

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

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

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

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I believe if you canvass the House, you'll find leave to call Bill No. 207, The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act, sponsored by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to go directly to second reading of Bill 207, The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

#### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 207—The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act

**Mr. Speaker:** I will now call second reading of Bill No. 207, The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill No. 207, The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act; Loi sur le droit à l'accès à des soins de santé de qualité dans des délais raisonnables, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable member for Inkster, that Bill No. 207, The Right to Timely Access to Quality Health Care Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, this bill would provide Manitobans the right of access to health care, the right to timely access to quality health care, which would be a fundamental part, we believe, in terms of the rights of patients. We believe this is important in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War, 1948, and that that expressed that there should be a right to health care and now, some 60-plus years later on, we're trying to make sure that that right is here in Manitoba. The bill provides appropriate remedies where the right is not—is breached. It provides not only for quick access to care, but it defines the nature of what is quality care so it is a right to quality care. It's not a right to bad care, and so I think that that is an important part of this bill.

We continue to have a—significant problems with wait times for medical procedures in Manitoba and there probably are a number of reasons for this. First of all, let's look at knee and hip surgeries. While we have reported on the WRHA Web site, wait times for knee and hip surgeries of 14 to 15 weeks on average in some cases, for instance in Brandon, knee surgery waits for 20 weeks, but this is only a small part of the story, Mr. Speaker.

Usually, before you get surgery, an individual would go in and see their family physician and there might be a wait time to see the family physician, say 10 weeks might not be unreasonable. But, because we don't have the statistics, we don't know what the average wait time would be, or what the average wait time would be for somebody who's got a knee or a hip problem.

We do know that very often then there is an MRI. The wait time for an MRI currently is 20 weeks and so, at the end of now 10 weeks to wait for the GP, 20 weeks for an MRI, 30 weeks, more than half a year, we now have the imaging done. We then have a wait time to see the specialist. Wait times to see the specialist are not reported. If one put that at 10 weeks, then we're now at 40 weeks and counting and then the wait time after you see a specialist until the surgery is done, we have that reported at 15 weeks. All told, that adds up to more than 50 weeks, so more than a year.

We don't know for sure if that's what the wait time is because the wait time to see the family physician and the specialist are not reported, and we don't have an overall report for people who have hip and knee problems in terms of the time that it takes to get the treatment that they need. So there are missing gaps in our knowledge and the fragmentary and piecemeal approach that the government has implemented is misleading in that it appears to be better than it really is, in terms of when you slice it up and/or dice it up into pieces that the overall wait time is not shown and it appears to be quicker than it actually is. A wait time of more than a year, as we suspect, is probably, in most occasions, is not acceptable.

Second reason that there's a significant wait time problem is that the government is reporting knee and hip surgeries and has put an emphasis on these, but is not reporting shoulder and elbow surgeries, and so we are—we are in the dark as to what the precise wait times are in these areas. And certainly the people who have come to me, they have often been waiting a long time, a year or two years or even been told that the wait lists are so long that they won't even put you on a wait list. And, for instance, if you've got, you know, rotator cuff surgery that you need on your shoulder, it shouldn't wait for this length of time. It should be operated on and healed because if you're going to get an optimum result, I mean, that's what you need.

So a piecemeal approach instead of the overall approach, an approach which focusses on certain types of procedures and surgeries, without mentioning the others, leads to some conditions which are not getting the attention that they should have and some wait times that are inordinately long.

\*(10:10)

Mental health care is not given a wait time anywhere and, clearly, we need to be cognizant of what's happening in mental health care. The—this is Mental Health Week after all. I understand that in Thompson, for acute mental health problems, that there is a waiting list of approximately two months at the moment. Well, it may depend on the problem but, certainly, in a lot of situations that's too long.

Mr. Speaker, last week we passed a bill with the right to hunt and to fish and to trap. I would suggest that for most Manitobans the right to quick access to care is what is foremost on their minds and that we should be paying attention in supporting this bill, and I hope all members will do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I appreciate the opportunity to stand and put a few words on the record concerning access to health care and the work that we have invested in doing to bring wait times down in the province of Manitoba.

Certainly, I know that all members of this House and indeed every constituent of every member of this House believes that when they are not feeling well, when they are feeling discomfort or pain, that they want to have service as quickly as possible. This is an issue on which I think every member could agree. When we get into a debate about timely access to care, we know that there are traditionally certain elements of the debate by some groups that are consistently left out of the discourse and left out of the dialogue, and it will give me an opportunity to talk about some of those things today.

I begin, Mr. Speaker, of course, with the issue of people needing emergency service. We know that when people require an MRI in an emergency, when they are in an accident, they require emergency surgery on a hip or on a knee, when they are in an emergency situation for cardiac, those people never go onto a wait list. They are taken care of immediately. You know, Dr. Menkis, from St. Boniface Hospital would clearly declare that, you know, between 40 and 50 percent of the work that they do and the surgery that they do concern people that never appear on a wait time or a wait list. So I think it's critically important when we discuss any sort of wait time or access to care, it's prudent and responsible, I think, for members to acknowledge that in those situations of emergency these are not people that appear on wait lists.

I think anyone could agree that the single most important thing that we can do to provide timely access to care is to invest in the system, and that's a commitment that our government has made year after year after year. I find it passing strange, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite, you know, brings forward such an argument today. We know some years ago—it's a distant memory, mercifully, some years ago when the member opposite had his hands on the controls that one of his decisions in the federal Cabinet was to actually cut money to health care. This is not the way to provide better access to health care. It's a pretty simple equation. Even as recently as 2008, I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party actually attacked our 2008 budget suggesting we were spending too much money on doctors and on

nurses. Again, this is a bit puzzling, I would say, that if you're trying to provide greater access to care probably you would want to have more professionals on the front line. So it's a peculiar argument that he's making today, not in the sense that all Manitobans want to have even faster care, but in the sense that his actions and his words of days gone by have not matched what he's saying today.

I would also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in the example that he spoke about today, talking about the issue of hips and knees, he said it's only part of the story. I would suggest that the words that the member is saying today are the embodiment of that, only part of the story, *quel surprise [what a surprise]*.

We know that in the process of going forward in improving care and making faster care through our commitment starting in 2005, one of the essential elements of providing even better care was creating prehab clinics, Mr. Speaker, and these prehab clinics are designed to assist individuals who are needing hip replacements or knee replacements in getting to be fit and ready for surgery. Not all people can have surgery on exactly the day that they suggest that they want it. They need to have a number of issues taken care of.

In these prehab clinics, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that work is done with individuals on healthy eating, on developing appropriate exercise plans, as is appropriate for their condition with a sore knee or a sore hip. And I'm really pleased to report that as a result of these prehab clinics, that also delve into other aspects of individuals' lives, the social emotional components of their lives, there have been a significant number of people, as it turns out, that have not, in fact, needed surgery at all. And wouldn't that be the ultimate outcome: to be in a place with your health where you may need to have a surgical intervention and, through other interventions and the development of a healthier and more well lifestyle, you don't need surgery at all.

