000 and a million visitors and the significance of that generating some \$38 million in economic spinoff to the city of Winnipeg and to the province of Manitoba, that is very, very significant. When you consider the Winnipeg Convention Centre, it is a lot like the Keystone Centre in the city of Brandon. The surrounding properties are enhanced by a good strong Convention Centre here in the city of Winnipeg. The outcomes of the running of that Convention Centre are very significant not only to the Convention Centre itself but to the surrounding businesses in the community and the local business people in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak to many of our business people in Winnipeg, and it has been mentioned over and over to me many times, certainly in the downtown area by restaurateurs, by many of the hotels and by the other businesses, retail shops in the vicinity of the Convention Centre, how critically important it is to have a Convention Centre that is well run, a Convention Centre that is well managed and a Convention Centre that is vibrant.

Mr. Speaker, when you take the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, for instance, that will have a convention involving well over a thousand people,

those people need rooms. Those people come to Winnipeg, and they use the Convention Centre over and over, over the last number of years. They eat out, they shop. They spend money on services in Winnipeg and, certainly, a lot of that is in the inner core and downtown in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, when you take the amount of conventions that Winnipeg has had the ability to attract over the last 30 years, a lot of that has been as a result of the Convention Centre. The wisdom was to invest in that back in the early seventies and have that facility at the disposal of the city of Winnipeg to put on and host many of those important initiatives that we have had.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk to anyone from Steinbach or Virden or if you talk to someone from Brandon or Lorette or many of the areas, one building certainly common and people will recognize and know is the Convention Centre. When you talk to just about any Manitoban and you mention the Convention Centre, it is something that Manitobans, I believe, are very proud of to have here in our province. It is something that most people in Manitoba that have ever been to our capital city for a convention have been to the Convention Centre in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the modernization over the last period of time of the Convention Centre, the reinvestment by our City Council here in the city of Winnipeg, by the investment in Manitobans' dollars into the Convention Centre, by the joint investment of our partners in the federal government, and then by the joint investment by the Convention Centre itself and, in fact, the business community, the upgrades have kept that building as a building that everyone is very proud of. The dollars and the investment in that building have been well worth it, obviously. The investment and capital investment and the reinvestment in that building will continue to be of utmost importance to Winnipeggers and to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the ability for me to speak to many Manitobans and just, certainly a couple weeks ago speaking to a friend of mine, mayor in the city of Thompson, had been talking about coming down to a convention and coming down to the Convention Centre. We had the opportunity to chat a little bit about the importance of the Convention Centre to him. Mayor Comaskey from Thompson had mentioned that, when you talk about public input and

public good in buildings, it is one that he mentioned to me. He said, "You know, the Keystone Centre in Brandon reminds me a lot of the Convention Centre in Winnipeg," and how important those are to Manitobans, how important those are to the positive spinoff that Manitobans can get and what we can host and be proud of in large-scale events.

An Honourable Member: Visionary government since 1975.

Mr. Smith: As one of the members mentions, obviously the vision of builders is evident, and certainly going back to 1975, let me think what government might have been in at that time. Schreyer government comes to mind. Just like today, when we see the building of what is going on in Manitoba presently with the development downtown, back in '75 and the early seventies of the Schreyer years and certainly of the city mothers and fathers in the city of Winnipeg, they had the vision to build buildings like that. Just like the MTS Centre that complements the Convention Centre now and the Hydro building that will be going in shortly, Mr. Speaker, the amount of people that are downtown, those are long-term visions and they do not go without capital investment. They do not go without a lot of hardworking men and women to make those projects possible.

* (14:40)

So, when I look back, Mr. Speaker, and I look back on the seventies and the province of Manitoba at that time, and, in fact, the federal government at that time and the city of Winnipeg, and I believe it might have been Mayor Norrie back in '75, the City Council around that time, certainly those people were visionaries.

The recent \$6.6 million that was reinvested in the exterior retrofit of that centre completed what Manitobans want to see. They want to see a reinvestment in capital infrastructure and buildings that Manitobans are proud of. The reinvestment in what we have seen, certainly downtown with the Red River community college, is a reinvestment downtown; the MTS Centre that we saw the reinvestment in; the redevelopment and reinvestment in the building that we are honoured to be in here today to speak in today are public buildings. Certainly, I think a lot of Manitobans look at the Convention Centre as being theirs and a public building.

Mr. Speaker, it is critically important, the board of the Convention Centre. I would like to compliment and remind members sitting in this House, over the years, the amount of men and women who have served on that board working for all of us, for Manitobans, and certainly for the Convention Centre's well-being and the good of the Convention Centre. We should certainly honour those people. We should honour their commitment to community. We should honour their commitment to a thriving capital city here in Winnipeg and the diligence and the work that they do to make that centre a viable centre for all of us.

It is a large operation, Mr. Speaker. When you consider 650 employees, if you took that into fact, of a company of 650 people, and the size and the amount of square footage of that building, and what it takes to keep the capital upgrades in that building, to fill that building with events and co-ordinate those events, to think of the commitment that they make to Winnipeg and certainly the downtown, they should have kudos and we should give credit from this House.

Mr. Speaker, they are the ones that are asking that we consider now a modernization of the Convention Centre Act, that we should consider their request of having more public input in the Convention Centre board, and having general citizens with relevant skills to assist on that board of 15. The City Council, as well, had recommended and looked at that, as opposed to four city councillors, to having that reduction and some people with relevant skills, and look at the request from the City of Winnipeg to have their number decreased from four to two, and the public input from two to four.

Mr. Speaker, I know many members on the other side of the House and members from our side of the House would like to put a few comments on the record of what we believe is good legislation, what has been requested from the City of Winnipeg, from the Convention Centre board and certainly by Winnipeggers in general to modernize this act, to have some minor upgrades and change the structure of the citizens and people on the board, for a building that, I am sure, many others will speak to the relevance and how important that building is and the management of that Convention Centre.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, it is my pleasure to introduce this second reading and speak to what I know other members will speak to positively. Thank you.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I just want to thank the minister for bringing forward this very significant, extremely important piece of legislation that changes the composition of the board of the Convention Centre. Mr. Speaker, it just shows that this government is very, very light on new ideas when this legislation, I am sure, and I know it is going to be debated for hours in the Legislature this afternoon by members of government who, because the government is so short on new ideas and a new legislative agenda, are going to have to filibuster their own bill.

We have absolutely no problem with changing the composition of the board of the Convention Centre and allowing more public participation. The minister has just spent a significant amount of time extolling the decisions that the former boards have made with the composition that presently exists. So he, in fact, has admitted that there was not any significant urgency to making this change and spending the dollars that are required to bring in legislation and the dollars that are required to run this Legislature and to provide for Hansard and for all of the things that with a company ensuring that legislation is debated and passed, the committee process, the translation and all of those things that are required.

Mr. Speaker, we support this legislation. We would urge the government not to filibuster, not to spend time debating this legislation that absolutely no one in this House has any opposition to. Let us get the legislation before committee, let us pass it on, let us make sure that we are not wasting time in this Legislature. Let us get on to the bills that the government should have on the Order Paper and get on to using our time in a manner that would be of benefit to all of the taxpayers and the citizens of Manitoba.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all members of the House unanimously to support the passage of this to committee immediately so that we can get on with other business of the House. We know that on most bills government members are silenced when there is a significant piece of legislation to debate and to speak on; we do not see members of the Legislature on the government side of the House getting up and debating that legislation. When it comes to private members' legislation that this side of the House introduces, they sit silently while people that are disabled and disadvantaged are suffering under the policies of this government. They sit and say

nothing. But, on a bill of this magnitude, I believe that you are going to see several members of the government standing up and spending time talking about how wonderful the Convention Centre is. The Convention Centre is wonderful. They have done a good job. We should be proud in the province of Manitoba for what they have done. What they were able to accomplish under the board as it existed in the past and under a board that will exist in the future with these minor changes.

So let us move on, let us pass this to committee immediately, Mr. Speaker, and get on with the other business of the day. If the government would like to debate legislation, I would encourage them to stand up and debate the private members' bill that I have introduced that would allow for some fairness for some very disadvantaged Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate it. I was up out of my seat earlier on because I, like many of my colleagues, am quite excited about the chance to get up and speak about the Convention Centre and what it means to us who do care about the city of Winnipeg and our downtown area.

I was interested to hear the comments of the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson). She indicated concerns, I believe, with the cost of drafting the bill which is quite surprising. The Member for River East well knows that we have been asked to bring on this piece of legislation by the City of Winnipeg. Unlike the previous government, we prefer to work with our civic partners. We responded promptly and appropriately when the City of Winnipeg came to us and asked for these amendments. These amendments provide the Convention Centre with more flexibility to manage its affairs so they can appoint volunteer board members who truly possess a broad range of skill sets for the Convention Centre to be an important part of this city as we are now in the 21st century.

Now, this amendment democratizes the membership to the board. It reduces the number of City Council representatives from four to two. City councillors work extremely hard. They represent an area, a number of people, twice what members of this Legislature do. They are very busy and, frankly, I understand, they had difficulty finding city councillors who could block enough time to show up for meetings. So, indeed, we think it is appropriate the number of councillors who are on the board has been reduced from four to two so they can maximize

the time that they spend working for the citizens of this city.

* (14:50)

Conversely, of course, the number of board appointments of the general public moves from two to four, and, as the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith) has said, this will encourage further participation and generate greater interest on the part of citizens and the general public and also allow greater public input into the running of the Convention Centre in the composition of the board.

This is a positive step for all parties. It allows the board to appoint more citizen members, and it allows the board to go and attract some members who have particular skills which we think are important in attracting more people to the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba. Those skills, as the minister has indicated, would include those with particular knowledge and particular expertise in the areas of marketing and tourism and financial management. It is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, we think that this is a good thing.

Now, the Winnipeg Convention Centre first opened its doors in 1975, when the Ed Schreyer government was in power, and it is just another example of the truth that the only good things that happen in the city of Winnipeg occur when there is a New Democratic government in power.

