



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

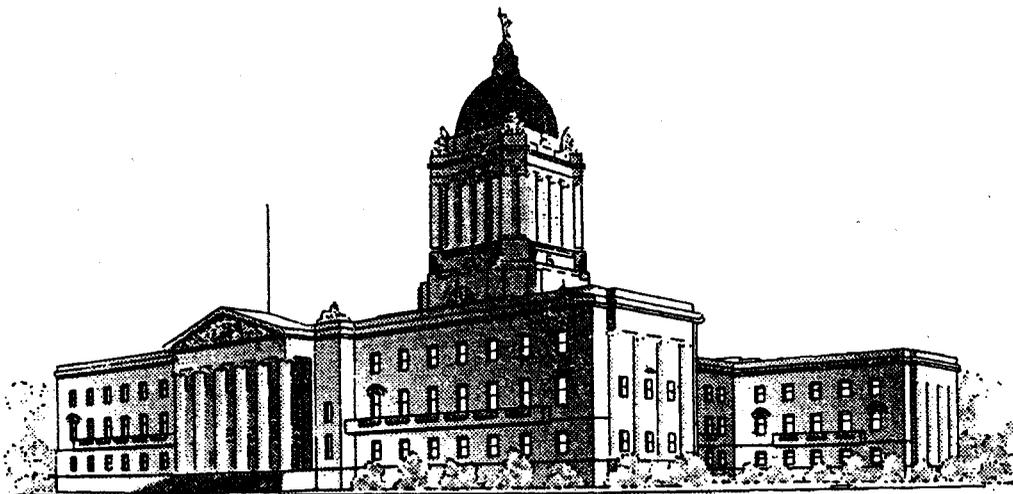
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANTOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 27, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Act

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of the Misericordia General Hospital praying for the passing of an act to amend The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Act to permit the admission of persons as members of the corporation pursuant to its by-laws and to extend the authority of the executive committee of the directors of the corporation.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Economic Development

Mr. Jack Reimer (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its first report.

Your committee met on Thursday, May 26, 1994, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the annual report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the year ended March 31, 1993.

Mr. Gerald Offet, General Manager and CEO, and Mr. Gordon Wakeling, Manager of Finance, provided such information as was requested with

respect to the annual report and business of the Communities Economic Development Fund.

Your committee has considered the annual report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the year ended March 31, 1993, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Justice.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 210—The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that leave be given to introduce Bill 210, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce this bill, which will, in fact, entrench the same principles contained within the Canada Health Act into the Pharmacare program here in Manitoba. This bill will require that the Pharmacare program be administered in accordance with the principles in the Canada Health Act, those principles being public

administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility.

We know that this legislation is greatly needed here in Manitoba because of what we have seen over the past few years of a deterioration in our Pharmacare program. We know that deductibles have risen, the percentage of claims that individuals are allowed to claim has fallen, and, in fact, there is a greater burden that is being placed on families and on seniors in regard to drug costs.

I would certainly recommend, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation to all members of the Legislature.

Motion agreed to.

* (1005)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of all members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the Carpathia School forty-two Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Carole Arenson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this morning.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Violence Prevention Programs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. There has been concern for the last number of years about the increasing violence in our schools. Evidence to all of us as MLAs from stories we have heard across the province plus statistics indicate an increase in violence in the schoolrooms and a very great concern by parents and teachers and others about the situation.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a 43 percent increase in the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 on weapons-related offences among students from 1991-92 to 1992-93. I would like to ask the Premier, what action is his government taking to deal with this very real problem in our

schoolrooms and in our classrooms across Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, this government takes very seriously the issue of violence across the province and also concerns that have been expressed by parents and teachers about violence within the schools.

The first thing that this government has done is to make sure that we have the input of Manitobans into the solutions, and one very strong message that came from Manitobans—and the Manitoba Teachers' Society yesterday declared their position—was the strengthening of the Young Offenders Act.

Mr. Speaker, we have the toughest position across Canada. It has been presented to the federal Minister of Justice. Manitoba stands by that position, supported now by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, by the Canadian Chiefs of Police. We have yet to hear anything from the opposition party.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, perhaps we will ask the minister to account for deeds, not her rhetoric in this Chamber.

Youth Court Transfer to Adult Court

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in 1986-87, there were 21 youths transferred to adult court. In 1987-88, there were 21; in 1988-89, 19.

Can the minister explain to the people of Manitoba what is happening in our youth courts when in the latest year of statistics from Stats Canada in 1992-93 under the administration of members opposite, there were only two youth transferred to adult court, considering the fact there has been a 59 percent increase in youth violence in the province of Manitoba.

* (1010)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is where we have some difficulty. Here is the member opposite who only wants to read statistics and point out their problems, but when there are solutions at hand, such as toughening up the

Young Offenders Act, he is unwilling to take a position.

He is no better, of course, than the Liberals, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite made the statement about weapons-related offences in schools when the Winnipeg School Division attempted to deal with some young persons who were in the school grounds with pellet guns. The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) said, oh, it was just an error of judgment. They should not be punished for it.

Those people there want to engage in the rhetoric, but when there are people who want to take action, they will not be supported by either of these two parties in the House.

Education System Violence Prevention Programs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, all of us want to see a Young Offenders Act that has consequences consistent with the community. We have all said that.

What we are worried about, Mr. Speaker, is a government that says one thing to the people of Manitoba and does another thing under the administration of the justice system. The Premier has not explained why there has been a 59 percent increase in youth violence in the province of Manitoba, and there has been a massive decrease, by a tremendous extent, in the transfers to adult court.

I will ask the Premier another question, because he did not answer the last one. He never answers questions, Mr. Speaker. He would not want to be accountable in this Chamber, but I would like to ask the government another question.

In 1991, there was a protocol recommended by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Trustees, the School Superintendents to deal with violence in schools. We asked the government two years ago, we asked the government one year ago, we asked the government again this year, what are they going to do to deal with violence in schools, to have a co-ordinated approach between justice and education?

Why has the government not taken any action at all to really deal with violence in schools,

increasing youth violence and a protocol that had been recommended years ago to this provincial government?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, that member is completely wrong. Let me tell him, as I have explained in the House before, there are four departments which have been examining very carefully ways to co-operate and to share information regarding young offenders and regarding violence in the schools.

But one thing that member needs to know is that in order to share information and also to make it public to the helping agencies, we need to amend the Young Offenders Act. That member will not take a position, will not indicate—and, Mr. Speaker, let me also say—

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have continually put our position forward on changes to the Young Offenders Act, and a Minister of Justice who has a 59 percent increase in youth violence—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Attorney General, to finish with her answer.

Mrs. Vodrey: In addition to that, this government has also put forward a nine-point plan to deal with youth crime and justice. The other side has taken issues such as the youth gang line, a very successful program in British Columbia, and just disdainfully spoken about it, dismissed it, though the people of Manitoba can take part in dealing with issues of youth crime and violence.

Universities Tuition Fee Cap

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, the current Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has already been censured by this House, and now he refuses to keep his simplest departmental

commitment, that university fees will be capped at 5 percent.

I would like to ask the Premier now to assure the House that his government will have the decency to be straightforward and keep that commitment to students and Manitobans.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Education.