The member also fails to mention in his discourse about hips and knees, and, of course, this is only one component of the discussion, the fact that in times—in the years gone by when the federal government was very strong in pushing their wait-time guarantee promise, they came to the provincial governments with—we'll call it an incentive. There are other words I suppose, but an incentive to pay off the provinces in order to take on their wait-time guarantee aspect in one element. Governments across

the nation chose—out of the big five, as suggested by our First Ministers—chose projects for cataracts or chose projects for cardiac or cancer, diagnostics, what have you.

Manitoba was an innovator in saying there's a better way to use this money and to use this investment, and that is to delve into a project of bridging the time between generalist and specialist care, as the member noted in his remarks. And Manitoba's project on bridging that particular gap, to bring down the wait before the wait, has been very successful so far. It continues to roll out and jurisdictions across the land, of course, are looking to Manitoba and looking to Manitoba's project to see how such a gap can be decreased so that the overall wait time is, in fact, lessened for Manitoba patients. So, to neglect to mention that, Manitoba being a leader in the nation on bringing down the time between generalists and specialists care, I think, was an unfortunate omission on the part of the member opposite.

We know, of course, as the result of making those investments, more doctors, more nurses, more procedures being done, we've been able to bring down our wait times. There's still work to do, but we've been able to do that but also doing it through innovation.

We know that on hips and knees again, in particular, the issue of the two-operating-room model and the use of clinical assists, has enabled orthopedic surgeons to go from doing three operations a day to seven operations a day, sometimes eight operations a day, which has substantially brought down the wait time.

We know that we have wait times—the median wait time for hip and knee is 14 weeks, down 68 percent, Mr. Speaker, from 44 weeks, which is where it sat in 2005.

By making continued investments, Manitoba continues to be a leader in the nation for having the shortest wait time for cancer radiation therapy. We're tied with B.C. in that. We're glad that they caught up to us. We hope the rest of the nation works on that.

We know that CT times are down from 18 weeks back in 1998, Mr. Speaker, to five weeks today.

We are having a current challenge with MRI times as a result of opening up the ordering to family physicians. We're working that through and adding capacity, but again, as I stated earlier, we know that emergency patients don't have that wait.

I would just say to the member opposite that every member of this House believes that we want to maintain a health-care system that is accessible for all, not just those who have the ability to pay. We want to make sure that access to our system is based on medical need and not on the shininess of one's credit card.

It's an investment. One has to continue to innovate with those investment dollars to draw health-care professionals to the province, to retain them there, to ensure that they are happy, are well resourced, and are nurtured in their jobs, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to make choices to put health care as the No. 1 priority to ensure that all Manitobans get the care they need, where they need it and when they need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\*(10:20)

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I'm pleased to rise today to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 207 brought forward by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

This bill establishes that all Manitobans have the right to timely access to quality health care. It then goes on to define both timely access and quality health care and puts the onus on the health-care system to take steps to ensure that this right is respected.

Furthermore, the bill asserts: that all Manitobans have the right to be fully informed of their own medical situation, including the right to be advised of the options for treatment and for promoting better health; the right to participate in decision making about their treatment; the right to information about their health-care provider's qualifications; the right to receive considerate, compassionate and respectful health care; and the right to communicate with health professionals in confidence.

It is fair to say that in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, that all Manitobans did not have timely access to quality health care. And I believe many of us in this House can probably bring forward situations that would challenge the points that were put forward by the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) in actually supporting his concern that these rights, actually, are not being fulfilled within the province.

And the proof, Mr. Speaker, is in the numbers. For example, the average wait for an MRI in Manitoba is 19 weeks. That's five months, and this

NDP government promised in 1999 that there would be an eight-week wait for MRIs. Ten years into their mandate, wait times for MRIs are, in fact, worse than they were when this government took office. The average wait for an ultrasound is eight weeks, despite the NDP's 1999 promise to cut that wait to one or two weeks. The median wait for hip and knee surgery is over three months. That's just a median, which means that half of the patients are waiting even longer.

I can speak personally to this issue, Mr. Speaker. My mother is waiting for a knee surgery and is scheduled for surgery in November—and we call her Super Baba. She's one that plays a very important role in our family's sanity, I guess, in keeping everybody organized and helping out with the children and that type of thing. And, for my mom, or baba, to be taken out of the loop with a knee issue and waiting for surgery has actually caused a great deal of stress not only on my family, my brother's family, but also on my dad, as well, because she's been the energy and the drive behind our family's activities and support. So I think, speaking personally, having over three months to wait for any type of care or service is definitely very stressful on a family.

The wait time for elective cardiac surgery is 74 days, and that's a long time when your—when it's your heart we're talking about, Mr. Speaker. And, while we're talking about hearts, there's a 26-week wait for echocardiograms in Winnipeg. An echocardiogram is an important diagnostic test that many people need before a physician can decide how to treat. So if you combine the wait time for an echocardiogram with the wait time for elective surgery, you could be waiting 256 days, or nine months, for heart surgery, and that absolutely is not timely access to health care.

Pediatric diagnostic tests have appalling wait times. It's 22 weeks for a pediatric MRI in Winnipeg and seven weeks for a pediatric ultrasound, and there are currently over—almost 300 children waiting to be seen at the Children's Asthma and Allergy Clinic in Winnipeg. They're waiting up to a year just for an initial appointment, and, being a mother of small children, anytime that they—you're faced with having a situation where your child is sick or ill or in need of health care, you really are wanting to have that addressed as quickly as possible. So these numbers with regard to diagnostic tests and allergy and asthma clinic points are very unsettling and very, very concerning for Manitoba parents and families

who are waiting for some answers and support for their children.

There's a 41-week wait to see—be seen at the Pain Clinic at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, and I do know that I've dealt with a number of constituents who have asked for help and asked for support in trying to get this wait list reduced. People who have to wait for extended periods of time for assessment or assistance with regard to their pain issues, 41 weeks is—plus, actually, 41-plus is very difficult for a family who are looking for support, and it definitely affects their quality of life.

Sleep apnea testing has a long wait list, too, and there are over 4,300 patients waiting more than 13 weeks for a sleep apnea test in Winnipeg. There's a seven-year wait list for hearing tests in South-Eastman health region and, sure, the wait times are less than in Winnipeg, but we've been told by individuals that the RHA—WRHA has been given strict instructions not to take patients from other health regions.

And this is very concerning, Mr. Speaker, when we, as a province, rely a lot on specialists that are located only in Winnipeg. I've been in conversation with several doctors who spend a significant amount of time trying to get care in Winnipeg for patients. I know one doctor who was trying to find a bed for patient from the western part of the province spent well over an hour talking to different people within the system, trying to access supports for somebody that was in serious need of supports within the city.