The Convention Centre hosts over 500 events each and every year, and frankly, as a proud Winnipegger, somebody who has always worked downtown, somebody who lived downtown for a number of years, certainly, events at the Convention Centre represent a cross section of life in this great city. I think over the past couple of weeks of some of the events that I have been very privileged to attend. One, just a few weeks ago, was the first annual African-Canadian fundraising banquet. I was very pleased to be there with six of my colleagues.

I note, of course, that none of the Progressive Conservative members of this House found it in their schedule, found it available to come to this event. I know they were a little bit preoccupied over the past couple of weeks. That is their issue, I suppose, but I was very pleased to be there with a strong contingent to provide support to the African-Canadian community in Winnipeg.

Also, just a few weeks ago, I was very privileged to attend a great event at the Convention Centre, the 20th anniversary of LEAF, the Legal Education

Action Fund. We had a great speech about some of the updates on various legislation that organization is taking part in, and I was quite impressed and learned quite a bit during the course of that breakfast.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to attend the United Way luncheon. There were more than 1000 guests in the Convention Centre, it is a facility that can host a luncheon of that size, and brought greetings on behalf of the Province. The United Way is an excellent example of what good things can happen in this province when we all work together. The United Way has representatives of labour, has representatives of business, has representatives of government and, just as this government is doing, can show the amazing things that we can accomplish if we all pull together.

There are many other events at the Convention Centre. Now, as a member of the running community, I was interested to see the Convention Centre was actually the base for the first downtown running event in many, many years. Now, I missed the event, unfortunately; I was visiting the wonderful community of Dauphin that weekend. But there was a race which began and ended inside the Convention Centre. Indeed, they used a big loading dock, the loading ramp on the side of the building, as the start and the finish of the race. I do not do much hill work unless I am going up Westview Park, or Garbage Hill, as some know it, so I did not have the joy of trying to finish a 10-kilometre race by running up that parking ramp, but others did and apparently it was quite successful.

I know that the Convention Centre has been well respected, as it hosted the Canadian Bar Association convention which comes to Winnipeg approximately every 10 years. There are many other events that I have attended there. I remember some Oktoberfests, I perhaps do not remember some Oktoberfests that I attended at the Convention Centre, but certainly the Convention Centre was front and centre when Winnipeg was proud to host the Grey Cup for the first time in our city's history in 1991. At the time, I was living just a few blocks away and I appreciated the chance to be able to walk to the events and had a great time at the Convention Centre and in fact had a chance to speak to Doug Flutie and gave him directions back to the hotel he and his Lion teammates were staying at.

So I have, certainly, throughout my life had a great deal of joy and been much entertained by events at the Convention Centre, which truly is a part

of the renaissance of the rebirth of the downtown of the city of Winnipeg since the New Democratic Party returned to power in 1999.

Another example of that, of course, is the MTS Centre, and I know that the former Member for Fort Whyte, and I know that the opposition members dare not speak his name now, I know what he said. He said, "This will be a rinky-dink building." Well, my family and I have been proud to come downtown. We have watched curling. We have watched hockey. We have watched world-class volleyball in a beautiful downtown entertainment complex. I am very proud to be part of a government which is building our downtown.

The recent reopening of the Millennium Library is another great thing going on in downtown Winnipeg. Every time I drive by the Manitoba Hydro building site I am excited to think about the amazing building which is going to take shape on that very site in the months and years to come.

I could go on and on. I could talk about our government's investment in the Health Sciences Centre. I could talk about the Red River College, the downtown campus, which is bringing hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of students down into our core area each and every day. As we heard earlier in this House, if you speak to the officials at Red River College, including the president, their own studies have shown that more than 90 percent, in fact, I believe it is 97 percent of Red River College graduates stay and work and raise their families right here in Manitoba. I am very proud to be part of that.

So, indeed, I know the member from River East and the others on that side with a sour disposition can stand up and say this is a nothing bill, this is not a good thing. Here, we have another chance to showcase the positive things that we are doing. Before I do close, of course, I do respect the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), who, I know, has lived in the city of Winnipeg, who lived on Home Street, if I recall properly, with no sour disposition on that member's part, has indicated his support for the bill. I hope that he will have the chance in caucus to speak to some of his more foul-minded colleagues and encourage them to come to this House, and like the rest of us, like the citizens of this city and this province, have a positive outlook on the wonderful things happening in the province of Manitoba.

So I am very pleased to have had the chance to speak to this bill. I do look forward to hearing what

my other colleagues, and if any of the members from the opposition wish to add their comments, I will be delighted to listen to them too. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased today to say a few words in support of Bill 10, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act. I note that the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) referred to this bill as a nothing bill and summarily dismissed it as not evidence of something worthy enough to be a part of this legislative agenda, and I think she is totally wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out at the beginning that the Convention Centre—I was going to do an old question-and-answer. We used to do those about 15 years ago when we were down to 12 seats in the House here, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will remember those, and we would ask them for a response. But I do not know that I am going to get a great response over there this afternoon, so I may have to rely on some of my own members who are here in droves to keep track. As a matter of fact, one of the members has the key answers to some of the questions, and I do not know that it is fair that he would be given an added advantage over everybody else in the Chamber here. But, nevertheless, I think there are enough general questions that I can ask that give everybody an even chance. But this is a self-marking test as well. I want you to know that I am not keeping track. So you have to be honest here and you have to keep your own score.

But in the beginning I wanted to point out to you that the Convention Centre itself was opened on January 15, 1975. The mayor at the time was Stephen Juba. The Premier at the time was the Honourable Edward Schreyer, the first NDP Premier of Manitoba and a builder Premier in this province. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to tell you that my notes indicate that the building itself was a \$25-million building. Now, I thought, from memory, in those days that it was in the \$30-million range or maybe a little bit higher than that. But I am told that it was a \$25-million—[interjection] Well, the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) is eager, eager to get involved in the question and answers, but I would prefer that he listen a little longer because I have got some really good ones here for him and I am sure he will not be able to answer all of them.

* (15:00)

I wanted to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Convention Centre takes up a sizeable area in the

city of Winnipeg and in that area were a number of long-time businesses. One of the businesses that was there was J.H. Hecht & Sons Limited, which was a fur factory, and that was located on the site from 1952 to 1972. I would like to also point out to you that the Alexandra School stood on this site from 1902 to 1969. I know that to be the case because I have a picture here of the plaques.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been countless, as the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) pointed out, countless dinners that he has attended, we have all attended dinners at the Convention Centre, rock concerts. In fact, the Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) pointed out to me earlier that on September 27, 1978, he attended his first rock concert in Winnipeg, and Trooper was playing. Then he tells me that on September 27, 1979, in any event a year later, he attended the conference by Van Halen, and this is something that he will always remember, the beginnings of the Convention Centre in Winnipeg.

You know, that is not different from what we have seen in Winnipeg in the last year with the opening of the MTS Centre. You know there is excitement in the air with the building and the development. Well, that is what existed in 1973 and '74 and '75. That was the MTS Centre of those days, the building of the Convention Centre. For example, political conventions were being held prior to the Convention Centre in different locations and when the Convention Centre was set up, for example, the federal NDP met here in 1975, and Ed Broadbent was elected leader. I remember it very well. As usual, I was on the losing side. I have yet to back a winner as far as the federal party is concerned.

But I do want to say that Convention Centre put Winnipeg in a national environment. It gave us a big enough venue so that we could have, we could attract, a national convention and we could have delegates here from all over the country, which, in fact we did. We met people from all over Canada coming here to participate in that federal convention and since then, the NDP federally has had several conventions in this city. Now, I am sure that the Liberals have had conventions here as well, none that I recollect, but the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is busily taking notes and I will not quiz him. Oh, he mentioned that Reg Alcock was nominated there in a huge—

An Honourable member: Kevin's got a traumatic experience there.

Mr. Maloway: The Member for Inkster, once again, actually won the leadership of the Liberal Party at the Convention Centre before they recounted it and took it away from him.

Mr. Speaker, the PC Party, the old PC Party, had great conventions there. As a matter of fact, their most notable convention was when they sharpened their knives and did in Joe Clark, 1983. So you see in that big coup against Joe Clark and so you can see that this Convention Centre has been an attraction to all three parties in Canada to have national leadership conventions here to put the focus, the spotlight, on Winnipeg for a three-day period, right, and to give Winnipeg some national profile. You know, we were able to attract conventions from all over North America as a result of building the Convention Centre.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know the boat show is another show that I know the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and I have been over looking at some boats. None of us could afford to buy any of them, but we went and looked at them just the same. There were other attractions over there as well, but I will not get into all of the attractions over at the Convention Centre. The boat show drew exhibitors from Manitoba and Ontario, as well, northwestern Ontario. So you see that is has been a meeting place.

There is the home show. It is a family event. Many, many people come to the home show year after year. The World of Wheels is another one. There are the recreation trailers, and so on.

This is the only venue in Winnipeg that is sufficiently large that you could bring in something as big as a boat show and put it on. And, of course, the builders had the foresight to have a hotel built next door, and I think many of us can remember many parties after the convention over at the—and some cannot remember them, after various conventions that we have had at the Convention Centre.

So, Mr. Speaker, I mean we are all politicians in this House, and I do have a question, though, and everybody get your pens out, there are two city councillors, and I was out there taking a picture of the plaque there at the Convention Centre a couple of hours ago, I noted that, you know, some interest here, that of all the MLAs that were sitting in the House in those days, none of them are here. As a matter of fact, the oldest serving MLA in this Legislature at the moment is from 1981 and that is

the member from Thompson, who is the longest member.

But there are two city councillors, who were elected, I guess, in 1971, because they were here in 1975, and they survived through the 50-member council, down to the 30-member council, I think it was, and then down to the 15-member council. I would like to ask this: Does anybody here know who they are, which of the two? It should be easy on you. You know, you do not have to remember from 50 anymore. It is out of 15. So it should not be that difficult.

An Honourable Member: Harry Lazarenko.

Mr. Maloway: Well, I hear Harry Lazarenko and you are right. Anybody who picked Harry, give themselves a point. Now, does anybody know who the second one is?