Ms. Friesen: Will the Premier explain—and I assume he has heard of the Roblin commission, will the Premier explain why his government has proceeded with fee increases this year when its own review, the Roblin report, clearly recommends that the present level of tuition fees should be retained until the government has responded to the Roblin commission? Why is he not respecting that recommendation?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness).

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, will the Premier make the commitment today that there will be no midyear clawback to universities this year, as there was 14 months ago, a commitment that his Minister of Education specifically refused to make in Estimates this week?

Does he have a commitment? Does he have the decency? Does he have the straightforwardness? Does he have any answers—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, despite the phony theatrics of the member opposite, I will take that question as notice, as well, on behalf of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness).

* (1015)

Universities Tuition Fee Cap

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) indicated in correspondence dated May 19, 1994, to the board of governors of the

University of Manitoba—and this letter has already been previously tabled in this Chamber. He indicated: While I appreciate the fact that we all face difficult financial circumstances, the new fees are, in my estimation, an abrogation of the spirit of the 5 percent cap placed on tuition fee increases.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the government has recognized that this is an abrogation of their government directive.

The Minister of Education has indicated that the Minister of Finance may, in fact, in the coming months, in the coming years, take that money back and enforce the 5 percent cap on the administration so that it does not make its way down to the students.

What is the position of the Minister of Finance on that door that the Minister of Education has left open in this debate?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the second opposition party is correct, that the Minister of Education did write to the board of governors back on May 19 of this year. To the best of my knowledge, that reply has not been responded to as of yet.

Obviously, we are awaiting a reply to the concerns that the Minister of Education has expressed on behalf of our government, a concern that I do, in fact, share. We will await a reply to that letter and take what we deem appropriate action upon receipt of that letter.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, clearly, through the Minister of Finance's budget, this was a commitment made by the government. It was in his Budget Address. It represents a government policy and a government directive that the 5 percent cap be in place and be enforced.

What is the Minister of Finance intending to do to defend his budget commitment? The Minister of Education has clearly indicated that the budget commitment has, in fact, been broken. What is the Minister of Finance going to do to enforce his directive, because it was his budget, Mr. Speaker, and it was a clear factor in his decision about the budget and about the monies that were going to

universities, that no more than a 5 percent increase was to go to the students.

What is he going to do to enforce that government directive with the board of governors of the University of Manitoba and Brandon University?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concerns of the Leader of the Liberal Party for a budget that he on three occasions now has voted against, a budget that has brought in protection for the students of Manitoba in terms of their tuition fees, a protection we brought in last year, a protection we brought in again this year.

I have indicated to him that I share the concerns of the Minister of Education, as expressed in his letter to the board of governors on May 19 of this year. At this point in time, we are waiting for a reply to that letter to see what actions, if any, they deem they might be taking. We do agree that it is an abrogation of the spirit of the cap of 5 percent, and we will wait for a reply to that letter and take appropriate action after that.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, finally, for the Minister of Finance: One of, I think, the worst aspects of this particular breaching of the spirit of this 5 percent cap is the precedent that it sets. Clearly, if it is allowed to happen this year, in future years that percentage and those fees may be increased over time and avoid whatever the government says about tuition fee increases.

What is the commitment today of the Minister of Finance to ensure that this does not become a pattern for other post-secondary institutions and in future years, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the people can trust the government to come through and enforce its commitments and its directives in its budgets?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I believe we are the first government to take the kinds of steps that we have in two budgets now to protect the students of Manitoba in terms of their costs for an education at our post-secondary facilities. We did that last year with a 5 percent cap. That was abided by, by the universities. We have done it again this year, and we have the concerns that we are already discussing.

So we have shown the actions we have taken to protect limiting tuition fee increases here in our province. I have indicated these to the Leader of the Liberal Party in two responses. Our Minister of Education has had meetings regarding this issue. He has corresponded with the board of governors just a handful of days ago and, obviously, we are awaiting a response to that letter that was written.

We do share the same concern with the actions that have been taken by the University of Manitoba, but we will give the board of governors the opportunity to reply to the letter written by the Minister of Education.

* (1020)

Domestic Violence Court Backlog

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

We now have a report from Professor Jane Ursel about the functioning of Manitoba's Family Violence Court over the period 1990 to 1992. Although the report is dated, there are two disturbing issues that it raises.

The first is that child abuse cases were backlogged up to 18 months at the time of the study. The second issue is that spousal abuse cases virtually met the government's objective of a three-month backlog just two years ago, and we now know that spousal abuse cases are backlogged up to one year from the date of the offence until the trial. That is threatening the very existence of the court, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister is, will she confirm that the backlog of child abuse cases has further worsened over the last two years, as with spousal abuse cases?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am very pleased to be able to say some words about the report that was received yesterday, done by Jane Ursel on our Family Violence Court, the Family Violence Court that was set up by this government.

This government recognized that the issues in family violence did require special treatment. It required special training on the part of Crown

prosecutors and a special dedication to the concerns of those individuals, and to have them supported by Women's Advocacy and by our child witness protection program.

Let me first of all say that in the area of 18 months which the member references, I have asked my department to speak with Ms. Ursel to find out exactly what case it was that required the 18 month, because it is quite out of sync with the time frame in which cases are seen.

In the area of child abuse cases, Mr. Speaker, we certainly make every effort to see those cases in a much shorter time and will prioritize them within the court system.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, given that indeed that government established the Family Violence Court, it is now overseeing its demise.

My question is, would the minister now consider establishing a special child abuse court, and would she give adequate resources to the existing Family Violence Court so we can actually have zero tolerance in this province?

Mrs. Vodrey: It concerns me greatly that the member opposite attempts to incite fear and to frighten Manitobans by using a word such as demise. That is obviously only what would happen if the members opposite became a government.

This government put that court into place. We continue to support the court. We have supported the court with additional resources. We have added additional Crown attorneys. We have accessed additional court time. We also support cases through the court through our victims' assistance process which specifically assists women in particular who are before the court, also children.

We take the court very seriously and continue to work to make it a better functioning court.

Mr. Mackintosh: The backlog speaks for itself.

A final supplementary is, given that the Supreme Court of Canada has said that a backlog of less than one year can put a case at risk of being thrown out of court, and, in fact, Ontario had to drop about 50,000 charges on that basis, could the minister table in this House an estimate of the expected backlog of child and spousal abuse cases over the

next several months in the face of the fact that there are 10 court days being cut and that we are going to be short 11 full-time judges by July 1?

Mrs. Vodrey: The case the member refers to is the Askoff case. What Askoff said was not exactly how the member has interpreted it, but, instead, that backlogs greater than 10 months are a concern.

We in Manitoba are able to say that the due process time we are dealing with in our cases in the area of Family Violence Court cases is approximately four and a half. That is well within the guidelines of Askoff, quite different to the, province downplays 10-month court backlog, in the NDP days of January, 1988, when they were in government—10 months when they were in government; four and a half months while this government is in power.

Driver Education Program Training Cars

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for MPIC.

Some months ago, the government at MPIC reversed its decision to privatize the in-car driving portion of the Driver Ed program. It is now reviewing the program, hopefully to maintain and improve it. However, Mr. Speaker, I have had reports, including some from my own constituency, that there is a sense of drift and a lack of direction and reports of insufficient cars, causing a lot of frustration among instructors and the students.