So, when the minister spoke about physician-to-specialist care numbers and how well that is working, I beg to differ. I know specifically of cases where individuals have had to rely on their physician to go above and beyond the call of duty to try to find spaces for their patients in the city and have been flatly denied, saying, there's no beds, I'm sorry. And, you know, what can the physician do or say to an individual who the physician knows needs timely care and has been told there's no beds, I'm sorry, you'll just have to wait, and we'll continue to try to find supports for you?

Mr. Speaker, there's a 16-month wait list to get to see a liver specialist in Winnipeg, and this is a very serious, very serious issue; 16-months wait period can cause a lot of damage, permanent and life-threatening damage, to an individual who is looking for supports in that area.

There are 260 patients in Winnipeg who are waiting up to seven weeks for a diagnostic mammogram to learn if they have breast cancer, and all of us have been touched by individuals, whether it be family members, cousins, friends who have all—who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and how serious this is to the quality of life of the individual, but the mental health and well-being of the family. So, having to wait seven weeks for any woman to have an—who has had an abnormal screening mammogram is something that this government needs to be taking more seriously and, obviously, at this point, hasn't.

With regard to addiction treatment, there is a wait list of up to 120 days long for residential addiction treatment programs in Manitoba, and that's a critical, important issue because when time an addict—by the time an addict decides that they are ready to seek treatment, a program must be accessible for them immediately. A day, a week, a month, these people may no longer be able to—be ready to accept treatment.

So, again, we need to have services that are available when the patients needs them, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that that's a very serious, serious issue that needs more interest and more attention by this government.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) bringing forward this bill. I think it raises awareness to the inefficiencies of this government and the lack of response that they've provided to a number of issues in regard to health care. Timely access is a fundamental right, and I believe that in rural and northern Manitoba we see more often than not how this government has actually failed in its responses to those needs.

So, again, I want to thank the member for River Heights, and I look forward to the continual debate on this issue, and look forward to some positive change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and talk a bit about the issue of access to health care. I want to start off by just talking a little bit about sort of where we've been in terms of health policy over the last 20 years in this country. And I think when we talk about solutions to the problems that we face today, it's always good to take a moment and think about some of the roots of those problems and solutions that have been tried before and maybe not worked out as well. So I want

to just take us down a little historical path for a moment.

\* (10:30)

We certainly saw, in the decade of the 1990s, when there was recession and there was challenges, fiscal challenges, the decisions that we saw taken at the federal level were to dramatically reduce transfer payments to the provinces and, in fact, to dramatically change, in this country, the social policy framework. Whereas before there was a shared responsibility in issues like child care and social welfare, as well as the traditional areas of health care and education. That all changed in the '90s by the federal Liberal government, in response to a recession, and large amounts of money were taken out of the system.

Now provinces responded to that and most of them responded by cutting programs. In this province we saw the response in '95, the freeze of the health capital program, which meant that all the health capital projects that were about to be underway, about to be approved, had been approved, were not yet constructed, all of that was frozen. Progress was entirely frozen in 1995 in terms of health capital.

We also saw provinces take action, in terms of cutting back training programs for nurses and doctors and other health-care professionals. And so the result of that was far, far fewer health professionals being trained and educated, and far fewer beginning their careers, and now we see that that generation of health professionals is really missing. Those folks would now be moving into management positions, would be experienced nurses, and those folks aren't there in the numbers they should be because of those decisions that were made.

We also saw many, many, many beds closed, as—and it was purely fiscal decision making at that time. And it's a trend, I think, in health care, to move out of institutional settings. And I don't think it's necessarily a negative trend, but when you do that, you have to make sure those supports are then put into the community, either in the forms of home care or better primary care, and that was the piece of the puzzle that wasn't done.

So every ounce of flexibility was removed in the health-care system in the 1990s, in terms of staffing, in terms of bed availability, and that had a tremendous, tremendous effect on the morale of health-care providers. And so, when we came to

government in 1999, that was the situation that we were faced with. And we took a very concrete plan and a very co-ordinated approach; we knew that we had to increase immediately the training classes for nurses, for example, and for doctors, and we've done that and we've done that every year. So now we are graduating record numbers of doctors and nurses, and the vast majority of those folks are staying here in Manitoba to work.

We knew that we had a huge deficit in terms of health capital, in terms of buildings, in terms of equipment, in terms of technology, and we spent, and continue to spend, many years and many millions of dollars upgrading those facilities and making sure that we have purchased the best technology, and expanding that technology. For the first time you can get an MRI outside of Winnipeg. We have made sure that those MRIs are available in places like Brandon and Boundary Trails. We also, for the first time, put an MRI in a non-hospital setting, when we put it at the Pan Am Clinic.

Because we recognized that if we could get the people who were having elective MRIs, who were having MRIs for issues which were not necessarily life threatening, if we could take those people out of the trauma centres, then they were going to get better service, because they weren't going to get bumped when a car accident came through the door or another life-threatening situation.

And so, you know, I guess these days we talk a bit about the last 10 years of government and the contributions that the Premier (Mr. Doer) has made. And I want to speak for a minute about the contribution that he made in securing a better fiscal partnership when it comes to health care, a better partnership between us and the federal government. And I know we hear in this House, day after day, that we should refuse every dollar sent to us from Ottawa, that we should send that money back. But it's clear that the federal government did have and does continue to have a responsibility to fund health care, and it's through the leadership of our First Minister that that fiscal partnership has slowly, gradually begun to be equalized. We still have a way to go there, but I think in the days to come, when the history is written, he will get a great deal of credit for that work.

The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) talked about some of the innovative examples in the health-care system of things that are being done and often are being done because they come about from the



experience of front-line health-care providers. You see the ways in the system that they can do a better job, that they can serve patients better. She talked about the prehab programs that are run at the Pan Am clinics and other places, where people who are waiting for joint replacement surgery have a program in place where they can either participate in exercise that's going to help strengthen their muscles so that when they do get surgery, they'll have quicker recovery times.

I also, you know, in terms of innovation, I just want to reflect. We all hear personal stories and often I know we do hear those personal stories from people who may be worried and have some frustration with the health-care system, but often we also hear those stories from people who had very positive experiences, and I want to just share with the House one story I heard from a friend of mine who I was trying to arrange a discussion with and couldn't make it because he had an MRI scheduled on a Saturday night at 8 p.m., and he was surprised that those machines would be running on weekends and in evenings and thought that it was a good example of how the health-care system was meeting the demands and needs of people, that it wasn't 9-to-5, five-day-a-week operation, that those machines were being maximized by making sure that they were being run in the evenings and on weekends.

We have managed to cut wait times for things that are life-threatening, things like cancer radiation therapy at about one week, which far exceeds the national benchmark of four weeks, and we will soon, I know, be bringing that radiation therapy to Brandon so that people do not have to drive in hours to come to the city for what is very short period of time of treatment. That's going to make a tremendous difference in the lives of many, many people who are going to be able to get that treatment closer to home, have shorter travelling distances, and be able to be closer to their families for the support that they need at those times.