An Honourable Member: Eadie.

Mr. Maloway: No. I heard Jae Eadie. No, it is not him. Anybody else?

An Honourable Member: O'Shaughnessy.

Mr. Maloway: Aha. The Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) has got it. Give himself two points. The Member for Rossmere said Mike O'Shaughnessy and correct.

So I do not know what we are supposed to learn from that, except that perhaps it is more productive in terms of longevity to be a member of the City Council, because your shelf life is potentially longer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I note that the Pan American Games used the Convention Centre as one of their venues as well, and many, many more.

An Honourable Member: Monnin inquiry.

Mr. Maloway: The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) mentions the Monnin inquiry, and, of course, there is not a lot of interest in the opposition for talk about the Monnin inquiry. I do not think they want us to go there.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is one great building. And, you know, there were people back in 1975 who said the very same things that some of the members in the opposition said about the MTS Centre. You know, people said the Convention Centre was going to be a white elephant. It was too expensive. We could not do it. People would not come here. People would not use it. Taxpayers would never get out of the debt.

You know, 25 years later, they said the same thing about the arena. The members opposite were supporting the arena one day and not supporting it the next day. They just did not know where to turn on it. The member for Fort Whyte, the ex-member, was so jealous. He could not get his own arena concept approved and, so, suffering from arena envy, he criticized the new MTS Centre. Now it has been open a year, and it has been proven to be a fairly successful—

* (15:10)

An Honourable Member: Over a million people have come into it.

Mr. Maloway: Over a million people have come into the MTS Centre. It is another project that has proven its detractors wrong. We hear the same approach over and over again from the members of the opposition.

Let us take the floodway as an example. We have the Liberal leader, depending on who he talks to, he is either for it with some people, and he is against it with others, and on the same day. So, you know, he is not—

An Honourable Member: Who is your researcher?

Mr. Maloway: We are waiting for the opposition to arrive on this bill and other bills. We are waiting for them to get up. You would think that, with a fullfledged, knock 'em out, drag 'em out, stab 'em in the back leadership campaign going on over there, all these potential candidates would be trying to build some Hansard. I can tell you that, when Darren gets back into town, and when Brian Pallister gets back into town, it would be helpful to the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), or the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), to have some Hansard to wave around because he can say, "Well, Darren, what have you got in Hansard the last three years, and, Brian, what have you done with Hansard in the last few years?" But, no, they are giving these two leadership hopefuls a free ride, because they will be coming to town and they are not dumb. They will be the first ones who say, "Let's see your Hansard, guys. Let's see your comments on the Convention Centre bill. Let's see your comments on The Official Time Act." Where are they going to be? They are not going to be there. Using my comments is not going to do you any good, or the Member for Minto's (Mr. Swan), because we are not running in your race. I mean, think about this. You have got to figure this out.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of other people in our caucus who want to speak on this bill. The minister of highways has been tugging at me here. I think he wants me to finish so that he can take the floor. He has been feverishly making notes and very eager when he found out we would be debating this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking here about improving the democratic process at the Convention Centre. We are talking about reducing the number of city councillors who sit on the board, reducing them from four down to two. The Member for Minto pointed out that they do not really want to be there anyway. They are too busy doing other things. To get some more citizen members on the board would be a positive thing.

To answer the Member for River East, you know, that is why we are bringing in the bill. The City of Winnipeg, she presents it and talks as though we are an arbitrary group, an arbitrary government, trying to shove something down somebody's throat here. When, in actual fact, it is the City that is requesting the measure themselves. The City has asked us to do this. Here we are, working hard in the middle of winter, making long speeches on this bill, trying to help the City out, and where is the opposition? Nowhere to be found. I do not even have enough participation in my question and answer here to validly decide who the winner is supposed to be, right? I am going to have to declare them all winners.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much more you want to know about the Convention Centre. But I have some notes here. I am not sure how much time I have because I never kept track of the time here. But, nevertheless, once again, I said we are introducing the legislation at the request of the City of Winnipeg, in consultation with the Convention Centre. We are not sneaking up on them. We are not doing this behind their back. These amendments provide the Convention Centre with some flexibility that it long needed so they may appoint volunteer board members. They are looking for board members who possess a range of skills necessary for proper management.

The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is talking about that these days. There are a lot of boards where people are selected to the boards and they are really not familiar with the area. So we should, because of the directors' and officers' liability insurance that these boards are—you know, people nowadays, when they sit on a board, usually demand

directors' and officers' liability before they will even sit on a board because people are so willing to sue these days. In fact, you really do not want to sit on a board unless you have some background in the area or some real interest. That is really unfortunate, in a way, because you should get new people involved and so on and not just people that are established in the area. But, from a legal liability point of view, I guess, you know, that is what we end up having at the end of the day is professional-type board people because we are worried and scared about liability claims, and it is the taxpayers in this case who are going to be paying the premiums. Once again, we are going full circle with the lawyers.

So, Mr. Speaker, the measure reduces the number of City Council representatives on the board of the Convention Centre from four to two, increases the number of Convention Centre board appointments from two to four, and we really think that, if the opposition would get here and speak to this bill, we could move this bill on to committee where we could effect the changes rather than having it delayed for a longer period of time.

This is a positive step for all concerned parties, allowing the board to appoint these citizen members who are competent and have the skills needed in the area of marketing, tourism and financial management. That is what this building is all about. It is not just a building. We are talking about the whole concept of marketing. We have got access to the Internet now. We need people on the board who are able to have some creativity and marketing skills to be able to attract more tourism to the province. With the dollar situation right now, it is a challenging issue, right? It is not as easy. When the dollar was low, the tourists came. But now the dollar is high, and it is tougher to attract those tourists.

Now, the federal government, the United States, wants to require passports, which is going to scare off people because only 15 percent of the American public have passports. I am not sure what it is in Canada, but in the United States only 15 percent. So they are going to be forcing all their citizens to get passports to be able to get back in the United States, which is going to mean that we are to lose a lot of tourism. At the end of next year, the end of 2006, we are going to lose a lot of tourism because, rather than coming up here for a convention or other activity, people are going to say, "Well, it is just too much trouble to get a passport for the one time that I am coming to Canada."

Mr. Speaker, the Convention Centre is a unique facility with a unique design. It is a five-level structure featuring two levels of underground climate-controlled parking spaces for 560 vehicles. I have been in that parking lot before, not for a number of years. I cannot get in there anymore. *[interjection]* The truck will not fit in there. I cannot get in there. It will get stuck, and I would have to phone the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and have him come over there to help me pull it out. But I can tell you that, when I was in there, I lost my car in there a couple of times after conventions.

I remember that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and I one time were at a convention—this is a bit off topic, but we were at a federal convention in Ottawa, and we were looking for our cars around midnight, the Member for Thompson and I, and we could not find the cars. So we went to an establishment and had a drink or two and waited until all the cars were gone, until there was only one little car—it was a rental car, you see, we could not remember the colour of it or the plate—so we waited till there was one—*[interjection]* The Member for Thompson said we had the right level but the wrong parking lot. But we found this one car there about three in the morning, so now we could identify the car. We knew where it was. We knew where the keys were. Guess what? We could not get it out of the parking lot because the parking lot was closed. *[interjection]* And we were supporting the wrong candidate that time, too, the Member for Thompson tells me. We just had a bad time that whole experience.

There are over 160 000 square feet of meeting and trade show space in three levels of the Convention Centre. Every year between half a million and one million visitors come to the Convention Centre, generating \$38 million in economic spin-offs for the city and the province. Now, the highways minister has mentioned that we had had a million people already through the new arena in the first year. The Convention Centre employs over 650 people. I did not know that. Did you know that? No, I did not know that at all—650 people with a payroll of over \$4.5 million per year.

* (15:20)

Today, and this is a subject that I am really keen about, the modern IT components to the Convention Centre. You know, I like to ask those questions about IT issues. Whether it is the Liquor Commission or the Workers Compensation Board or Manitoba

Hydro, I like to know how their systems are integrating into the SAP system of the government, whether we have consistency and efficiencies that are very important to a smooth operation and good and better service to the public and a profitable operation so the public are not subsidizing and paying where they should not have to.

But, today, did you know, Mr. Speaker, that in the Convention Centre, the modern and unique features include direct Internet access, high-speed data lines and fibre optic cabling? The first floor level provides over 21 000 square feet of meeting room space plus a number of specialty rooms, including a teleconference and video conference centre. Well, you know, I wonder if the honourable Whip, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), knew that before. I am sure that he did not know that. That is why it is important to have this time in the House. Now the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) wanted extra days in the House. Well, he has got them. Now where is everybody? Where are all the people that are supposed to be here listening to these speeches and making these speeches?

We have gone from the first floor. Now let us deal with the second floor. I want to tell the Member for Inkster the second floor. The second floor provides over 24 000 square feet of meeting space plus a concourse area with a variety of retail shops and services, including the Centre Place Café—I did not know that—a print centre, hair salons, news and smoke shop, as well as an art gallery.

Now let us go to the third level. The third level features the primary exhibit hall of 78 000 square feet of pillarless space, how about that, with full service provided via the floor ports. In addition to conference, meeting and consumer trade show business, many spectacular events requiring a wide range of specialty lighting, staging and dramatic effects are handled by the experienced professionals at the Winnipeg Convention Centre every year.

I would like to draw your attention back to the Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) again, when I reference this, that he was able to go to his very first rock concert, Trooper, in September 27, 1978, to experience those spectacular lighting, specialty lighting, staging and dramatic effects, and that had an effect on his life. The fact that he remembers where he was all these years later should tell you something about the effect of this Convention Centre on that particular individual.

So, Mr. Speaker, I only have a couple of more points to make here. You know, we have had to, and I have often wondered about building designs and building constructions, about why a building that is only 20 years old needs major renovations. I think there are buildings in Europe and other places that have withstood the test of time for hundreds and hundreds of years without major refits and so on. It seems that when we construct buildings in this country, within 20 years we are putting on new roofs on houses and we are having to do this and do that, and you wonder why that is the case. But, recently, there was \$6.6-million exterior retrofit completed in order to remedy structural concerns, as well as to upgrade insulation, improve energy efficiency. So you see, I remember when they did that. There was a big construction effort. I believe it was just before the Pan Am Games, and I have often wondered about that.