My question to the Minister of MPIC: Will the minister immediately review this matter and make every effort to ensure an adequate supply of training cars so that the young people will continue to receive adequate driver training this year?

* (1025)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, this is the same angle that the member was interested in last week when we were reviewing the MPIC annual report.

In fact, the work that is going on right now is in just that area to enhance the program and attempt to make sure that there are sufficient cars available. I think it should be with some comfort that he can report to his constituents that this is the primary effort the corporation is putting into this project right now.

Mr. Leonard Evans: These questions arise out of concerns of constituents and others around the province, Mr. Speaker, since that meeting.

By way of information, I wonder if the minister could confirm that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation spent \$2 million from its safety budget to purchase the radar guns for the City of Winnipeg, and, if this is true, and if MPIC can find this kind of money, why can it not find some money right now to ensure that there is an adequate supply of training cars for the present program that is going on, to ensure a top-quality Driver Education program?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm the number. It seems to me it is about one-tenth of the number that the member indicated.

In fact, the acquisition of cars, of course, is still an important aspect of enhancing this program. As the member knows, at last count, we have about two-thirds of the cars that are required available. We expect to be able to firm up the other third, obviously, in support of the fall program.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I thank the minister for that information, but I am getting reports now that there is a lot of frustration among the instructors and the students about insufficient cars right now, so I ask the minister if he would undertake this morning to contact MPIC and ask them to make every possible effort to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of training cars now, even if it requires some short-term leasing, so that we get over this spring-summer period and make sure that the quality of driver education does not suffer, because this is key to safety on the highway in this province.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the interest the member is showing in the acquisition of cars. As he will recall, there was some considerable debate about the source of those cars

a year ago, whether they would come from the Manitoba Motor Dealers' Association or whether the corporation should start to acquire a fleet of cars.

Let me assure him that the corporation has explored a number of alternatives in that respect, and they are pursuing the acquisition of cars first through the Motor Dealers' Association and will take other courses of action if they are unable to get the sufficient number, but I have to report at this point that the number of cars that the corporation is trying to acquire has not been fully satisfied.

Home Care Program APM Management Review

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the government has said they are going to pay Connie Curran the three-quarters of a million dollars that is sitting in trust for the projects that she has undertaken, and we think that is wrong.

Will the minister, today, table the report called the home care action plan which was to be prepared by Connie Curran and submitted to the deputy minister dealing with home care?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I told the honourable member yesterday in response to questions relating to our appeal panel and advisory council that the work of APM with our department on the home care project last year arrived at certain recommendations.

I told the honourable member that we reject any recommendation dealing with getting rid of the licensed practical nurse in the delivery of home care services, that I had concerns about recommendations dealing with contracting out home care services to personal care homes at this time, as I said, because personal care homes are being reviewed at this time, but I did say that we find value in recommendations dealing with improving our information systems, our co-ordination functions in the Home Care program and the equity of assessment issues.

So it does not surprise me the way the honourable member frames his question, but I think with the help of the advisory council and the

appeal panel, we will be able to move forward and improve home care services in Manitoba.

* (1030)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, why does the minister refuse to make this report public, a report that cost the taxpayers of Manitoba \$23,000 per month? Twenty-three thousand dollars per month, and the minister will not make this report public.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of making a report public. It is a question of talking about the results of the demonstration project which was the work that was being done. It does not come to us in the form of a neatly bound package of recommendations. That is not the way it works. I have tried to explain that to the honourable member, but he thinks that somehow we have a consultant come in and write a report. That is not what happened.

Manitobans were involved in arriving at recommendations in the home care project, and Manitobans will be involved in any implementation that happens as a result.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, then why are we paying her that money of \$750,000 sitting in trust? That is disgusting.

My final supplementary to the minister is: Will the minister give assurances to this House that as a result of her work at home care, not one single nurse, LPN, RN, VON, will be laid off or cut by this government as a result of that report?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the object of the whole thing in health care in Manitoba is to put the concerns of the patient as our No. 1 priority. I will not accept recommendations, pleadings and urgings by the honourable member to destroy our health care system. I refuse.

Air Quality Report Release Delay

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): My question is for the Minister of Environment.

In February 1994, the Manitoba Air Quality Annual Report was released. This report is for the reporting period 1990. Given the increase in concerns by citizens for the quality of our air, can

the minister explain why this report is only now being released, containing data that is more than three years out of date?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I will have to review what occurred that required the delay in that report.

I have in my hand here a CCME report on air quality—and I will distribute this to my colleagues immediately—that demonstrates that Manitoba has some of the best air in Canada. Some of the air quality information that is included in this release from the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment points out that Manitoba is indeed a good place to live and breathe.

Ms. McCormick: My supplementary question to the same minister: The data which is reported uses standards which are nearly 10 years out of date. The director of the air standards section of his department says that they do not have the resources to bring the standards up to date in accordance with international data.

My question to the minister: Is the inability to provide current reporting also a question of inadequate resources?

Mr. Cummings: I am not sure from what era the comments from the employee may be referencing, but, in fact, in our most recent budget initiatives, air quality monitoring was one of the initiatives the Department of Environment has undertaken.

In fact, our ability to monitor and report effectively on air quality and to monitor situations which may arise from time to time is one of the areas where we are focusing. In fact, we have recently hired additional technical staff, a new person with some specific expertise in air quality, to beef up our capabilities on that side.

So while the member raises a legitimate question, we are, in fact, proceeding rapidly.

Ms. McCormick: My final supplementary to the same minister: Can the minister advise this House when we can expect the report for the 1991, 1992 and 1993 reporting periods?

Mr. Cummings: Very quickly, I would hope, Mr. Speaker.

ACCESS Programs Federal Funding

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister in his capacity as government leader on federal-provincial relations.

We have heard on a number of occasions pleadings from the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness) that the government's commitment to the ACCESS programs remains strong, despite some reductions in financial support in the latest budget.

My question to the First Minister is: Has the First Minister, in his capacity as Leader, raised the issue of ACCESS programs, the contribution of the federal government to those programs, contributions which were withdrawn effectively in 1989? Has the First Minister made any progress in those discussions?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, not only has our government raised the issue and kept it on the agenda with the government of Canada ever since 1989 in many, many meetings, but I certainly raised it with numerous representatives of federal governments in the past.

Cost Sharing

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, am I to take from those remarks that this government would commit to a 50-50 cost sharing of ACCESS-like programs were the federal government to respond in a positive manner to such a proposal?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that we get the maximum possible federal participation in this particular issue, because of a variety of matters, including the fact that most of the students are aboriginal and that the primary responsibility, constitutionally, is with the federal government for aboriginal issues.

The federal government did support to a very great degree in the past these programs, and we were happy to be their partners in it. We need their continuing major support in order to provide the kind of programming that is implicit in ACCESS because of the fact that it is far more costly than putting other students through university and

colleges. We need to have their participation to the greatest possible extent, and that is what we are seeking.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the First Minister has just repeated a factual error which the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness) has repeated on many occasions, and that is that it is more cost-effective to have ACCESS students, those students who are eligible, attend university.

The fact is the government is in possession of a report drafted for them specifically that says the ACCESS programs pay a return not only for the students who succeed in the ACCESS programs but for those who fail after seven years, and the success rate is triple what they achieve going to the normal university program.