Telehealth, I think, is also a great example of innovation that has helped to bring access to specialist care to more places throughout our province. There are Telehealth sites all over the province in rural and northern Manitoba where you can sit in a room in Thompson, for example, and have a specialist in Winnipeg talk to you and assess your condition. You don't have to make that long trip. And recently, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from an organization called Echo, which is an interpretation centre for people who are

deaf or hard of hearing, and they've taken advantage of Telehealth by getting a Telehealth site put into their location so that there can be interpretation for people who are deaf, sign language interpretation, which can help with access to medical care.

So, when we talk about access, we have to think about the many ways that people access the system, the barriers that exist, and how we get over those barriers, and I think that's another good example of innovation. Advanced Access is a system used in primary care centres and I know is being tried and piloted in community health centres here in Winnipeg where primary health-care providers, instead of the old system where you might have an appointment that's three weeks from now, they try to do today's work today. So you call up, you have an issue, you need to see your primary doctor, you can very often get an appointment that day to come in and deal with the problem you have on that day, on that day.

And they find that, although it's a complete re-orientation of the system, that it does provide better access and better care to patients, especially those who have multiple health issues. They can come in and deal with the health complaint that they have on a Tuesday on the Tuesday. It doesn't build up and perhaps get worse and get added to other health complaints that they have to talk about down the line.

We've added new professions, well, really recognized new professions. They were already in existence in the health-care system. Folks like nurse practitioners who we know can be a very important part of the primary health-care system, can provide an awful lot of care and high-quality care to patients and can decrease those wait times for primary care which we know is often a gateway to all other kinds of care.

Clinical assistants, also a good example of a health profession that we've recognized and helped play a bigger role in the health-care system, and those clinical assistants, as physicians' assistants, are helping to reduce wait times for joint surgeries.

\* (10:40)

At Concordia Hospital we have a very innovative system that was established by one of the leading doctors there. We have two operating rooms running at a time and, with the help of clinical assistants, they're able to do twice as many surgeries.

So I have many more examples, Mr. Speaker, but I see my time is up so I will sit down and let the next person speak. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** You know, Mr. Speaker, that times the NDP in their own way feel that they own the issue of health care, and time and time again, we see very clearly just how bad the NDP are in dealing with the issue of health care. And it's somewhat ironic, you know. I can't comment in terms of who's here and who's not here inside the Chamber, because, even though they might not necessarily be in their seat, you know, you look around and there hasn't been anyone sitting in the front row.

Half of the members are here, or they could be inside the Chamber—one could ultimately argue in the second row, Mr. Speaker, and I think that speaks volumes in terms of—it speaks volumes. And they could be sitting in the loges and so forth. All I'm talking about is the empty chairs that are before us. I'm going to suggest to you that the NDP really have no idea about health care. I'm going to suggest to you that the NDP are probably the most, the most incompetent government in dealing with health care in North America.

And let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. We hear criticisms from the NDP about the '90s, and they even make reference to the Chrétien, when Prime Minister—or former Prime Minister Chrétien was here. I should tell the members opposite, because most of them weren't here. Back in the late '80s, the NDP at that time were criticizing, saying that what we needed to do is to establish a floor in health care so that Ottawa will continue to fund health care well into the future.

Well, it was Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party today that established the guarantee that Ottawa will continue to finance and play a major key into health care well into the future, Mr. Speaker. And not only did the Leader of the New Democratic—the Leader of the Liberal Party do that in the '90s, coming into the Manitoba Legislature time and time again, has brought forward legislation that would make health care better in our province. And what does this government do?

Whenever there's a good idea dealing with improving the quality of health care, improving the delivery of health care, improving accountability in health care, this government sits on its back end and does absolutely nothing. Rather, it crows about how

wonderful they are because they're New Democrats and they believe that they're the answer to all problems in health care. Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing is further from the truth.

No government in North America has spent more on per capita in health-care bureaucracy than this NDP government in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. This government in Manitoba has doubled the expenditures in health care in nine years, and what is the results of that doubling of funding in health care in the province of Manitoba? Well, if you go out in the North End of Winnipeg, they'll tell you that health care is not any better today than it was 10 years ago. They'll tell you that—look what's happening at the Seven Oaks Hospital.

Seven Oaks Hospital is now reducing the amount of services that it is providing in emergency. This government is more interested in turning the Seven Oaks Hospital into a geriatric centre or a glorified walk-in clinic, Mr. Speaker, than they are in providing the types of services that Manitobans and, particularly, North End residents in Winnipeg want to see out of a hospital. And where does this government, what does this government do? Absolutely nothing. You know, yesterday I raised an issue about someone that's trying to share with the public issues related to what's happening in the Burntwood regional health-care authority, and this particular individual has been sued, or there was an attempt to sue the individual.

Government is trying to silence any sort of criticism in regards to its health-care policy. And the minister kind of shakes his head and oh, oh. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that they do need a wake-up call, that far too often they listen to the bureaucrats that are bringing their health-care policy down the wrong path. And it doesn't matter who speaks inside this Chamber, particularly from the opposition benches, but I'll suggest to you that this government does not have any control over health care in the province of Manitoba, that they have lost absolute and total control, that the empire that has been created through the regional health-care authorities is now running health care in the province of Manitoba, that it is being driven by bureaucrats, that this government has lost its ability to provide the quality health care that Manitobans expect. And I genuinely believe that to be the—to be the case.

Why—you know, one of the things that we have suggested in opposition is that the regional health

care authorities should be held accountable by having them come to the Manitoba Legislature and come before standing committees, Mr. Speaker. Today, the amount of money that we spend, the billions of dollars that we spend on health care, and the lack of accountability must and needs to be addressed. That it is not good enough for us to rely on whoever the minister of the day is in terms of holding that bureaucracy accountable, because what this government has clearly demonstrated is that it does not have the ability to be able to hold government—the health-care decisions that are being made accountable. The government has demonstrated that.

You know, I've talked to people and I'm gonna go back to the Seven Oaks Hospital on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. You know, it wasn't because of money that the decisions were made in terms of emergency services. The decision was made because there was a couple of bureaucrats that felt that this is the best direction to take health care, this concentration.

Well, you know, there was a time in which it was espoused that the decentralization of these services was, in fact, the best—the best way to go. But because you have a change in bureaucratic thinking, they're taking it in a direction that is not meant to save money. It is meant to have a higher concentration of services in one or two or possibly three facilities, thereby taking the valuable role that community hospitals could be playing.