You know, I was in Cuba one time and we were waiting for this beach bar to be built, and New Year's Eve was coming. It was only two or three days away, and, you know, there was nothing going on. There was nothing happening. They put building materials on the spot, and, all of a sudden, the day before New Year's Eve, the whole thing went up. Actually, yes, New Year's Eve. It was up in about three hours. The big beach bar, all the alcohol and drinks.

An Honourable Member: Is it still there?

Mr. Maloway: I am sure it is still there. That is what happened here. All of this stuff, these retrofits and so on were brought in just before the Pan Am Games, as was the seating, the new seats brought into the stadium. It seems that that is what motivates us to do great things, when we are forced with deadlines. When we have some big event to put on, then we kind of can justify making all kinds of improvements in the infrastructure. These things are good because they put people to work; they lengthen the lifespan and the use of the facility; and they give it a facelift and make it look better than it was before.

In that case, the Manitoba government provided half of the money. Manitoba Hydro is involved in there trying to refurbish the building and make it more energy efficient, which is another very important thing. Mr. Speaker, I have a few points left, but I know the Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) is very eager to make her presentation. I am sure she will pick up on these remaining points. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I am not sure who they are applauding for, but I assume it is myself. So thank you very much. Mr. Speaker.

Just a few very brief points on this. I think, first of all, listening to the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the comments that she put on the record, and then I listened to the Member for Elmwood, that I would indicate fairly clearly that anyone who is going to be either reading Hansard or will listen to the comments made by the Member for Elmwood, there really is no substance to this bill.

Anyone who is going to look at the comments made in the last 25 minutes that have been on record are not specific to this bill at all, not at all. They have been all over the world, but not specific to the bill. So, Mr. Speaker, I therefore submit that the substance of it, as the Member for Elmwood has clearly indicated in his speech, is somewhat irrelevant to the bill itself. Thank you very much for the opportunity to just put a few comments on record.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to stand up in the House and put a few comments on the record in regard to The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act. I think it is incredibly unfortunate that the MLA for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) feels that this bill is not worthy of debate. I think that we have had a proud tradition here in Manitoba as a provincial government of working in partnership with our city governments and also with the federal government.

We are pleased to introduce this legislation because we were approached by the City of Winnipeg in consultation with the Winnipeg Convention Centre to bring this legislation forward. There is absolutely no question that this bill is a bill that is worthy of our debate, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the members on this side of the House feel that way in regard to debating our legislation in the House. That is part of the democratic process. It is unfortunate that members opposite do not share that same kind of passion that we have for debating bills in this Legislature.

I have to say, you know, we have to remember that this building was built in 1975 and, as the MLA for Elmwood was saying, there was a real vision. Politicians at the time really realized that this was going to be a benefit to our economy and many of

the previous speakers from my party have talked about all of the events that they have been to and all of the memories that they have because they attended events at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

It kind of made me do a little trip down memory lane as I was listening to all of these events that they had been to. Like the MLA for Gimli, I remember one of the first rock concerts that I went to at the Convention Centre. Of course, I was very young, it was just a couple of years ago. It was not really a rock concert per se but in those days it was. It was Al Jarreau. I do not even know if people remember who Al Jarreau was. *[interjection]* I know the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Ms. McGifford) says that she definitely remembers him because she is of the same vintage as I am, so I am pleased about that.

* (15:30)

A Manitoba musician who has performed many times in the Convention Centre, who is without question one of my favourite rock and rollers, is Kenny Shields. If you have ever been to a Kenny Shields's rock revival concert, there is only one place to see him and that is in the Winnipeg Convention Centre. I wish he would come back and do a concert. About two months ago, he did a concert at the Windsor Park Inn out in the MLA for Radisson's neighbourhood—

An Honourable Member: On Lagimodiere.

Ms. Allan: Yes, out on Lagimodiere. You know, I really wanted to go. But I just really, to be honest with you, I did not quite have the energy. But I can tell you right now that if that concert had been at the Convention Centre, I definitely would have been there.

Now, the MLA for Elmwood took me down a political memory lane when he talked about some of the political conventions that he remembered that had been held at the Convention Centre. Two of them were very, very near and dear to my heart. One of them was a federal convention, and I am hoping that his historical memory will remind me what year this was, when Ed Broadbent was retiring, and I organized the tribute to Ed Broadbent. It was a one-and-a-half-hour live show. It was telecast to all three national TV stations. I think it was 1985, '84, '85, and I cannot believe I took on that job. *[interjection]* So they are figuring it out here and I am sure they are going to tell me soon.

An Honourable Member: 1989.

Ms. Allan: Yes, 1989. Thank you very much. I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it was really quite interesting because I was originally hired to organize a wine and cheese reception for Mr. Broadbent, and it turned into a live one-and-a-half-hour show to three national TV stations. It was probably one of the highlights of my life in the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Of course, the other political event, and I am sure many of my colleagues will remember it, is when we elected Premier Gary Doer as the leader of our party in 1989. You know—

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

An Honourable Member: 1988.

Ms. Allan: Sorry, 1988. Thank you very much. I recall, yes, of course it was 1988. How could I forget? My daughter had been born in January, and I was at the convention when Jessie was six weeks old. So it must have been right around March or so. That was a really exciting time. Of course, now, thanks to that activity in the Convention Centre, we now have the most popular premier in Canada, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So, you know, there are many, many memories that I have from having the opportunity to attend events at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The MLA for Lord Roberts, she reminded me of—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): Order. One moment, sorry. Just a reminder that all persons in the Chamber must be referred to by their position, not their name.

An Honourable Member: The MLA for Lord Roberts?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): Gary Doer.

Ms. Allan: Oh, sorry. The MLA for Elmwood.

An Honourable Member: Concordia.

Ms. Allan: Concordia, sorry. The MLA for Lord Roberts reminded me, remember the Christmas craft sales, the big Christmas craft sales that used to happen at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, and the MLA for Minto. Now this was a real boost to our economy, and many, many, many multicultural events happened and we were pleased to be there. He mentioned the African, the first annual African

cultural centre fundraiser at the Convention Centre that was just a couple of weeks ago that we attended with about seven of our colleagues, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we were very, very pleased to be there. It was a spectacular event, and I want to congratulate them because they really raised the bar in regard to events, in regard to entertainment. It really was a spectacular evening.

The other events that are probably some of my most favourite as well are the women's events that I have attended at the Convention Centre, the business women's dinners and the galas recognizing the achievements of women in—*[interjection]* Absolutely, in our community. I think these are very, very important events, and they are held in a world-class facility. We would not be able to have those in our community if it was not for this very, very important venue.

Now, the MLA for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was wondering why the opposition members were not here to debate this bill and really get their comments on record in regard to their leadership debate. You know, I do not want him to take it personally that they are not here because I know they enjoy listening to him speak as much as I do, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am absolutely sure that, even though they do not want to debate this bill, they are not debating this bill here, that they are sitting in their offices and they are listening to every word he said, because I am quite sure they enjoy the MLA for Elmwood, listening to his speeches, just as much as all of us do on this side of the House. So I certainly do not want him to take it personally.

I am really pleased that we have brought this legislation forward. There are important amendments in this bill that will provide the Convention Centre with the flexibility that it needs so they may appoint volunteer board members who possess—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): Order, please. Just another reminder, although you did not name anyone, it is not a wise idea to make any reference to people being in or not in the Chamber. This is just a caution.

Ms. Allan: I said they were not debating the bill. I did not say that they were here or there anywhere—*[interjection]* No, I did not.

These amendments provide the Convention Centre with the flexibility it needs so that they can appoint volunteer board members who possess the broad range of skill sets necessary for the proper

management of the board. I have to congratulate the Winnipeg Convention Centre in regard to having a look at their governance structure and making sure that in this day and age when corporations and non-profit corporations and Crown corporations are all looking at their governance structure, they are making sure that it meets today's realities.

These are important amendments because they will further democratize the membership of the board. It also reduces the number of City Council representatives on the board of the Convention Centre from four to two and increases the number of Convention Centre board appointments from two to four. This change, Madam Deputy Speaker, will further participation and interest on the part of our citizens and the general public as well as allow for the greater public input into the running of the centre and the composition of the board. I think this is a very positive step for all concerned parties because we can appoint citizen members who are competent and they will have the skills in marketing, tourism and financial management that I am sure will be quite needed so that we can take this wonderful facility that we all have all of these wonderful memories of and we can take this into the future and it will really make a contribution.

It has been here since 1975, and we want it to be around long into the future so that we can continue to go to events at the Convention Centre and continue to have these wonderful memories of events that will be memories for our children. My daughter, just a few weeks ago, went to her first concert and it was at the Convention Centre. She came home and she was in the mosh pit and she ruined—

An Honourable Member: Mosh.

Ms. Allan: Mosh? However you say it, mosh pit. She came home, she had ruined a pair of shoes, unfortunately, but it was an important memory for her. Maybe some day she will be standing in this Legislature debating legislation, and she will have a memory from the Convention Centre that she will be able to talk about. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I really think it is important that we continue to make these kinds of governance changes in our institutions so that they will be there for many, many years to come.

* (15:40)

I really am proud of our government and all of the work that it has done in regard to the facilities that we have in Winnipeg and the vision that we

have, the MTS Centre, Red River College. As our Premier (Mr. Doer) has often said, the MLA for Concordia, many, many times, he has mentioned the fact that we brought back the extinct bird, the building crane, to Manitoba, and we will continue to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, because that is what we believe is going to build strong communities and will contribute to our economy so that everyone can participate.

I am particularly pleased that we have not just done this in Winnipeg. We do not have Perimeteritis. We have done this all throughout Manitoba, and I am particularly pleased with what we have done at the Keystone Centre in Brandon. There has been a huge amount of work done at the Keystone Centre in Brandon. It is now Manitoba's largest year-round multi-functional facility for sporting, hospitality, agriculture and cultural events, with over \$5.6 million in funding for various structural upgrades as well as funding for a new multi-functional facility that would include the addition of an agriculture centre of excellence.