My question to the First Minister is: Will he now assure this House that if the federal government is prepared—and, Mr. Speaker, every Liberal candidate in the province prior to the election was in favour of ACCESS. If the federal government provides that kind of a support program, will the Province of Manitoba, this government, be a partner?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I did not make any factual error. The cost per student of a student going through the ACCESS funding route versus a student who goes through normal programming to the university is much higher. There is no question that the costs are much higher to send that student through on the ACCESS program.

The point, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] Well, one has to be assured—[interjection] I do not want to argue with the member opposite. We will do all that we can to ensure there will be a continued commitment to ACCESS and that we get more federal dollars to ensure that this continued commitment will be there for the future.

* (1040)

Education System Inner-City Student Transfers

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

A very serious problem between K and 12 that we have in the province of Manitoba is one in

which a student will start school in September in one school and then throughout the school period will often enter into two and three different schools.

I am sure that the Premier, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) and other members of the government would acknowledge that if you are able to keep that child in the one school throughout that academic year, the child's education would be much, much better served. In fact, we now have Sister MacNamara, who is implementing a program in her particular school to try to facilitate just that. That is a 78.1 stability rate.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: What co-ordination amongst government, in particular between the Department of Housing and Family Services and Education, is there to deal with the problem of instability of children who have to go to different schools throughout that academic year?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Education.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, maybe then I can ask the Minister of Housing. When you look at the one program that is being implemented by the Sister MacNamara School, you will see that there are other schools that have less stability, four in particular—William Whyte, Mulvey, Dufferin and Strathcona—which is less than 75 percent.

What is the Minister of Housing doing to ensure that there is stability amongst nonprofit housing, encouragement that individuals who are moving in are able to meet the rent so that they are not having to move into different catchment areas of those schools?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I know the issue that the member has raised, and it is a very significant issue. There has been a lot of dialogue that has gone on between Ministers of Family Services, Education and people in the housing industry. The mobility factor is one that does impact upon children who are moved quite frequently.

I can tell the member that I have had discussions with tenant advocates and housing associations about this problem, trying to see what we can do as a Housing department to provide stability in our public housing so that people will not feel the need or the desire to move as frequently.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Sister MacNamara's program is seeing a housing registry of landlords. Can the minister responsible for housing look into the possibility of establishing a housing registry for landlords in some areas, in particular, if necessary, as a pilot project in some of the areas in which the number of transients is considerably higher, in particular where there is more than 25 percent?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, the whole concept of a registry of the sort the member is raising has been tossed back and forth from time to time.

I know that the Residential Tenancies Branch has had discussions from time to time with landlords, with tenants, about that concept, and it is a matter, I believe, that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and I will discuss at some point, but there are some practical considerations that have to be put in place along with those kinds of discussions.

Provincial Trunk Highway No. 2 Red Coat Trail Designation

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, in 1872, the Boundary Commission worked their way across Manitoba. In 1874 the North-West Mounted Police made their trek across Manitoba following very closely the Boundary Commission route. Both of these groups followed the route now known as Provincial Trunk Highway No. 3. Yet the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) changed history and designated Provincial Trunk Highway No. 2 as the Red Coat Trail.

What logical historical reason does the Minister of Highways and Transportation have for ignoring history and designating Provincial Trunk Highway No. 2 as the Red Coat Trail?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr.

Speaker, the member is mixing heritage regions and tourism initiatives in his question. Our government is very supportive of developing a heritage region within the province of Manitoba, working actively with groups in the southern part of the province to develop the heritage of that region.

We have been meeting with those groups and providing some funding for them to develop the heritage region. We are very optimistic that this will take place in the coming years.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, can this government then explain why—since successive Ministers of Highways and Transportation have in the past refused to designate Provincial Trunk Highway No. 2 as the Red Coat Trail, why has this Minister of Highways and Transportation betrayed his colleague the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, when in a letter dated January 16, 1991, it stated: After a thorough and lengthy discussion, however, we have agreed not to identify a provincial road or provincial highway as the Red Coat Trail.

Why has this government betrayed the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite I think is saying that government should not be working with communities that want to promote tourism across southern Manitoba.

The sister provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta recognize the Red Coat Trail and have entered into tremendous tourism initiatives based on the communities and the amenities in those communities that are across southern prairie provinces. We have joined with those provinces to assist those communities who want to bring more and more tourists to their communities and advertise the amenities of the entire region.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, the government's own document, the 1994 Manitoba Explorers Guide, which this government produced through the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, indicates that the original Red Coat Trail, in fact, piggybacks the Boundary Commission trail which is near No. 3 highway.

Will this government, which is obviously now rewriting the history of Manitoba, go back and identify Provincial Trunk Highway No. 3 as the Red Coat Trail, in addition to the North-West Mounted Police and Boundary Commission trail route, to accurately reflect the historical events relating to the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member for Transcona to maybe get out into rural Manitoba and visit the beautiful communities in southern Manitoba. I am not sure whether he has ever been in places like Souris to see the swinging bridge and to assist those communities to develop their tourism industry.

I think the member has been inside the Perimeter Highway too long and perhaps has not had an opportunity to visit some of those wonderful communities that want to promote not only their own community, but the many amenities of southern Manitoba that will bring tourists from across Canada and the United States to visit those places.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to make our own contribution to the history of Manitoba, would you please call Bill 9, followed by the rest of the bills in the order they appear in the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 9—The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), Bill 9, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Corporation du Centre des congrès, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add some remarks on this piece of legislation at this point. I have read the minister responsible's remarks on this particular piece of legislation, and I think we can say quite safely that it is a relatively innocuous piece of legislation, although there are perhaps some questions that need to be asked about the proposal and some questions perhaps the minister may want to answer when he concludes debate on second reading.

We have no objection, for example, to the increase that is being proposed in the amount of money that the board can manage without, I guess, additional approvals. I gather that the maximum that would be available has increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000 by this legislation, and that does not appear to be a problem.

Mr. Speaker, the additional appointments and the restructuring of the length of service and the conditions of service for board members is not of major concern, I do not think. Certainly, we have not heard expressions of concern from the industry per se, and I am assuming that the minister responsible for Tourism has consulted with the industry, and the City of Winnipeg and others who are interested in this particular board, for advice.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this restructuring of the Convention Centre board is perhaps missing the point. I am not sure that the restructuring of the board is going to alleviate some of the problems that the Convention Centre has faced over the last few years. We all know that they are facing again a significant deficit. They have over the past few years, despite changes in management—and I think what the government and perhaps the Convention Centre have failed to realize is that the success or failure, the profit or loss, that the Convention Centre faces on any given year reflects as much the general state of our economy, provincially, as anything else. Certainly, North America and other parts of the world, perhaps we could call it a global recession in some respects, has been partly to blame for the circumstances the Convention Centre faces.

* (1050)

I do not think this minor restructuring, although it may improve accountability, and I am hoping that the minister responsible will perhaps outline for us a little more succinctly how this is going to improve some of the accountability at the Convention Centre, how it will be improving its efficiency, but we also would like the minister who happens to be responsible for Tourism to outline a little more clearly what the government is going to do, what the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and the Tourism branch is going to do, to improve the prospects for the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record, as well, my concern that the Convention Centre has not been the benefactor of largesse from the federal government. In fact, the Liberal government just announced as part of its infrastructure renewal program, ironically, a contribution of some \$23 million to a convention centre in Quebec, in Quebec City, I believe.