I don't believe that there were members of the New Democratic caucus that had the foggiest idea in terms of what was actually taking place. In fact, I had some of the constituents of some of those MLAs trying to tell me that what I was telling—what I was putting out in material was, in fact, wrong, Mr. Speaker, that it was misleading. And I had challenged MLAs, I had challenged those individuals' constituents to come forward, to attend a public meeting, to tell the people in attendance at the public meeting that the information that I'm given is wrong. And not one person, outside of the Minister of Health's spy, showed up to actually, to confront or to say, no, that what I'm saying is wrong. It was only the individual sent by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to see, in fact, what it is that I was actually saying. There's no shortage of money in order to be able to provide the individuals to protect this government and to put on spins, even if those spins are outright misinformation being provided to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to suggest to the government, because I realize that there's a limit in terms of time, I'm going to suggest to the government that they would do a service to all Manitobans if they would recognize the value of appreciating legislation that's been brought forward here today and in the past. Today, it happens to be on wait times and providing guarantees. That's something that's in the best interest of health care, the best interest of Manitobans.

I would argue that the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party has been consistent through the years in trying to improve our health-care system. And the government, as opposed to trying to fixate on the past and issues from the past, would do a better service to Manitobans if it would start spending its money in a much wiser fashion and ensuring that there's more accountability in health care by having regional health care authorities come before a standing committee where individual MLAs will be able to hold them to account for the bad decisions that are, in fact, taking place in Manitoba.

And there are so many horror stories that are out there, Mr. Speaker; they need to be addressed, and this government needs to start coming clean and being more transparent on health care. We spend far too much money. Manitobans are so reliant on having quality health care, and this government's inability to be able to deliver that is going to create the window of opportunity in which Manitobans will abandon the New Democrats, and they will look at alternatives, and I truly believe that they're going to look at the alternatives of parties that are genuine in bringing forward good ideas. And I would suggest to you that the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party has been doing just that, and the sooner the New Democrats wake up and smell the coffee on it, maybe they might be able to marginalize the defeat that they're going to incur on October the 4th, 2011. Thank you.

\*(10:50)

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** I want to say a few words about the—about this bill.

You know, when we're—when we're talking about timely access to quality health care, I think over the years since I've been around public service and other local governments, I've seen a lot of growth and changes in this area. But we've come a long way, not only in 10 years, but 60 years or so since the right to health care was determined by the declaration.

That's one of the—that's one of the things my dad often talks about. It's one of those privileges that we enjoy today because people went to—went to fight for those—for those rights and privileges that we have today. And he—and he often talks about that; that we should continue to work hard to make things better, to make the system better, provide more training opportunities for nurses and doctors and so forth.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, I've also seen some events in my—in my time, where health teams would work together to avoid surgeries for patients, especially in my—in my area there, The Pas. One particular person that I remember, his name was Patrick Moore [*phonetic*], he had something seriously wrong with his—with his toe, and he was—he was a diabetic, but there was a urgent need to amputate. But, after talking to the health-care providers, they all agreed that, we're going to give it some time to work on this, try a different approach.

And by working together with the—with the health team, well, they avoided that surgery and it was—it was not necessary to begin with. So I'm very grateful for health teams that are providing that kind of a quality service to people, to my constituents.

Another case that I'm quite familiar with is a person that had a heart attack in The Pas, and there was talk that he might be going to Winnipeg for immediate surgery. But, through careful planning with the health team there, they kept him in The Pas, and, as it turned out, he didn't need the surgery after all.

Those are rare occasions, of course, but I think—I think it goes to show that the health teams that are working for the—for the people, given the opportunity, given a chance to properly diagnose and also to provide treatment, what we call a holistic approach to treatment, can work if given the proper opportunity to make it work.

In those health teams, nurses are the—are paramount in terms of providing that necessary service to clients. I have seen the nurses in The Pas do more than what has been required from them, to provide a much more holistic approach to healing particular illnesses that the patients are suffering.

But we need more nurses; we know that, and in order to reduce those—the wait times that we all experience from time to time, either personally or somebody that we know—a friend, a family—we also need more doctors and nurses to provide the needed

services that have been identified throughout this debate here.

But according to the nursing colleges, there are 2,034 more nurses practising in Manitoba today than in 1999. We have turned around the nursing shortage created by the Tories when 1,573 nurses left in the 1990s. When the Tories were in office, you know, it's been stated here before that 1,000 nurses were fired and drove hundreds and more from the province.

This new data shows that for every nurse that was fired we have now hired two back. So, to me, Mr. Speaker, we are not merely sitting on our hands waiting for miracles to happen, we are creating opportunities to provide better health care for Manitobans. I am grateful that this government here has paid a lot of attention to that need over the years. This data shows that we are now well on our way to meeting our election commitment to hire 700 more nurses. There are now 445 more nurses working in Manitoba than in 2007. So, to me, that's a clear indication that there is—that there is movement towards, you know, to continue providing the health care that's required by citizens of Manitoba.

We have also exceeded our election commitment of adding 100 nurse training seats. We've added 124 more new nurse training seats since 1999. In 1999-2000 there was 772, and in 2008-09 the total number is 1,041. There, again, the statistics show—the data shows that we are moving progressively towards better health care in our province.

As I said earlier, I've seen all the changes. I've seen the improvements over the years. Just two days ago, my sister, for example, you know, had a minor heart attack. I don't know, you know, to me a heart attack is a heart attack, minor or major. But the care she received in The Pas hospital there was second to none in terms of making sure that she not—that she not deteriorate any further. Her health did not deteriorate any further, but, instead, what they did was bring her back to where she was before prior to that heart attack. Now, to me, this is the kind of health care that is working for the people when the health teams are working together: doctors, nurses, and so forth. But that's just one example. There are many, many other examples of how the present health-care system works for the people.

In 2009, the budget 2009 ensures that we maintain quality health care for Manitobans in this time of global economic uncertainty while continuing to make strategic investments. We will

not repeat the crippling decisions the Tories made in 1990s. We will not cut medical school spaces. We will not fire 1,000 nurses. We will not freeze health infrastructure spending and let our health facilities crumple. Instead, we will continue to provide those school spaces for the nurses, the doctors. We will continue to make efforts to hire more nurses. We will continue to spend on health facilities to make sure that they continue to be quality health-care centres and hospitals for the citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, 2009 budget encouraged many important health initiatives—

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. Order.

The honourable member's time has expired, and when this matter is again before the House the debate will remain open.

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 24—100th Anniversary of B'nai Brith in Manitoba

**Mr. Speaker:** And the hour now being 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions, and we'll deal with Resolution No. 24, 100th Anniversary of B'nai Brith in Manitoba.

**Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge):** I move, seconded by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), that

WHEREAS B'nai Brith has had a presence in Canada since 1875 and is the Jewish community's senior advocacy and community service organization in this country; and

WHEREAS 2009 marks the hundredth year of B'nai Brith's establishment in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS B'nai Brith is a human rights organization that works to combat anti-Semitism, racism and hate, while promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue and respect among all Manitobans; and

WHEREAS B'nai Brith's mandate in Manitoba includes support and assistance for vulnerable communities and providing important community action based on and derived from a strong sense of Jewish culture and spirituality; and

WHEREAS this includes fostering remembrance of and broad community education on the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS since its inception B'nai Brith has continuously contributed to the growth of a vibrant Jewish community in Manitoba.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Assembly recognize the hundredth anniversary of B'nai Brith's important and ongoing human rights and social justice advocacy, as well as the cultural contributions it has made to Manitoba.