Now, of course, as many of you know, there are a lot of events that happen at this facility as well, that people will have many, many memories from. It is a 100 000-square-foot building with a show ring and seating for up to 700 people. The show ring will be built to accommodate events such as rodeos, cattle sales, 4-H shows and sales, dog shows, I have been told by my colleagues and, of course, major equestrian competitions, which is what I am, of course, very interested in, Mr. Speaker, because I am very fortunate to have an equestrian rider in my family who has competed in Brandon, two years ago with her horse, Kazaam, and she will be back there again this year with her horse, Don't Be Nasty. We will be boosting the Brandon economy while we are there, so I am really, really pleased that we have put that kind of money into our facilities here in Manitoba so that we can continue to have world-class facilities for all kinds of activities and events for many, many years to come.

Now, I know that there are many of my colleagues who are champing at the bit, you know, to put a few words onto the record. In fact, my colleague the Minister of Transportation and Government Services, I know that he is interested in equestrian as well, and he may want to put a few words on the record in regard to what this has done here in Manitoba in relationship to the Keystone Centre and the Winnipeg Convention Centre. So I am very, very pleased, Madam Deputy Speaker, that

I have had an opportunity to put a few words on the record today in regard to this very important piece of legislation, and we will continue to work with our partners at all government levels in regard to bringing in legislation that is meaningful and that will make a difference for Manitobans and for our communities. That is what we are here to do, to get things done. Thank you.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): It will be very, very difficult to follow my colleagues after many of the great comments they made and very eloquent speakers as they are. I just wanted the opportunity to put a couple of comments on the record. I thank you very much for the time, and I know all the members opposite cannot wait to hear my comments. I will certainly not be critical of them. I prefer to be more high road and to actually take a look at the vision that has been provided, not only now, but in the past.

I just want to make reference to the year 1975. Premier Ed Schreyer was the premier of the day, and at the time he was being criticized, I might say not only for the Convention Centre, but also Hydro projects. There were many other projects that the premier of the day was being criticized because of this vision that he had, a vision not only for the people of that particular day, but also for the children and grandchildren into the future. Today we see all of the benefits of that vision, of that government, the first New Democratic Party government in Manitoba, that government of Ed Schreyer and the visionary government it was and the building government that it was.

I have to tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that, when you take a look at the Convention Centre, just on the face of it, you see that many speakers before me have talked about the square footage and the size of the building, and talked about many, many physical features and the attributes of the size of a building like that. I want to talk about a little bit of the benefits it provides to Winnipeg and to Manitoba. As the former Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and I know that the previous Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism to me is also in the Chamber today and would want to second my comments about the importance it plays in tourism for the province of Manitoba, there are many conventions held at this Convention Centre, and many have been held throughout the years since it has been built, 30 years ago. I have to tell you that every year we talk about 500 000 to 1 million visitors come to the Winnipeg Convention Centre,

generating about \$38 million of economic spin-offs to the city and the province. It is substantial. I know, since the Convention Centre was opened in 1975, over \$1 billion of economic activity has been generated because of the Convention Centre.

You have had many, many important meetings that have taken place there. There are many meetings that have taken place around Remembrance Day and, especially, talking about our veterans. There are many concerts, and I know we made reference to the events that have taken place there with regard to music concerts, but many of the events that I look back at, and when you take a look down memory road, the events that have taken place there around, for example, the Grey Cup.

We have had a couple of Grey Cups held in Winnipeg and we always throw a great social in the Convention Centre around Grey Cup, and I am sure in the fall of '06, when we host the next Grey Cup in Manitoba, there will, again, whether it is Kenny Shields or someone else playing at the Convention Centre, I know we will show visitors to our province a great time, and they remember the Convention Centre.

I have had the opportunity to travel over the last number of years. People have made reference to our Convention Centre, and they recall the great socials that were held at the Convention Centre around the two previous Grey Cup games. It is a Manitoba tradition. When you talk about socials in Manitoba, there is nothing like having garlic sausage, dill pickle, crackers and cheese—and Manitobans know it as a great time—and rye bread, great Manitoba rye bread. I can tell you that there are many of us in Manitoba, in this Chamber, certainly, can reflect back on many, many events that we have attended at the Convention Centre.

I want to tell you that Winnipeggers should be proud of the Convention Centre, but not only Winnipeggers, but Manitobans. My constituency of La Verendrye, there are many, many individuals from La Verendrye and rural Manitoba is the point I am trying to make, Madam Deputy Speaker, who come into Winnipeg to attend many events at the Convention Centre. This particular establishment, as was mentioned, was built in 1975, and since that time there are too numerous events to mention or recall in the short period of time that I have, but there are many that many previous speakers before me touched on. We all have different memories of that Convention Centre going back many years, and some

have different experiences there that are very, very positive.

* (15:50)

When we take a look at the vision of Ed Schreyer and their government, I want to make reference to the government of the day. In 1988, I attended a convention where the New Democratic Party was changing leadership. Now the MLA for Concordia was elected leader and Premier of Manitoba at that time, and that convention was really a leadership. That convention was really uplifting in the sense that it was not long that we had lost government of the day. We were in a rebuilding mode, and we needed someone with vision and someone with the tenacity to bring a party up from a government that had just been defeated. The MLA from Concordia was able to do that, was able to build up a strong, strong membership in Manitoba. But he did it by showing a vision similar to Ed Schreyer about what could be done with an NDP government in the 1990s or in the 2000s.

So, in 1999, the MLA for Concordia was elected Premier. Then, if you take a look at what has been done since 1999, many have referred to the MTS Centre. There were many naysayers across the way. We were not sure where they were coming from half the time, whether or not they were out there tying the yellow ribbon around the Eaton's building with the rest of the naysayers and all the nitpickers that were around at the time, not wanting to do something about the downtown, not wanting to improve downtown Winnipeg. Instead, what we saw in the 1990s was a downtown that had buildings just with plywood fronts. It was embarrassing.

I had relatives, I attended a 300th anniversary of the Lemieux coming to Canada, and many of my relatives came to Manitoba to visit Manitoba in the 1990s. What did they see in downtown Winnipeg? Buildings with plywood fronts and that was our downtown. Even to this day they ask. They have not been back to Manitoba. I am trying to encourage them to return once again to see the rebuilding and the vibrancy that has taken place in our downtown Winnipeg since 1999. This is all part and parcel of a vision of this new Premier that was elected Leader of the New Democratic Party in the Convention Centre in 1988.

Others have mentioned about Mr. Ed Broadbent, who stepped down as Leader of the federal New Democratic Party in '89, and that was a tremendously successful convention. I know members opposite

also have their examples of many, many conventions and events that have been held there, and I know they would wish to stand up and speak about the Convention Centre and the importance of this Convention Centre to Manitoba.

I want to make a point, Madam Deputy Speaker, before I conclude my remarks, I have a few more to make. But, before I conclude my remarks, I just want to get to the essence of what this legislation is all about. We are talking about a piece of legislation that is at the request of our partner in this project, the City of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg in consultation with the Convention Centre. These amendments provide the Convention Centre with the flexibility it needs so that it may appoint volunteer board members who possess the broad range of skills necessary for the proper management of the board.

I was very fortunate a number of years ago to be the minister responsible for the voluntary sector of Manitoba. Volunteers in this province provide so much time, valuable time of their own. Everyone has a busy life these days. We are very fortunate in Manitoba, not only to be one of the highest contributors in Manitoba when it comes to providing monies for different charities, but also volunteering their time.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

When you talk about volunteerism and people who are going to volunteer their time, you want to make sure that the boards that they sit on are also effective. You find that, at the request of our partners, the City of Winnipeg in consultation with the Convention Centre, they wanted us to streamline that particular board to make sure that it would function and work a lot better. This amendment will further democratize the membership of the board. It reduces the number of the City Council representatives on the board of the Convention Centre from four to two and increases the number of Convention Centre board appointments from two to four. This change will encourage further participation and interest on the part of citizens in the general public as well as allow for greater public input into the running of the centre and the composition of the board.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is really a true benefit for the Convention Centre. The Convention Centre not only needed the facelift that we, as a government, provided in a \$6.6-million retrofit, and over the last 10 years about \$15 million of interior refurbishment, but it needed a change inside. It

needed a change on the board to make it function a lot better.

We are able to work with our partners, as I mentioned, to be able to do that. I know that when you take a look at, as the previous speaker mentioned, about 500 different sorts of events in 1800 rooms that so far this year have been booked, it is tremendously important for the economy of the city of Winnipeg, but also the province of Manitoba.

The Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), the MLA for St. Vital, and the Minister of Labour mentioned previously, as well, about the Keystone Centre in Brandon. I just want to touch on that a little bit, Mr. Speaker, because the Keystone Centre in Brandon is often forgotten because of the Convention Centre in Winnipeg, the larger centre that it is. But the Keystone Centre in Brandon is very, very important in many ways, not only to rural Manitoba, but the city of Brandon.

The MLA for St. Vital mentioned about dressage and the equestrian events, in particular the equestrian events, but my daughter participates and has participated in dressage and is a proud owner of a Dutch Warmblood. We are very proud of the fact that she has taken this sport up. There are many others in this Chamber who I know have the love of many different animals, whether they be horses or dogs. There are many dog shows at the Convention Centre, as well as horse shows.

So I just want to point out that the great city of Brandon, Manitoba, the Wheat City of Manitoba, has such a great facility that our government, as well, has shown some vision that it needed some work, and we are very, very proud to be a partner in that initiative as well.

Mr. Speaker, many previous speakers before me have talked about what I think is the key issue. The key issue and the difference between our government and the government of the 1990s is that this government has a vision about building this province. We have our economic challenges, as the previous government did in the 1990s, but we have a vision of not only building hydro dams. We are also talking about rebuilding the city of Winnipeg, our greatest asset in the province of Manitoba.