There is no doubt that our Convention Centre, the Winnipeg Convention Centre, although it is in the middle of a renovation, sort of a revamping, Mr. Speaker, could have—

An Honourable Member: The provincial and local authorities had also wanted that Convention Centre there. We have not fought for that.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) raises another point, that perhaps the Convention Centre group in Quebec and the provincial government in Quebec have been a little more aggressive in seeking out the opportunities to develop our tourism infrastructure, and I think that is what the Convention Centre is.

So this legislation which you know changes the number of appointments and staggers the corporation centre board appointments in a different way, may be missing the point. That, in itself, is not going to make any difference in terms of the success or failure of the Convention Centre. That, in itself, is not going to make any difference when it comes to attracting conventions to this city.

I think what is required perhaps is a little more support from the department of Tourism, a little

more support, a direct support perhaps, from the private sector and a little more support from Manitobans in general in promoting Manitoba as a place to convene, to meet, to do business and perhaps to enjoy themselves, because that is really what the Convention Centre is selling.

The Convention Centre itself is not a wonder of the world. It does not, in and of itself, attract people. It is a service facility and, to the extent that it falls behind what is available in other communities, to the extent that it needs revamping, to the extent that it does not fit the demands and the needs of conventiongoers, it is going to be less and less successful.

So, Mr. Speaker, we think and I hope that the minister will in his address identify some things that the government is going to do besides simply rearrange the chairs, as it were, in an attempt to improve the circumstances of the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

A couple of other points that need to be raised in this debate I guess relate to who is going to sit on this board. As it stands, the government is proposing that the board be made up of members of City Council, members appointed by the City of Winnipeg, members appointed by the board itself, so it becomes a little bit self-serving in that the board itself appoints members, and two members appointed by the provincial government. We have argued in other venues that one of the things that government should do in structuring boards, and particularly boards of government agencies or quasi-government agencies, we should ensure that there is representation from the various interests groups that may be affected by the operation of this board.

I expect that the City of Winnipeg, and indeed, I expect that the provincial government by Order-in-Council is going to appoint people that it believes represent the interests of tourism in the province. But, Mr. Speaker, there is no obligation to do that, and one of the ways I think that you can prevent the simple appointment of defeated Tory candidates, for example, is to make sure that others in the community are allowed, for example, to select potential representatives to the Convention

Centre board. So what you might have is the regional tourism groups, for example, submitting two or three names to the government for consideration, and the government would be obliged to choose one.

Mr. Speaker, we had this debate several years ago in the Chamber when the government of the day and one of the former members of education who currently sits in the cabinet chose to appoint someone as a student representative to the university Board of Governors who was not a designate of the students themselves. We have, and many other governments over many years had taken the advice of the student groups and appointed whom they wished to see as their representative.

Mr. Speaker, obviously it caused a controversy. Certainly, I think it undermined the authority of the students union, and I think it was wrong. I would argue that some of the appointments to the Convention Centre board should logically have come from the industry themselves, that you could have taken a representative from the Hotel Association, the Manitoba food and restaurant association or the TIAM associations, or as I suggested before, regional groups, and applied some sort of a process whereby their representatives would be appointed to this board.

As I say, I am not suggesting for a moment that the City of Winnipeg is not going to try and find people it thinks will do an honourable and credible job on the Convention Centre board. I think they will, but one of the principles of grassroots democracy is that you do not leave those things to chance, that you require that kind of grassroots participation when you can, and the government could have done that in the legislation if they would have wanted to. It seems to me that is something we should be arguing should happen.

So I look forward to the minister responsible's remarks when it comes to that kind of suggestion, and I lay it out as a suggestion, knowing that certainly many of the groups that I have referenced, including the Hotel Association and the TIAM associations, the regional associations

like the North of 53 tourism group would in fact be very supportive of that kind of idea.

It seems to me that it is a much more effective way of making sure that the interests of the industry are not subverted for perhaps political interests, making sure that a defeated candidate gets on a board somewhere simply because of some sense of political obligation. It is something that happens from time to time, and I think simply raises more questions about the process of government and undermines what little credibility governments sometimes have left. [interjection] The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) says now, now, now, and I take his chiding quite seriously. I am not suggesting for a moment that other governments—[interjection] The member for Steinbach—I am sorry, I continue to refer to his former constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Steinbach points out that this is not necessarily a partisan comment, and, in fact, I would be the first to admit that we also appointed on occasion people who were political supporters, and I have supported that process. It seems to me you want people who are politically supportive in important roles, who are philosophically in tune, as we say, but what I am asking the member for Steinbach to consider and other members to consider is not to take away the government's right to appoint these people or the City of Winnipeg's right to appoint the people.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I am simply saying that we have a more democratic way of doing it, and that by asking the industry to submit three names perhaps or half a dozen names, that from those names the government can choose, but at least it will represent the genuine interest of the industry, rather than the specific interest of the government and perhaps the political concerns of the government of the day. [interjection]

* (1100)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger), from his chair, who is very interested in this bill obviously, says, how do we know that does not happen. Well, we have

watched with interest the political appointments of this government, and they have appointed I think some well-chosen representatives, and they have missed the mark on some other occasions, and all I am saying is this takes it out of the political sphere at least one step, although it does not remove the interest of the government completely. So I would like the government to consider that as a real suggestion, that they could amend this and make it better for the industry.

I wanted to spend a few moments talking about why I think representatives, for example, from the tourism industry of Manitoba should be appointed to this particular board. One of the problems that exists in the tourism industry and has for many years, and I am not laying this at the feet of the government, is the fact that it is really a conglomeration of hundreds, if not thousands, of individual entrepreneurs.

Manitoba, although we are blessed with a number of destinations in and of themselves and events which attract significant numbers of tourists, the fact is that the province as a whole is the destination point for most travellers into Manitoba, that we have small attractions, less well-publicized attractions in every region of the province, that deserve some support.

One of the ways that we can make sure that conventiongoers know more about what is going on in the province and in other regions around Winnipeg is by making sure that groups like the Convention Centre have ties to the rest of the province. From my experience, the Winnipeg Convention Centre board is made up almost exclusively of people who have interests in the city of Winnipeg, Madam Deputy Speaker, and maybe that is not the best way to approach this.

Certainly I am aware of an international convention that is coming to the city of Winnipeg in the fall of 1994, and this is a convention of sci-fi buffs, an international science fiction convention. My community, the community of Flin Flon, has launched a project to attract some of those visitors from the sci-fi convention to the city of Flin Flon.

The city of Flin Flon is the only city in North America that is named after a science fiction

character—[interjection]. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is the problem perhaps. The member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst), chirping from his seat, says, that is a stretch.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not a stretch. All that the group in Flin Flon, and it is centred around the Greenstone Community Futures group, would have to do is get 1 percent of the people who are going to come to this convention to actually come to visit Flin Flon, to take a side trip, spend two or three days or four days, and it would be better for the province, it would certainly be better for my community, and it would be good for the tourism industry as a whole.