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

WHEREAS B'nai Brith has had a presence—dispense?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

**Ms. Howard:** I want to start by welcoming our many guests here today. We have with us in the gallery, Alan Yusim from—the regional director for B'nai Brith Canada; Maria Fernanda Medina, special projects, Midwest Region, B'nai Brith Canada; Vanessa Hidary, member of the B'nai Brith Advocacy Board, Reverend Rudy Fidel, spiritual leader, Faith Temple, and Gina Fidel; Reverend Bill Taylor, pastor, Faith Temple; Reverend Raymond McLean, president, World Indigenous Nations for Israel; Jean McLean; Ron East, founder, Canada Sheli; Shelley Faintuch, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg; and Rebeca Kuropatwa. I'd like to welcome them, and if I've forgotten a few, we'll see you at noon, and we'll get acquainted then.

So, welcome here today, and I would like to thank the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) for seconding this resolution this morning.

B'nai Brith, the name, in doing my bit of research, I found, means children of the covenant, and it is the oldest operating Jewish service organization in the world, founded in New York 165 years ago. And, like many organizations, it was founded to meet some immediate needs of a population, immediate needs in terms of providing sometimes food and shelter and assistance and, out of that meeting of those immediate needs, came a desire to do advocacy to make sure that those needs perhaps didn't occur.

And so, like many organizations that are founded at a time of great need and are founded really to just help the neighbours, help each other out, they become organizations of advocacy, they

become organizations that move us forward as a society, and B'nai Brith is a good example of that.

I wanted to bring forward this resolution because I think any time in a province as young as Manitoba, an organization or an institution celebrates a hundredth anniversary, it's worth recognition. You think about how long B'nai Brith has been in Manitoba in the last hundred years, it was here for some of the first waves of immigration of Jewish people and immigration from all over the world to help folks settle into Manitoba and to help advocate for better conditions.

B'nai Brith was here for the First World War and the Second World War and was here to bring to light the atrocities of the Second World War, when so many people would rather have not heard, would rather have lived in denial. B'nai Brith was established in Manitoba long before the creation of Israel and has been a tremendous supporter for Israel and a tremendous source of education and dialogue about the creation of Israel and the ongoing struggles that that nation faces.

And their work, of course, continues today. One of the things that I've always been impressed about is their relationship with the Aboriginal community, and some of the folks that are responsible for that relationship are with us today in the gallery. And I think it's very instructive of B'nai Brith's way of doing things, of their own philosophy, that out of what was a very shameful time in our history, out of some very hate-filled comments from David Ahenakew, came not a desire to divide, not a desire to fracture our community more, but a desire to come together.

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

And out of that came tremendous work both with the Aboriginal community and the Jewish community resulting in trips to Israel with Aboriginal educators and, I think, resulting in a better understanding of the issues and struggles that both those nations face in our country, and their common experience, I think, of prejudice and discrimination, and their common understanding of what hatred can do to a community, what it can do to families and what it can do to the souls of all of us.

I have had the opportunity in my time since being elected to attend many of events—many of the events that B'nai Brith has had a hand in. One of them early on was an interfaith Passover celebration and was my first Passover celebration. And I went,

you know, with some trepidation; I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know, you know, how this ceremony would go. I believed that I would be welcomed but it was, you know, with a little bit of nervousness. And I was very warmly welcomed. We had a tremendous time in the synagogue with Rabbi Green, learning about the Torah and then we had this wonderful feast where I got to sit with people from many different faiths and cultures and share a meal. We were led in song and some very non-traditional songs, set to the themes of songs like *Gilligan's Island*, for example, but it was a celebration and it was a learning experience and I felt so warmly welcomed by that community.

Like many of us in the House, every year I have attended the Holocaust Memorial ceremony that B'nai Brith is involved in—the reading of names and I've had the opportunity to read some of those names. And, I think, often when we look at atrocities like any kind of genocide, it's very hard for us to comprehend, it's very hard for us to relate to what the meaning of a genocide is. But the experience of reading the names of people, of families, of parents and children that were killed in the Holocaust, that experience brings it home, I think, in a way that few other experiences do.

And so I thank them for their ongoing work at educating all of us about the Holocaust and educating young people and hoping that together, we can work for a world in which genocide and hatred no longer exists.

Of course, they—also B'nai Brith has a reputation for being involved in recreation as well, running youth camps and running sporting events. And they have been not only a voice for their community, but a service organization for their community; meeting those needs wherever they are.

One of the things that they do nationally is audit; do an annual report on anti-Semitic incidents and they have an anti-hate hotline that people can call and report those incidents, but also get support for the feelings and the emotions and the experience that one goes through when they're faced with that kind of hatred.

And I just want to read from their latest report in 2008, and just quote from it for a moment, because it is important to remember why the work of documenting anti-Semitic incidents remains, unfortunately, a necessary task. The Jewish people have seen over the years and over the centuries that hate prepares the way for violence. The refusal to

expose and confront intolerance can lead to crimes beyond imagining. So we have a duty to expose and confront anti-Semitism wherever it is found.

In 2008, according to this report, there were 1,135 anti-Semitic incidents across Canada and the sobering part of that statistic is that's an increase of 8.9 percent over 2007. And as you read that report and you read of some of the details of those incidents—I want to read some of them that have happened in our own province. There are some, of course, that are well documented and we all read about in the newspaper, but then there are those others that perhaps happen and we don't hear about.

\* (11:10)

One of them of a young boy travelling with his mom on a bus who was threatened and taunted with anti-Semitic slurs. Now this isn't something happening in some distant place and time; this is happening last year in our own province. A billboard for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, an institution that I know we're all proud of, that was defaced with swastikas and hateful messages.

So B'nai Brith continues to do its important work of raising awareness and never letting down its guard and never letting the rest of us forget that we have to be ever vigilant, that when it comes to dealing with hatred, dealing with hateful comments and those attitudes.

I want to just close by—for a moment also paying tribute to our Premier (Mr. Doer), who's been a long-time supporter of the Jewish community and has been honoured for that support and has been on trips to Israel, where he has both brought back information on medical technology that we now use here in Manitoba to help train doctors and nurses, but also working with the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), helped work with the Israeli people in providing better technology for water, for the planting of trees and for the use of water.

So, on behalf of this House, I want to thank you, all of you, who've been involved with B'nai Brith over many years. You have contributed tremendously to Manitoba, and we are a much richer province for your existence. Congratulations on your hundredth anniversary.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I want to thank the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) for introducing this important resolution today and, as well, thank the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) for seconding

this resolution. And I'm very honoured today to have the opportunity to speak in support of the resolution for very many important reasons.