The inner city, you had many homes that were burning in the 1990s. We are trying to change that. We are trying to do something about the core of this city and the heart of the province of Manitoba. Regrettably, in the 1990s, you had the previous

administration that was the cholesterol, and now what we are trying to do is give this province a transplant. What we are trying to do is we are trying to inject a new heart, a new vitality into this province. What we are finding—and the MLAs in this Chamber can talk all day about it and we can talk about the vision and how Manitoba is building—what we hear when we leave this Chamber and leave this building, and we hear this from Manitobans every day, is that they see a difference.

They see a difference not only in the downtown. They see a difference in rural Manitoba. They see a difference in northern Manitoba, and they know that this government is making a difference because we do have a vision and we want to build this province and we want to make this the greatest province in Canada.

That is our goal, and each and every MLA on this side of the Chamber every single day works day in, day out to ensure that is going to happen. With the leadership of the Premier (Mr. Doer), the MLA for Concordia, we work every day tirelessly in co-operation with many, many stakeholders and with the population outside of this building to ensure that happens.

Mr. Speaker, just to conclude my remarks with regard to the Convention Centre itself and the vision it provided in 1975 and the vision that we have with regard to the MTS Centre, the new Hydro building, the Red River community college downtown and the library, we could go on and on and on, and Manitobans have seen the difference that the Province has made to all of us, to all of us, to our children, to our grandchildren. They will be able to reflect back and they will be able to see the vision that we have. We have more to do, and we are going to continue building this province. Each and every MLA, as I mentioned before, is going to work tirelessly to make sure that that happens.

So I really thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put a couple of comments on the record with regard to the Convention Centre and the importance of this Convention Centre to the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba, and for what this legislation will do in democratizing and changing the board make-up, but also the importance of working with the City of Winnipeg, one of our greatest partners, and also with the board itself.

So thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put a few comments on the record.

* (16:00)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I know that the government members are facing some difficulty in trying to keep this House going, and I think they are filibustering their own bills. I think our critic for the Convention Centre act had actually indicated that we were ready to pass this bill, and it seems that the honourable members from the government side of the House are wanting to keep this bill going. That demonstrates clearly to us that they have no agenda.

I believe that, if they had any meaningful business to present and meaningful legislation to present, other than basically these one-pagers that they have presented here in the last week or so, I think we would be prepared to pass this bill. I think our critic had indicated a willingness to let this bill go and we support this bill. So I would suggest to the House Leader over there that, if it is their wishes, we can proceed then to the next piece of legislation to debate that piece of legislation before we keep on just talking about the same old thing.

Basically, this bill only changes two board members. We are spending a whole day debating the importance of debating two board members on a board of directors of the Convention Centre. I believe that it is somewhat indicative of the kind of agenda that this government is bringing before the people of Manitoba. It is clearly an indication of how unprepared they are coming into this House, coming into this session. We would certainly like to see this bill dealt with, and let us get onto some other business in the House.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to table the resolution that we would be debating a week from today? I am not sure of the correct procedure to do this in the House. But, if I may, I would table this resolution so that it could go in the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I would like to put a few words on record on this particular bill on The Convention Centre Amendment Act.

I think I do understand the people from the opposition talking about the relevance of this debate. I would say that this bill brings the change in the management, which is very important for any corporation to exist. I think it is going to bring democracy into the management of Convention

Centre, which is very important. But, when we talk about what Convention Centre does, it is not irrelevant. I think some of the members from this side have spoken with passion, with excitement of some of the memories.

I, for one, would say that, when I came to Winnipeg, the Convention Centre was non-existent. There was a small, little grocery store there, and my brother used to go and buy some Indian groceries at that store. I used to work in Glenboro in rural Manitoba, and later on I came and I saw bulldozers going and the Convention Centre being built.

It was the then-Premier, Ed Schreyer, whom I tremendously respect for making me stay in Manitoba, because I think it was he, when I came, who was the Premier. I could see that the vibration that had been created that time would be the future for our grandchildren, that Premier Schreyer had built.

I must say, when we talk about the memories of the Convention Centre, some of the friends we have talked about, I have my own memories. I do remember, I think it was in early 1986, that I introduced, at the NDP convention at the Convention Centre, Ed Broadbent, who was the leader of that party. At that time, I think the federal NDP was running in polls to about 34 percent. Compared to today's Prime Minister, who is the Liberal Party head, he polls today at about 30 percent, and he is still the Prime Minister. I wish, at that time, if Ed Broadbent was elected the Prime Minister, then Canada would have been a much better country than what we see today.

I take that pride, that Convention Centre is a place that we bring all these big events and the memories come. I am very happy to really repeat some of the things that my colleagues have said. It is a pride that I have—*[interjection]* I am not able to hear you, sir. All you do, member, is yell and scream, and that is not going to make me any different. In fact, I will be much more charged if you challenge me.

So here is what we look at the downtown vibration. When I was looking at the years when we were not in government, downtown was dying. It was a sleeping city. There was nothing, no action. Now, today, if you go through the downtown see the Human Rights Museum. I was visiting India, and I took a great pride in announcing that the largest museum of human rights is being built in downtown area. This is the excitement, this is the building up

that this government has done, and it is, fortunately, in the same pattern that the previous Ed Schreyer's era was building. We are building. We are developing. We are making vibration in the downtown area, and we are looking at the results which will be future for the generation and our city's and our province's future. I think it is very relevant to see when we talk about the excitement of Convention Centre.

I have one very fond memory. My own son's wedding was at the Convention Centre. I think it was '89, or '92, I think it was '92 that I had the wedding reception there. After that there have been several receptions, weddings that I have attended at Convention Centre. There have been several other industrial shows, home shows, furniture shows, that this Convention Centre houses. It is important for us to pass this kind of legislation which makes the management of that centre much better, much more democratically done and much more effective.

I also have to say that we celebrate Diwali there. When the Ramadan comes, the Muslims go there and they make their own prayers there. It is a large convention. In Diwali there are over 4000 people who come and attend there. There are a lot of stores and shows. It is a vibration, excitement, passion that we are trying to really establish in the Convention Centre.

I think it is very important for us to realize that when we are building we must be positive. I am really sorry to see the opposition not getting any excitement in anything which is positive. They should come at times and say, "Hey, you have done a good job." I have never seen that. Every time when you would talk everything is negative and doomy-gloomy, and that is not what we should be doing.

I know that there will be this 160 000 square feet of space which is in the heart of downtown, maybe perhaps too small, maybe the growth we are doing now, maybe we will build another convention centre. But we have to really look ahead, be futuristic and be excited about building our communities and our downtown and our economy.

Also, it says that \$6.6-million exterior retrofit has been completed in order to remedy structural concerns as well as upgrade the insulation and improve energy efficiency. Winnipeg Convention Centre began energy improvement program with the assistance of Manitoba Hydro approximately five years ago, and the partnership will continue for another three to four years.

Also, we are talking about Brandon. Some of my colleagues had mentioned about Keystone Centre, which we have attended. Now it is really showing the vibration getting into the other communities, other cities, other towns of the province of Manitoba. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the attitude of this government is to build, to develop, to look futuristic and to be positive.

* (16:10)

To be positive, we are still balancing budgets. We are looking at improving in all areas. But we are really very positive about building, and that is a positive mode with economic balance and social balance. I would commend this government and Premier Doer who has led to this particular type of attitude of building. So I would say strongly that we should, all members should, excitedly support this bill and pass it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 10. Bill 10, as it has been pointed out from the first speaker, is a fairly straightforward bill that, in essence, sees a reduction of City Council appointments in favour of the Convention Centre board being able to appoint two others, which will ultimately, I think, as has been pointed out on several occasions, make it a healthier board, a better situation.

I, too, acknowledge the benefits that the Convention Centre has brought forward, trade shows, different types of consumer trade shows, dinners, nominations have been talked about, concerts. We have seen it used as sports venues. We have seen it used as some of the better socials that Winnipeg has ever seen, Grey Cup or whatever it might be, Mr. Speaker. There are numerous events. The previous speaker talked about Diwali. There are so many events. It is a huge facility that accommodates literally thousands of individuals for one event alone, and it has proven to be of great benefit for our province.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, what one sees—and I say we do not have a problem with this bill, in fact, passing. We would encourage it. I have been sitting actually quite patiently and just watching and observing members contribute to debate on this bill, and it is interesting that we see so many government members commenting on Bill 10. Some might say, well, they like it. I suspect that they would like it; otherwise, they would not have introduced the bill.

But what I find interesting about it is that as the session progresses, no doubt we will see more legislation coming before us, and it would be interesting to see in terms of what sort of level of participation we get from the government on other pieces of legislation.

I think that it is important to note that we had a substantial break, Mr. Speaker, and it was an agreed upon break. The government was afforded plenty of opportunity to bring forward a legislative agenda that would allow for good, full debate on some critically important issues. What we have seen is the government talk about, yes, the Convention Centre is important, but let us put it in perspective in terms of what we should be talking about.

The Throne Speech made reference to changes to The Elections Finances Act. There is a great deal of interest in terms of just what this government is doing with regard to that act. Where is that act? This is an act in which the government has had over five and a half months to bring forward and allow for debate. Are we going to see that legislation at the ninth hour or the twelfth hour, just before the government wants us to wind up?

Mr. Speaker, one can easily appreciate the frustration that one has in terms of here we are debating the convention bill, when, in fact, I had tried to raise the issue of the Crocus fiasco and having that issue debated inside this Chamber. There is lots that is there that we could and should be debating, and I challenge the government, as it has done today, this afternoon, in putting up speaker after speaker on Bill 10, not only to address Bill 10 but to address other issues that are, I would argue, more important in many ways than Bill 10.

It is not to discourage the members. It is more so to encourage the government to bring forward what the heart of their legislative agenda really is. Let us look and reflect on the Throne Speech that the government has brought forward, and where is that legislation? Why are we not talking about some of the issues and debating some of the issues?

If government wants to put up 10 or 12 speakers on every bill that is before us, that is their right, and I will protect your right. I believe that they should, and if that means we should be sitting 110 days a year in order to accommodate that right, Mr. Speaker, I welcome that 110 days of sitting. But I suspect that the government will eventually wind down their enthusiasm on speaking on some of these bills as they start to introduce more legislation.