There are those kinds of events taking place all over the province, so I make the case that, like other Winnipeg-centred boards, there may be some logic in making sure that other people from outside the city of Winnipeg representing rural tourism interests are actually appointed to the Winnipeg Convention Centre board. I remind people that the Winnipeg Convention Centre is supported by the province of Manitoba—the province of Manitoba, not just Winnipeg. The provincial government represents the province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I relate to another problem that I became aware of about six or seven years ago with the Manitoba Sports Federation whose board did not have a single representative from rural Manitoba. The Province of Manitoba, through the Lotteries Foundation of the day, was giving the Manitoba Sports Federation literally millions of dollars every year, and there was no representation from rural Manitoba.

I believe that Randy Wiwchar who was then the recreation director in the community of Flin Flon was the first northern director, certainly, appointed to the Manitoba Sports Federation, and I give them credit for doing that. It took a long time, but Madam Deputy Speaker, we now have a little broader representation on that board. I do not know exactly who is sitting on the board right now, but there may be still one representative from rural Manitoba.

So the point I am making is that the Convention Centre does not simply belong to the city of

Winnipeg. The Convention Centre is a facility that actually could support a much broader range of communities in the province if we wanted it to, and that is what I am arguing we should be doing.

I am not suggesting for a minute that we have a preponderance of members from outside. I am simply saying, let us have that rural perspective, that northern perspective, and the science fiction convention that is being held is just an example. If we had had some imagination and applied it when this convention was being planned and the conventiongoers were being solicited, perhaps we could have tied in the community of Flin Flon.

The National Film Board vignette of Flin Flon I think has attracted worldwide attention. Certainly, it has been seen in many quarters of North America and perhaps beyond, and the name of the community is familiar to everyone. I once saw a Qantas airline advertisement saying we can take you from the Fijis to Flin Flon. So it is widely known, and the community of Flin Flon is anxious to make sure that they can tap into this convention that is happening in the city of Winnipeg.

Perhaps if there had been some interest in developing a relationship with Flin Flon, in this case, but also with other parts of the province, the Convention Centre itself may have been more successful, and we as a province may have benefited by having another two or three or a week's vacation attached to the end of a convention by a number of those visitors to the city of Winnipeg and to the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other issue that I wanted to discuss in terms of this bill also relates to the appointment of members from the Tourism Industry Association. One of the problems that I referenced earlier was the fact that the tourism industry is such a conglomeration of independent entities, and one of the most successful ways of defining some sort of central interest amongst those groups was the creation of the Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba, an association which was supported through the previous tourism agreement to some extent.

I know there are always problems in getting people with a wide range of interests to focus on some sort of central theme, but it seems to me that if the province as a whole is going to get a handle on its tourism marketing efforts, its tourism spending, that we need that kind of central focus, and one of the things that I think would help would obviously be some more direct government support of the private-sector tourism industry and the creation of supportive bodies that reflect the interests of tourism across the province and then their recognition in terms of appointment to groups such as the Winnipeg Convention Centre board. I think that might be a good first step.

* (1110)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to conclude my comments, I guess, by saying that the government could take the opportunity—it has increased the number of board members from 13 to 15. It could take the opportunity to make sure that those two additional appointments are representative of the province.

I would like to say that the minister, when he responds to the debate, the remarks by myself and other members of our caucus and perhaps from the second opposition, that we would like to see some of these issues addressed. We would like to think that this period of debate will be useful to the government in reviewing this legislation. It comes before us as a rather technical—and I believe the minister in introducing it said housekeeping amendments, but the opportunity exists to make this a more important piece of legislation, a more successful one, if the government chooses to do so, by considering some of the remarks perhaps made by members opposite, and perhaps members of the back bench, if they are interested in providing their remarks.

With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I leave the floor to my colleague from Rossmere.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): The member for Flin Flon has already spoken about the directors, about this bill. As I look through this, just a few clauses about changing the directorship, I just wonder how changing a few directors, changing some of the personnel, how it will

change the scope of tourism or how it will change how the Convention Centre is run. I really feel there is not really that much weight in this bill.

We know that tourism is very, very important to our economy, to attract tourists, attract business, and recently, we have not been doing that because our economy here has been very, very sluggish. Tourists are very, very important to help small businesses in our province and in our city, but this bill does not change the scope of tourism, and the Convention Centre really is about tourism.

Our city has a lot to offer. We have many festivals. We have a great ethnic diversity which we can really play on, like Folklorama, Festival du Voyageur. There is Assiniboine Park, The Forks. There are arts groups like the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. We are in sports. We have had the Pan Am Games; we might get them again. The legislative grounds and this building, they are a tourist attraction; Osborne Village, the Exchange District, the Museum of Man and Nature. In rural Manitoba, we also have many museums that are of great interest. So we have a lot in this province that tourists should be interested in.

Coming back to the Convention Centre, its greatest problem is the deficit. Our city has a very large capital debt. The city seems to always get saddled with deficits. Various kinds of deficits, they are always saddled with. I think the province sort of ignores the city, its major problem it faces.

In most provinces, they cover the city deficit of the convention centre across this country. Winnipeg is one of the cities where the province totally ignores the cost of running the Convention Centre. By the way, that Convention Centre is very important to Winnipeg and to our province. It is very important, but the province does very little to support the city in running that Convention Centre.

They should take a bigger look at the tourism. For instance, Winnipeg tourism is very, very costly for Winnipeg. They should consider a study which might integrate city and provincial tourism and do it as one package instead of two, but the provincial government has cut the provincial budget on tourism. They cut it. They do not look upon tourism as very important. Changed a few

directors; I am not saying it is all wrong. It will not do anything to the tourist industry. It will do very little to the tourist industry.

The Convention Centre is just one example of the poor relationship the province has with the city. Actually, I have read reports where all formal channels of communications have broken down with the province. The province and the city are not working together. That is a fact. It is the city, each time when there is a cutback or so forth, they are the ones that sort of end up being the whipping boy. Okay. The wrath of the voters always comes down on the side of the city. The province gets off scot-free.

For instance, on property tax, it is a parallel situation. We are reduced by \$75 across Winnipeg and, of course, the city councillors got the wrath of the voters upon them. Here is one more, the VLTs, where they gave them \$4 million, the province walks off with the rest of the money. Social assistance, the city has to pay a fair amount of it, 20 percent of it. Most provinces do not have this.

So what I am saying is, there is a parallel situation here between the Convention Centre and other things that the province and city do together.

I would just like to read—I just was given the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review from Manitoba Urban Affairs, the Estimates for '94-95, and it talks about, on page 2, to address major urban issues. Well, this does not address major urban issues. On page 14, here it says, "Continued dialogue between the city and the province" Well, that has broken down, that dialogue, and when we discuss the Convention Centre, we discuss tourism, that dialogue has broken down. They print one thing—it is nice literature to read—but in reality and practice, it is something quite different. So this bill does very little to correct the problems, address the problems of the Convention Centre. It does very little to address tourism in this city and in this province.

I would suggest that the government take a broader approach, a broader scope on tourism. Get more rural people involved, a provincial perspective, maybe ethnic community involved as well that have contacts outside this province, and

study some of these things. Changing a few little directors will not do it.