Before I get into those reasons, I want to just thank and welcome Alan Yusim and his guests who are with us today in the gallery, somebody that I have gotten to know over the last couple of years, who I know is a dedicated and hardworking advocate on behalf of, not just the Jewish people in Manitoba, but on behalf of all people in Manitoba who may be confronted with issues of discrimination and racism.

In addition, I want to just acknowledge as well Pastor David Reimer from Steinbach, who is here as well. Pastor Reimer is here to show support for B'nai Brith and for our Jewish community and, I think, is representative of the kind of co-operation and goodwill that exists between different faiths and denominations in our province, all of us recognizing that every faith and every denomination and every race in Manitoba, in the modern Manitoba, is a minority, and so that means that there is the need for all of us to, firstly, recognize that reality and, secondly, ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that we push back against discrimination and work toward a stronger and more united and tolerant province of Manitoba.

B'nai Brith has been well respected in Canada. Since 1875, it has done groundbreaking work in the areas of anti-Semitism, racism and the promotion of human rights. It's been a strong advocate on the pressing issues of the day and has been a provider of important social services to many people in this country. This year, as this resolution reflects, is the 100th anniversary of B'nai Brith here in the province of Manitoba.

The members of B'nai Brith have much to be proud of. They have served people, members of the Jewish community in many important ways, but have also extended their work to defend the rights of minorities across our province and across our country. And we know, inasmuch as progress has been made over the last few decades in dealing with issues of discrimination or racism, that this is a problem that has not gone away, and it's an issue that needs to continue to be confronted.

As the member for Fort Rouge has indicated, when incidents of anti-Semitism are reviewed and monitored, we know that, in 2008, the League for Human Rights recorded over a thousand such incidents in Canada, and that there has been a growth, regrettably, in recent years, in the incidents

of anti-Semitic incidents. As well, this is backed up by Stats Canada who released a study in 2008 that revealed that nearly two-thirds of hate crimes are motivated by religion, were directed at the Jewish faith.

And so we know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a—it is a scourge, it is a wrong that needs to be confronted at every turn and that we cannot fail in our resolve or become complacent in our—in our attitude toward dealing with this—with this kind of hateful conduct, hateful words and hateful deeds.

In Manitoba, there were 35 such incidents reported in 2008, and 26 of those cases involved harassment and in eight cases there was vandalism. And these are all things that, as Manitobans, when we read the reports, we feel deeply saddened, heartbroken and disturbed by these—by these kinds of actions motivated by hate, intolerance and ignorance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I recall at a young age, at about the age of 12, I was urged by my mother to read the book *Holocaust*, which documented some of the horrors inflicted on the Jewish people during the Second World War. As somebody who had grown up in the relative security and safety of Winnipeg during the 1970s, this was an experience that I will never forget, reading about these incidents, and it was an eye-opener for somebody at that age to see man at his very worst, committing such acts motivated by hatred and bigotry. And we know that notwithstanding the horrors of that era, that even today, we continue to see the sorts of large-scale actions against minority groups in countries around the world, and that this is a role that Canada and Manitoba must play in pushing back against this sort of—these sorts of atrocities wherever they may occur.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a collective responsibility on all of us to act. It is not a partisan issue; it is an issue of being a Manitoban in the modern age. As the—as Albert Einstein observed, the world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil but because of the people who don't do anything about it. And this has been the case through history, that where people of goodwill have remained silent and have failed to act and have failed to stand up against acts of hatred, that those who are—who are perpetrating such acts are given a free hand and are given far more power than they're entitled to, to carry out their immoral actions and deeds. And so it's up to those people of goodwill, regardless of their background, to stand up and speak out, to act and to ensure that the message is sent, that this is a place of

comfort and security, of tolerance and celebration of diversity, and not a place that tolerates hatred, bigotry and racism.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased on behalf of my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative caucus, to say that we fully support B'nai Brith and their efforts to completely eradicate hate-motivated acts. We wish them ongoing success in their pursuit of justice here in Manitoba, and I again want to extend my personal good wishes to Alan Yusim and the others who are involved in carrying out this very important work that—within our great province. And so, thank you again. I thank the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) for bringing this forward, and we enthusiastically support this resolution. Thank you

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** Yes, thank you very much, and I want to offer my congratulations to B'nai Brith for their 100 years of work for, and contribution to, the people of Manitoba. I certainly want to congratulate the member for Fort Rouge for bringing forward this resolution, and I do welcome our friends to the Legislature. As anyone who watches goings-on at the Legislature know, it isn't every day that—or every hour, that we stand up and we can all agree on something. That's even the case on these mornings when we debate private members' resolutions, but I'm extremely proud that we do have every member of this Legislature, I believe, standing shoulder to shoulder to congratulate B'nai Brith on its 100 years' presence here in Manitoba.

\* (11:20)

And, really, a big part of B'nai Brith is about making Manitoba the most welcoming place that it can be, and perhaps now more than ever, is the case. We've had great success in our, within the province in attracting more and more immigrants to Manitoba, and I think all of us can be very pleased that's included a greater number of Jewish immigrants in the past 10 years from eastern Europe, from central Europe, in many cases, from eastern European countries via Israel, and even countries such as Argentina, where our thriving and vibrant Jewish community here in Winnipeg has really served as a beacon for so many tremendous people to bring their skills and to bring their talents to Manitoba. And, certainly, a big part of that is Jewish people from across the world seeing Canada and seeing Manitoba as a beacon, as a safe place, as a welcoming place, and I don't think—I don't think anyone should take



lightly the important role of B'nai Brith in terms of presenting the safest most welcoming opportunities for people to come to the province of Manitoba.

A big part of B'nai Brith over the past hundred years has been providing social services in terms of building that structure for newcomers and for others in Manitoba. I know that for a very long time the work that's been done by B'nai Brith in Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada has been to reach out to families; to seniors and communities in need; social services, including everything from breakfast programs to visiting hospitals and seniors homes; to providing food to families in need; to organizing outings for children; and even running athletic leagues for young people. Those are all—those are—maybe you've seen small pieces, but they're all part of the fabric that's being prepared by B'nai Brith in Manitoba.

Obviously, a second major role and, perhaps, the most visible role is the work that B'nai Brith does every day to combat anti-Semitism, in particular, and racism, in general, and I'm sure everyone in the gallery would want to tell us they wish their efforts weren't necessary. I'm sure they'd love to hang a big mission accomplished banner out of the gallery.

But still today, even in 2009, even in welcoming and multicultural Manitoba, we know that, unfortunately, the ugliness of intolerance and prejudice still exists, and I know that B'nai Brith has been very, very active in doing what they can to make sure that we really have a zero tolerance policy for hatred and for intolerance. B'nai Brith maintains an anti-hate hotline and, as we've heard from the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) and the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), they track all crimes against minorities in Canada with a particular focus on anti-Semitic incidents.