The question that I have to ask is what have you been doing for the last six months. Why have we not seen—you take a look at Bill 10. The combined opposition wants to see this bill passed, and we are prepared to see it pass today. Well, you know, let us deal with some of that legislation of great substance. If the government feels that, no, we want to bide our time, well, maybe the government should be reflecting in terms of other issues. With the consensus of this Chamber, we could have, for example, been debating the Crocus fiasco, but that is an issue that they do not want to hear inside the Chamber. I suspect that Manitobans would be well served with that sort of a debate.

Again, the choice is with the government and the choice is with the members. The members will decide, ultimately, what it is that they are going to comment on. They have chosen to comment on Bill 10, and that is fine. If they apply the same principles and the same passion that they have spoken on Bill 10 to every bill inside this Chamber, I would suggest that they have a caucus meeting, sit down with the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) and ensure that we are going to be sitting 120-plus days in the upcoming year, or they are not going to have the same opportunity.

So make sure, Mr. Speaker, that they know what it is that they are doing. We all debate on certain bills for certain reasons, no doubt, and I trust this is just one of those major platforms. It was just forgotten in the Throne Speech. But, all in all, it is a good bill. Let us get it passed. Thank you very much.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading, Bill 10, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 5—The Dental Hygienists Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 5, The Dental Hygienists Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for it to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina? *Agreed? [Agreed]*

Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in speaking about Bill 5, I had to look behind as well as forward because when I looked behind to I have spoken about in the past, you have to be consistent, and I cannot be, the Member for Wellington cannot be, completely consistent. He will contradict himself once in a while. But I will explain why this is so.

Because the Member for Wellington was brought up in a different cultural background, and we have a different way, when I was growing up, we have a different way of regulating professionals. We never advocate in the Philippines. I am talking about the Philippines. I left the Philippines in 1961 and never been back because I got transplanted in this new society. But every culture develops its own political and economic system independently of others. There might be variations. But, in a host of countries known as the Commonwealth of Nations, the parliamentary system is prevalent and it is the dominant system. There is another set of countries where the republican system of government is the dominant model, and they have a different system, the presidential type of government.

* (16:20)

I find it really difficult because I am being torn apart in looking behind and looking forward. How can it happen? Because, in my belief, in this world of material and economic interests, no one can really act against one's own self-interest. That is basic. If any profession claiming to represent the public interests of all is less than all the members of a political community, as against other groups, there will be division already, and this kind of division tears you apart because people are divided according to their set of beliefs and according to their cultures, according to their backgrounds.

Let me give an example why it is sometimes difficult to live in different worlds. Take this rule about guarding against one's own self-interest. We have a convention in Canada, as well as other Commonwealth countries, that we are strict about pursuing our own self-interests. In ours, we have a rule against self-interest in our individual capacity as human beings, as individual citizens. You cannot even participate in the things that you are interested in, but we continually violate that kind of rule also without knowing it, subconsciously, unconsciously.

Compared to other cultures, like where I came from, if you are a public servant appointed or elected in that country, you are expected to take care of your own relatives. Your brothers, your cousins, anybody

related to you, as far as they need some kind of help, they will look unto you, and you are obligated by that conscience to help them, so you put them in some jobs. You help them find some employment, even if they have the same last name as yours.

In this country, we call it nepotism. That would be a form of corruption, whereas in those needy underdeveloped countries, it is a form of survival; it is a form by which you can help your own family. Is that not a contradiction? I am only asking the questions. So I said as a member of this Assembly that it is wrong for any government, no matter what kind, whether parliamentary or presidential, to advocate its own power in regulating the conduct of activities within its own borders. To allow any kind of professional group to pursue their own self-interest without any regulations is precisely the epitome of self-seeking groups.

Are we going to legalize that one? When we cannot do otherwise, we have to. But I say this kind of legislation like Bill 5 is a step in the right direction. I see that there is one-third representative of the public in the governing council. I was reading the bill carefully, and, in the past, it is exclusively composed of those members of the profession, those who are interested in preserving their own trade, their own skill, their own professional life, their own income, their own livelihood. In this particular case, I find, looking at the scheme itself, that there is now at least one-third representatives from the public sitting in the governing council of a professional group to take care of their interests.

Remember, this is a professional group claiming to become the spokesperson of the public interest. Of course, I am not doubting anything of their claim. All professionals have a code of ethics. That is why the medical people take the Hippocratic oath, the oath of Hippocrates, who was the Greek founder of medicine, that they will sacrifice their own self, their own time and their own interests for the benefit of their clients. That is self-denial.

But, when the dollar becomes the ruling and dominant factor in the exercise of one's profession, and one does not follow any more all these oaths of ethics of the various professions in the pursuit of material gain, then I think it is not good for society in general. So I heard a medical practitioner in New York say that I need some kind of medical attention. The first question is can you afford this one. Do you have the money? Do you have the money to pay? If

he does not, the medical person will not attend, will not even put any kind of effort to cure the illness.

But, in the case of oral hygienists, I have personal experience sitting in the dental chair. In fact, I accept their suggestion that I should go there often because our teeth, I understand, are building up some kind of stains, some plaque and whatever, sometimes beneath the gum. If you do not take care of these things, you will have gum disease and all those teeth will have to be pulled out. You can imagine what kind of self-esteem or self-image you will have if you have no teeth at all. You will be a toothless mammal.

So this is important for every individual Manitoban, that they will have access to their oral hygienist whenever these are all developed and they adhere to their code of professional ethics. This is the beginning of professionalization, of a group of specialists taking care of a limited set of tasks.

Right now their conditions are difficult. They are employees of the dentists. Being employees of the dentist, when the dentist's office is open, they are open. When the dentist says, "I would like to have a month's vacation in Acapulco," the office will be closed and the job of the hygienist, his employer is out, or the lady's employer, and usually they are ladies, but the employer is on vacation. So, during that month that the dentist is on vacation, there is no livelihood for the hygienist. Remember, the hygienist is a specialist, trained in oral cleanliness of the mouth. Is that a good situation? No, it is not.

*(16:30)

Because they are only hired part time, they work for employer A for two hours, employer B for another two hours, employer C for another two hours. They have a difficult time, the hygienists. Can you imagine working three part-time jobs to make one full-time job? Very difficult. Besides, supposing one of your employers demands one thing, the other employer demands an inconsistent thing, and the third employer demands another thing which is inconsistent. How can you serve all those three employers, three masters?

It is written, no man can serve two masters. Either you hate the one and love the other, or else you adhere to the one and despise the other. You cannot. All you can do is do your best. It is a basic truth. You cannot serve more than one master. You cannot serve more than one employer in a satisfactory way.

In Canada there are more than 14 000 dental hygienists. They are all part-time, or most of them anyway, and they either work for dentists or for a medical doctor or for some other employment service. It is a difficult life for these hygienists. So this is now the beginning of their professionalization. They are weaning like a baby away from the mother. They are trying to be independent. They are trying to be master of their own house. That is what these hygienists are doing.

Now, in relation to the government, in the past, the government completely abdicated any kind of role in regulation of these self-governing professional groups. In fact, the government is almost helpless when any of these powerful professional groups are already organized and are lobbying for their interests as a group. Being rich and powerful—the American Medical Association, for example, is fighting any kind of program passed by the government—it is very difficult to resist this kind of pressure group, but, nevertheless, they still are pressure groups.

If we are creating so many of these mini-self-governing, self-seeking, self-ruling groups of essential people in our society, are we doing ourselves any good when we abdicate all kinds of regulatory authority over them? When the public no longer can even criticize their practices, they will lay down the requirements for education qualifications to get into the school. They will lay down qualifications for practice. They will lay down qualifications for self-regulation. It is the establishment of a monopoly. That is exactly what it is.

If this were all in the realm of the non-material things like servicing others, providing care, then let us say they are all acting in that capacity and it is not a business. If it was a business enterprise seeking profit for money, then it would have been a different outcome. They will incorporate themselves. They will have expenses that are capital expenses, investments, and they will have to make money. Money is essential to life if it is a servant, but money is no good if it becomes a master because, when money becomes your master, you forget all your ethics, all your rules, all your norms, even your conscience you deny yourself.

I am talking of what some people in the past have already thought about. Deep thinkers in our society have already examined this in a different capacity. For example, there is the concept of the general will from Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The

general will in a community means consensus, everybody agreeing, either because they agree or because it is forced upon them. The general will is precisely the union of common consent with common power.

An Honourable Member: What are you talking about?

Mr. Santos: It is high philosophy. If you do not understand, I have no say in that.

When common consent is joined with common power, you no longer can ask any kind of relevant questions because they have complete control of everything. So being self-governing to me is not a good idea. The government should always keep for itself some residual power. If any of these groups self-governing exceed the limits or have diverted from their direction for their purposes as an organization, then the government can divest them of such self-governing authority. It should never be surrendered; otherwise, we are helpless. No matter what we say here, they do what they want.

So it is now important that we understand what we are doing here. I say this is in the good direction because, ultimately, the dental hygienists will realize that they have to develop their own code of professional ethics. They will also realize that they will have to live up to their own code of ethics and not depart from it.

It is trivial if we are talking about minor things. The mouth of a person is the entrance to his system.

An Honourable Member: The window to the soul. No, that is the eyes.

Mr. Santos: No, that is the eyes. We have only one mouth. We have two eyes, two ears, one mouth, one tongue. What does it mean? You talk less because you have only one mouth. You listen more because you have two ears. You look more because you have two eyes. That is what it means. *[interjection]* Well, I am not embarrassing anybody.

An Honourable Member: Not you, Conrad.

Mr. Santos: I am speaking the truth.

An Honourable Member: Not you; you have no agenda.

Mr. Santos: Who?

An Honourable Member: The government.

Mr. Santos: I am part of this government, and this government is the best government ever there is in the many years that I have been here around.