I have taught high school for many years, and we always used to teach students what a bill was. I would try and get a bill and show it to the students. Excuse me, I would not show this one because they would think it is not much weight here. I used to build up the Legislative Chamber here, that great things were going on. Anyway, this bill is lacking. I thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and to add my comments on Bill 9. I believe I will be the last speaker from our party speaking on this bill, and after my comments will be prepared to pass this bill through to committee, of course allowing for other members of the Chamber who may wish to have their opportunity to speak on the changes that are incorporated in this bill itself.

I listened to the comments for the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) who I believe, when he was a member of City Council, had some dealings with the Convention Centre. Of course, he sat from his seat here for a period of time and added comments from across the floor. Maybe he, too, would like to have the opportunity today to stand up and put some comments on the record about what should be done to improve the Convention Centre opportunities and encourage more tourism to come to the city of Winnipeg and indeed for the province of Manitoba.

* (1120)

I listened to the comments from the two previous speakers, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) when they were talking about Bill 9, The Convention Centre Corporation Appropriation Amendment Act. There were a couple of points that were made in their comments that I think merit some serious consideration by the government with respect to appointments to the new board structure that will be in place.

The member for Flin Flon referenced the fact that there is an apparent rearranging of the number of chairs on the board, or the board representation. I know that my colleague for Thompson (Mr.

Ashton) has indicated on government's past legislation that from time to time, this could be referenced to be a rearranging of the deck chairs on the Titanic. I hope that is not the case here, that the Convention Centre will continue to grow and hopefully move into a more profitable picture to allow them to be self-sustaining in their operations.

One of the comments that come from the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) made reference to the sections of the bill dealing with the appointments to the new board itself in this legislation, comprising a number of members, of appointments, from City Council itself, and appointed by the City of Winnipeg, and, of course, members appointed by the board itself after this legislation passes, and, of course, two people who are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, which will be the Premier.

It is my understanding that the province under the current board has members representing the provincial government on the current board, and that there will be some changes with this in the terms of office in that four members from the City Council of Winnipeg will be appointed for a one-year term and will be appointed by the City of Winnipeg.

The other 11 members who are to be appointed, seven of them will come from the city of Winnipeg and will be appointed for a two-year term and the other members, two to be appointed by the board itself, will also be for a two-year term, which, I believe, is a change, if I understand, in the length of term that they are appointed for.

Now, I do not profess for a minute to have a great background or understanding about the past operations of the Convention Centre. I will rely on the comments of other members who have dealt with this matter, I am sure, in more detail than I have over the past number of years. But I think it is important to look at the appointments themselves, and the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) referenced this, that it may be advisable to look outside of the Perimeter itself for some of the appointments, because tourism to the province is not just tourism to the city of Winnipeg, and if we

can in some way encourage convention groups to come to Winnipeg to utilize the facilities of the Winnipeg Convention Centre, we would like to encourage those people coming to Winnipeg to also see other parts of Manitoba, to visit those communities as well, and, of course, maybe spend some money in those communities to encourage the expansion of some of the rural opportunities.

One of the ways we could do that is to have people from rural Manitoba sitting on the board of the Winnipeg Convention Centre to allow them the opportunity to have some input on how we can further expand and inform convention groups coming to Winnipeg to see and to visit rural Manitoba and to visit those communities.

The member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) also indicated, too, another comment which I thought has merit as well, when he referenced the fact that Manitoba is comprised of a large number of ethnic communities. I do not see why we cannot have members of the ethnic community sitting on this board as representatives, as well.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Obviously, they have, I would expect, ties to some of their traditional native roots, and maybe that would give us the opportunity to encourage groups from outside of the borders of North America to come to Winnipeg, and if they do, to have them see other parts of Manitoba, as well.

I think that the two comments, the two suggestions that were made by the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) have merit, in having rural representation and having representation from the ethnic community. I think both of them merit serious consideration.

Now, it is my understanding that the Convention Centre has recently been doing some upgrading of their facilities. I know, I have been in there in the last several weeks taking part in different events. In fact, I was there just last night talking with the nurses of MARN when they were holding their convention. They were having a reception last night. So it was interesting to see that we have various groups utilizing the Convention Centre.

It is my understanding that the Convention Centre is spending some or has spent several millions of dollars renovating the facility. The facility, of course, appeared to need an upgrade, and I think that looking at or judging by the changes that have taken place there, I hope it will have the desired effect in attracting new Convention Centre business. I think the amount spent was in the range of \$4 million, if I recall correctly. I hope that the money will be well spent.

I know that the Convention Centre has the opportunity to attract different shows and concerts. I have had the opportunity to go with my family to see many of them, and also as the critic for Highways and Transportation, I have had the opportunity to represent our party at different Convention Centre shows that have been there, with the Manitoba Trucking Association when they have held their annual conventions there. There has also been trucking displays utilizing the display floor space, and, of course, the home shows and boat shows and other shows that are held there. We had the opportunity on a yearly basis to attend some of those shows, as well.

It is my understanding that the Convention Centre has been undergoing some serious financial difficulties over the period of a number of years. Of course, if I recall correctly, there were some changes in the leadership of the Convention Centre board just recently, and that with those changes, there are new people in charge there now. I hope those changes will bring about some improvement in the financial picture for the Convention Centre itself.

But I believe that you have to aggressively market the Convention Centre. It is not something that can be undertaken on its own merits. The provincial government obviously has resources available by way of trained people to not only sell the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba for tourism, but also to sell specific sites or events that might be of interest to people in different parts of North America or in other parts of the world, as well.

My colleague the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) made reference to the fact that there

was the Pan Am Games hopefully coming to Manitoba. I hope, too, that we are successful in having the Pan Am Games. I think that that will give us some opportunities to allow us to achieve some increase, a significant increase, I hope, in the tourism markets.

Tourism has been on a serious decline in the province of Manitoba for quite a number of years now.

An Honourable Member: Are you sure about that, Daryl?

Mr. Reid: Well, I listened to the comments that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) made reference. To whether or not I am sure of that, I listened to the comments of my Leader in some of the questions he has had in this House during this session and past sessions when he referenced the fact that tourism has been on a serious decline for a number of years here, in fact is lower now I believe than in 1958, if I recall the comments correctly.

So I think we have to take some serious steps to encourage and to attract visitors to the province of Manitoba. I hope that the department of Tourism has the skilled people to go out and sell the facilities in the communities of our province, not only the city of Winnipeg and what it has to offer, but the rural communities as well.

One of the ways—[interjection] Very much, I am very much interested. [interjection] The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer) thinks, Mr. Speaker, that I have not visited other parts of the province of Manitoba, that he thinks that I have a parochial vision of Manitoba and what it has to offer.

I can assure the minister, Mr. Speaker, that almost since the first couple of months that I was elected in 1990, I have spent a great deal of my time travelling the province of Manitoba. I have been to every corner of the province. [interjection] Yes, yes. The original historical Red Coat Trail I have travelled on many times, not the one that is not the true designation of the Red Coat Trail.

Tourism is important to rural Manitoba, and I tell the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship that I have visited his community on many occasions, that I have friends that are living

all over the province of Manitoba, and I have visited them in those communities. I have been to Portage la Prairie; I have been down to Morden, Carman and Winkler; I have been down to all of the communities in southern Manitoba that I have been able to visit, Mr. Speaker.

Before my election I was visiting those communities and since my election I have continued to visit those communities. I have been to the far reaches of our province; I have been to Churchill; I have been to many of the northern Native communities in northern Manitoba. I have been to the—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, it may be even true that I have travelled more than any other member of our caucus, except our Leader.

I tried as the Highways and Transportation critic to see the needs of the people of every part of our province, to witness first-hand and to talk with them personally, because tourism, Mr. Speaker, as this Convention Centre will hopefully attract, is important to those areas. If we do not have the sound transportation system to allow them to move about our province, then we are not going to be able to encourage people to travel the province of Manitoba.

So the Convention Centre will hopefully attract the tourists to the province of Manitoba, and I hope that the government will look seriously at having people from rural Manitoba and people from the ethnic community sitting as board representatives so that we can encourage further tourism for other parts of Manitoba as well.

* (1130)

I know, Mr. Speaker, that our party has utilized the Convention Centre facilities on numerous occasions for our Convention Centre activities. In fact, it does not seem that long ago that we held a convention in the city here where we elected our federal leader—[interjection] 1989, as the member for Burrows made reference to. I was at that convention as well, and I recall quite fondly and quite clearly the events of that weekend where we elected our federal leader and that we tried to support the facilities that are available within our province. We have utilized the Convention Centre.

I am sure, opportunities permitting, we will continue to use the Convention Centre facilities, but we also travel to other parts of the province of Manitoba with our party activities, where we like to go and travel the province to take our business to those communities, but at the same time to visit and to talk with the people about issues that are important to them as well. So we, Mr. Speaker, like to utilize the facilities.

I hope the government will look at the solutions or the comments that have been referenced and made by the members for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

It is my understanding, going back to the financial concerns relating to the Convention Centre itself, that there is going to be some changes or an increase in the Convention Centre Corporation's short-term or revolving account, I believe, from \$100,000 up to \$250,000. I am not quite clear on that, but I would expect that that would allow them to have some greater flexibility or latitude in their operations, to allow them to continue to conduct their business.

I am sure that, if the members opposite have the opportunity to stand up and add their comments, in particular, the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme), who obviously has some experience in this, as does his colleague, the Minister responsible for Housing—[interjection] Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst). I cannot keep up with the changes on the government benches over there, Mr. Speaker. It seems like they change on a weekly basis. I am not sure the reasons why they make these changes, but I suppose that—[interjection]

Quite possibly. My colleague the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) referenced the fact that it was made quite possibly during the recent by-elections, and, of course, all Manitobans know the results of those by-elections, Mr. Speaker.

I look forward to the members opposite who have had some dealings with the Convention Centre Corporation when they were members of City Council—I hope they take the opportunity here today to stand up and add their comments about the Convention Centre operations, to

educate all members of the House, and possibly to put their concerns on the record with respect to this legislation as well.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to comment on Bill 9 today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 2—The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 2, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance et la Loi sur les pharmacies), standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 3—The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 3, The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation de traitement du cancer et de recherche en cancérologie), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Bill 4—The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), Bill 4, The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur l'énergie et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the

name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 5—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 7—The Crown Lands Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), Bill 7, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les terres domaniales), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Bill 8—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), Bill 8, The Fisheries Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Bill 10—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), Bill 10, The Wildlife Amendment Act

(Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

The honourable government House leader, what are your intentions, sir?

SECOND READINGS

Bill 11—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might seek leave of the House for me to introduce Bill 11, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to allow the honourable government House leader to introduce Bill 11 for second reading?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 11, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a second time and it be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Assembly Management Commission who has the responsibility of managing the affairs of the House, as they relate to financial arrangements at least, has come to the conclusion during consideration of the Estimates of the House that we will restrict ourselves, as part of the ongoing restraint practices in government here and also in the House, to two franking pieces per year as we did in 1993-94.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, addresses that issue and changes the dates from the bill passed previously in our last session from 1993-94 to 1994-1995, so that we will be restricting ourselves collectively to two franking pieces per year as we did during the 1993-94 fiscal year. The requirement in order to

accomplish that is a bill, and that is one of two areas of substance in Bill 11.

The other area of substance in Bill 11, Mr. Speaker, addresses a problem that has occurred from time to time in the way that reporting is done with respect to the money allocated to each party caucus for the operation of their caucus offices. This bill tries to address an anomaly that occurs when publicly being reported individuals, generally speaking, either caucus chairs of each particular caucus, wind up showing as income to their particular account in a public way, money that is intended for the operation of the caucus only.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is really not fair to suggest that the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), for instance, from our caucus should be shown to be receiving an incredibly large sum of money when, in fact, he has no benefit at all and is simply the caucus chair. You know, it occurs similarly in other caucuses, Mr. Speaker, because the way the legislation is currently worded, it says the Leader will designate a member of the caucus to receive that money.

Obviously, the cheque then comes to that member, and when it is recorded publicly, Mr. Speaker, that money then is allocated under that member's name. It has nothing to do directly with that member, other than they hold the position of caucus chair or designate of their Leader.

The bill addresses that anomaly. We will now have the funds paid to a caucus if there is a recognized political party, and if there is not, then there are other designated arrangements. Hopefully, that will clear up some of the confusion that surrounds it, and obviously does not create an embarrassment for those designated members of the caucus who publicly then appear to be receiving a lot more money than is really the case.

Mr. Speaker, those are the two kinds of significant issues related to this bill, and I would leave the bill now to the consideration of the House.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 11.

* (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would like just to put on the record a few concerns or just a comment on this particular bill as it came through LAMC.

With respect to the franking piece, I understand that the actual franking this year for MLAs is they actually have an option, and the option does allow for, I believe it is the three printing and one postage, one mailing, if they so choose, and, as the minister pointed out, the two mailings and two printings. I believe there could even be a third option, but I know of those two in particular.

It was done as a one—well, I should not say as a one-time thing, because this is actually the second time that it has occurred, but I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the general feeling that most have on this particular issue is that, hopefully, in the following years, MLAs will be able to go back to the franking piece of three times a year. It is, in fact, important for MLAs to be able to communicate to their constituents, and the franking piece allows us to be able to communicate at a substantially lesser cost than having to go through the direct mail process.

It also allows us to be, I guess, a bit more frank. Some MLAs choose to be fairly political in these; other MLAs choose not to be as political. It is an optional thing for them to do whatever it is that they would like, and the limitations, I believe, are somewhat necessary with respect to what the content is in the franking piece. Maybe some time in the future we will see some form of limitations in terms of what it is that an MLA can put into that particular piece.

The other one, I myself am sympathetic. I know the member from Gimli (Mr. Helwer)—and it was actually the caucus chairs used to receive the designation of the additional monies given to caucuses. It would be registered or show up as a part of an income at one level, even though it was not part of the caucus chair's actual income, but it was registered under that particular MLA, the caucus chair. Unfortunately, it was included in a number of different articles, and it seeks to change that.

So I understand that we can actually designate it to, for example, whether it is research, the research director or the caucus manager, which would probably be a more appropriate placement of these dollars coming into the caucuses.

Having just received the bill today, and I believe the minister, the government House leader points out the only two changes, we support the changes this time, but we do and would like to see the ongoing support for the three franking pieces into the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Before the House, second reading of Bill 11, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative. Is the House ready to adopt the motion? [agreed]

Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 12:30, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

Have a great weekend.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 27, 1994

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