We inherited a situation where the children's tooth decay was becoming really a problem, particularly in northern Manitoba. We are trying to remedy that one. This majority government is acting on its own mission as the guardian of the general interests of all Manitobans. We introduced the pediatric dental services in Thompson bringing closer to home for the residents of the North. The North is forgotten. We cannot do that. Every Manitoban is important. Anybody in charge of governing this province should think of everyone on equal tax, although you may, of course, benefit the most immediate one. At least, you will not neglect those people who are forgotten.

We have repatriated surgeries. This majority government repatriated surgeries to home communities. We introduced Healthy Smile, Happy Child program, a more effective preventive program than was previously done. These are all steps forward in the right direction.

* (16:40)

We have to make a distinction between what we need and what we want. Again, there is a difference between what people need and what people want, what people desire. Want is almost unlimited. The more you have, the more you want, but need can be satisfied. There are basic needs of human beings, and the basic need is health for everyone. Does this country, this Canada, have enough resources to take care of all these basic needs? What do you think?

An Honourable Member: Absolutely.

Mr. Santos: If it has, why is it not providing it? Do we have enough resources in this province to take care of all our children in school? Think about it. Why is it that there is no such thing as a program in every school where these children will be protected? You see, prevention, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. You see, an ounce of prevention, I heard the Premier say this. He said, "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." That is true. If you prevent anything from decaying, you save resources that you would otherwise use to cure and save the individual from pains and heart aches and all the dysfunctional consequences of that kind of disease.

We know that the government is sometimes on assault also. The basic three powers of government are the power to tax, the power of eminent domain to take over property for public use, and the general power to look after the general health, convenience, good order of the community. Those are basic. Why are some people thinking, "Why should we let the government tax?" Why? Because tax is the exchange for providing publicly consumable services that no public firm will ever try to sell because it is very expensive, what they call public goods in economics. This is publicly consumable commodities. Only a government can provide that, for example, providing national security—

An Honourable Member: Street lights.

Mr. Santos: Street lights, only a government can provide that, but if we are trying to say no government can tax anymore, the government should raise their money not by taxation but by borrowing, by borrowing from loaners of money, then you are weakening the powers of government because government has the inherent power to raise the money to provide publicly consumable services, public goods. No roads will be built, no bridges will be built, no airports will be built if everything has to be borrowed. When we borrow everything from abroad, what do we get? Interest, charges greater than your initial debt.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the member in full flight on this very, very important legislation that the government has brought forward, but I would like to just ask the House to revert back to the tabling that I did of the resolution. I did not mean to table it. Apparently, I am just supposed to announce the resolution that is going to be debated next week without tabling it. So I would like that corrected for the record, please. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: For a correction of the House the document that was tabled will be returned to the member and the obligation is just to announce the business for the next Thursday, which the honourable member has already done.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Wellington, to continue with his speech.

Mr. Santos: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being aware of the importance of time and the importance of organizing our task here in the Legislature, I would like now to begin winding up and concluding.

In this country, as every country, there should be no east or west. We have electricity, we need to provide it to a sister province. So let me conclude by saying this once. I quote this: "The north, the south, the west, the east / No one the most and none the least / But each with its own heart and mind / Each of its own distinctive kind / Yet each apart and none the whole / But all together form one soul / That is all our country at its best / No north, no south, no east, no west / No yours, no mine, but always ours / Merits in one power / Any lesser power no one is favour / Great or small, it is all for its and its for all / One whole, no great, no small, all for its and its for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to The Dental Hygienists Act. I think in many ways I do agree with some of the previous speakers that this is actually a very important act, especially for the dental hygienists in terms of making them into an organization that can represent itself and that you have to hold certain credentials to be a dental hygienist. I think that is one of the important things that this bill brings forward. This bill would define what the practice of a dental hygienist is, and it will provide for the regulations of the profession. It will establish the College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba, establish a governing council which includes public representation. It will require the registration of dental hygienists, and it will create a process for handling complaints and for discipline.

When you refer to Part 2 of this act, it talks about what are dental hygienists. It says the practice of dental hygiene is the promotion of oral health through oral health education and the assessment and treatment of teeth and adjacent tissues using preventative or therapeutic means. I think that many of us, because we are of the age where we are in our forties or our fifties—[interjection] well, some of us younger—we sometimes fail to realize the importance our teeth have. As you get older, you actually suffer the repercussions of not having taken care of your teeth. You end up having to have dentures or crowns put into your mouth, which can be very painful and which can be the result of having poor dental hygiene when you were younger.

There actually is a really important part to this act when we talk about 3(2) where it says: "No person except a dental hygienist shall use the title 'dental hygienist', 'oral hygienist' or 'registered dental hygienist', a variation or abbreviation of any of those titles, or an equivalent in another language." I think that is really important to the dental hygienist to have an act which embodies their profession and gives them status and gives them the opportunity to act on their own behalf. When you look at the fact that there are now more than 14 000 dental hygienists in Canada, you realize that this is actually quite a growing profession.

* (16:50)

I look at my children who have excellent teeth. One of them I have to commend; he is actually really good. Every day he flosses. I have to give him credit. He does not just brush his teeth; Steven, flosses his teeth, too. I have to give him credit. I credit a dental hygienist who taught him the importance of taking care of his teeth. I think that that is going to bode well for him in the future, as he gets older, because he will be able to keep his teeth. I credit the profession who has taught him take care of your teeth and they will stay with you all your life.

I want to thank dental hygienists who have been out there, teaching our children, teaching us the importance of taking care of our teeth so that we are able to live a long and healthy life. I think that, when you look at your teeth, you forget how important they are. They are important to be able to make you speak, to be able to smile, to taste, to chew and to swallow. It is dental hygienists who keep us healthy and well. So I want to thank them, and I want to commend our government on bringing this act forward, which also looks at ways of mediating solutions if there are also conflicts that happen and if people have complaints. So I think this act is very important and I am glad to see it go forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 5, any speakers? Okay, when this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Bill 6—The Dental Association Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 6, The Dental Association Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House, to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina? *[Agreed]*

Bill 9—The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 9, The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? That has been denied. Okay.

Also, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), who has 25 minutes remaining—*[interjection]*

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I did not realize that we had members who were still wanting to speak to this. So can I ask that we agree to leave the matter standing in the name of the member from Turtle Mountain so that we could speak to it and the member will have a chance to speak as well?

Mr. Speaker: Okay, is there the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain? Is there agreement?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: There is agreement. It is also standing in the name of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose, who has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Before I was so rudely interrupted yesterday, I was concerned about the implementation of this bill as, perhaps, the government thinking that it really was doing something on behalf of Manitoba agriculture and the farmers across this province, by introducing this legislation. It has a very positive ring to the bill. But it only changes the situation surrounding potential liability to the board of directors that manage The Farm Practices Protection Act, and I do not disagree with that.

Mr. Speaker, what bothers me is that this government, including some of the chatter that came from the member from Dauphin about how much they believe they have done on behalf of Manitoba

agriculture during their tenure in government, and yet that does not jibe with what I see happening across the length and the breadth of this province, and particularly in the area that I represent, which is heavily involved in livestock and grain production.

To say that this government has provided leadership is entirely without foundation when you talk to the people of rural Manitoba. If we look at whether or not we have been able to develop, under duress, some way of relieving the pressure on the cattle industry in this province, we have not succeeded.

Today we saw the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) fail to respond in a meaningful way to the fact that the CAIS program, Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program, is increasingly becoming referred to as a dismal failure in rural Manitoba. It is, Mr. Speaker, without question, causing farmers to make decisions that will be detrimental, not only to their own future, but to the future of the economy of agriculture, the agricultural economy in this province, because, as has been so aptly pointed out by many of our farm scribes, what this does is it has now driven Manitoba farmers to where they have to look at how they manage their farms to decide whether or not they can get money out of the program. It takes those farmers who have diversified, who are struggling to change the circumstances that they find themselves in, it literally penalizes them because it is only when you have a specialized operation that you easily become eligible under Income Stabilization.

Mr. Speaker, we now have the example, which could, in fact, become the spectre of having provinces one by one being driven to take on this monster that we know today as the depopulation of our rural areas, the pressures that are on agriculture, the modern day industrial revolution of western Canada, if you will, because agriculture is going to be forever changed as a result of the impacts that have occurred in the last few years and are continuing to occur. If the government is unwilling to take an aggressive approach to dealing with the situation, then we will never be able to indicate to the children who want to farm, the logical next generation that will keep the agricultural industry going in this province. They will not farm anywhere near in the same manner that my generation had the opportunity, and the generation before them.

I say that, not that we should not change, Mr. Speaker, but that we are putting ourselves in a

situation where there are a large number of agricultural enterprises that are losing their equity. Certainly, that was led by what happened under BSE, but, secondly, we now have, and this is the reason that people can feel significant justification in talking about the fact that we have a crisis on our hands. Not only has the BSE issue had a large impact on the communities that I represent, probably more than anywhere else in the province, I would suspect, or certainly equal to any other livestock producing area in the province, but we now have a grain pricing crisis that we all acknowledge the Province alone cannot deal with.

But the Province has a responsibility to provide the leadership and advocate on behalf of the industry that we have within this province, and we do not see that happening. It becomes a bitter disappointment when we read on the Order Paper that we are getting an amendment to The Farm Practices Act and thinking that, well, maybe this is going to be meaningful legislation. I have already referenced the fact that it addresses the one narrow issue, and that is fine, but we have not seen aggressive movement by the government to advocate, to move forward.

Instead, we are seeing increased regulatory controls being put on the industry. The agricultural

industry wants to be environmentally sound in their operations. They want to live within the rules that society believes we need for clean water, and, certainly, air and soil, for that matter. But, in the end, if the government is not going to move aggressively forward and change the way they see or the way they approach agriculture in this province, the changes will be irreversible, Mr. Speaker.

It leads to absolute dismay in a lot of our rural communities right now. We are dependent in a way that we never in agriculture ever wanted to be. We see agriculture as being the future, a future cornerstone for our children in this province, and we need aggressive leadership on behalf of the government to make sure that it will play its role in the future.

I will close my comments there, Mr. Speaker, and urge that this bill go to committee quickly.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 17, 2005

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