But it's also turned around in a positive way, and B'nai Brith's taking action against hate initiative is an educational forum that brings together different segments of society, including community members and leaders, anti-racism experts, educators, students, media personalities, government and law enforcement representatives, increased networking and reinforced positive relationships. And it truly teaches participants how to recognize hate and provide practical strategies to counter violence and hatred in our society to ensure that people don't simply stay silent when they see or they hear something that's wrong, and certainly B'nai Brith must be recognized for their efforts.

Finally, of course, the major—another major role of B'nai Brith is to ensure that no one, Jewish or otherwise, ever forgets the horrors of the Holocaust, a dreadful horrible period for humanity. Each of us, perhaps, has their own experiences. I've had the chance to visit Dachau and also Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. I believe that everybody, everybody in Manitoba should be aware and, thanks to the efforts of B'nai Brith and others, they will continue to be aware, even as that horrible time in history recedes into the past, and B'nai Brith has certainly been front and centre at making sure that every Manitoban has the opportunity to learn more about this horrible time in humanity's history to make sure that nothing like it ever happens again.

I'm very pleased of this government's record over the past 10 years. In May—on May 1, 2000, this House unanimously passed Bill 19 proclaiming Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Memorial Day, in Manitoba. I was also very proud last year when the member for Fort Rouge brought forward a resolution which, again, was passed unanimously by every member of this Legislature to affirm U.N. resolution 60/7: to reject and condemn without reservation any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event. And, of course, all of us as Manitobans can be very proud of the Canadian Museum for—or the Canadian Human Rights Museum which we built in Winnipeg. I know that this government and, certainly, the community that's represented here today are big supporters of giving Winnipeg a world-class museum dedicated to the cause of human rights.

So, for all those reasons, it is a delight to speak to this resolution today, and I look forward to hearing what other members of the Legislature have to say. And I do want to congratulate B'nai Brith on 100 years of important and vital service to the people of Manitoba. Thank you.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I am very pleased to have been given the honour today to second this resolution, and I am happy to stand before you in celebration of the 100th anniversary of B'nai Brith in Manitoba and I want to welcome Alan Yusim and others who are here with us today, and many of whom I've seen out and met out in the community. It's great to have you here with us today in this great celebration for all of you and all of us here in Manitoba.

B'nai Brith Canada is a very important independent voice of the Jewish community,

representing its interest nationwide to government, NGOs and the wider Canadian public. Since 1875, B'nai Brith Canada has been respected in Canada for its ground-breaking work on matters relating to anti-Semitism, racism and human rights, its strong advocacy of the pressing issues of the day and the importance of social services it provides.

This year, 2009, has marked the 100th anniversary of B'nai Brith in Manitoba, and members of the B'nai Brith have much to be proud of today, with ground-breaking work in fighting racism and demonstrating an exemplary commitment to human rights, B'nai Brith has made a significant contribution in the province of Manitoba. They have been instrumental and done much work in reducing the number of hate-crime incidents.

Racism, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a scourge and we know that when even one person in a community is singled out for hate, it affects the entire community, and, sadly, we still live in a world of rampant anti-Semitism.

In 2008, the League for Human Rights recorded 1,135 incidents across Canada. That number has significantly grown each year, especially during the last decade when it has increased fourfold. The findings are similar to data in a Statistics Canada study released in 2008 that revealed nearly two-thirds of hate crimes motivated by religion were directed at the Jewish faith.

In Manitoba, there were 35 regrettable incidents of anti-Semitism reported in 2008, which indicates that there is still much work for all of us to do in eradicating hate-motivated acts against the Jewish community. Of the 35 incidents of anti-Semitism in Manitoba in 2008, 26 were cases of harassment and eight cases of vandalism.

Sadly, Madam Deputy Speaker, our community is not free of anti-Semitism. Just last year swastikas and hate messaging defaced a billboard promoting the Canadian Human Rights Museum. No act of anti-Semitism should be tolerated and we must all work together to eradicate hate-motivated acts. Anti-Semitism includes private bigotry to state-endorsed intimidation, from vandalism to physical assault, from murder to genocide, and no level should be tolerated or accepted in society.

We echo the sentiment of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who noted in a recent tribute to the victims of Mumbai, that anti-Semitism is a pernicious evil that must be exposed, that must be

confronted, that must be repudiated whenever and wherever it appears. It is clear that we all have a collective responsibility to act. When governments take responsibility, Madam Deputy Speaker, the stage is set for individuals, collectives and society in general to assume greater responsibility for their actions.

I'd like to say we fully support—I say we fully support the B'nai Brith and their efforts to completely eradicate all hate-motivated acts and wish them ongoing success in their pursuit of justice. I'd like to also, as I mentioned earlier, recognize—acknowledge Alan Yusim who is here today for the significant contributions that he and others have made to B'nai Brith community and our province as a whole. I know Alan has worked tirelessly towards these efforts on behalf of B'nai Brith and on behalf on all people in Manitoba to help eradicate racism and genocide and other hate crimes in Manitoba and beyond our borders here, and I want to thank Alan for all of his hard work and effort, and all of those that he works with in our community, and I want to congratulate them on the hundred years in celebration today. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

\*(11:30)

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** I, too, rise in support of the resolution that the Legislative Assembly recognize the 100th anniversary of B'nai Brith's important and ongoing advocacy work and the cultural contributions it has made to Manitoba. Manitoba is all the richer because we have B'nai Brith located locally.

I've had the privilege of working with some of our guests who are with us today. Alan Yusim and Maria Fernanda are here today from the local B'nai Brith office. It has been an honour to work with them on many, many issues, not the least of which is our Manitoba-Israel Shared Values Roundtable, and I can tell you that the leadership on the round table from B'nai Brith is second to none. The work that they have done on inclusivity on the round table, as well as all of their work, shows that the vision for a better world extends far beyond the Jewish community. It extends to the encompassing of those who are marginalized, of those who are in need of support. The eloquence with which their messages are given is very, very welcome and is superb. I've had many conversations and have been honoured to be at an honouring of David Matas, who, of course,

is a world-renown human-rights activist and authority, and is also the general counsel for B'nai Brith. And to have individuals such as Alan, Maria and David here in our community, and working so hard on behalf of our community, is an honour. I also wanted to recognize Earl Barish, who is the current president of B'nai Brith here in Manitoba, and we all know that his vision extends not only throughout all of Manitoba, but also on an international basis. So we are the richer. We are the privileged to have B'nai Brith here in Manitoba.

They are an advocacy work that combats anti-Semitism which, unfortunately, is on the rise. I read their report annually, and unfortunately, over the last few years, with sadness, to know that there is an increase of anti-Semitism in Canada and internationally. And it behooves us all to speak out against anti-Semitism, to speak out against those who would deny the Holocaust, to speak out against those who would deny that there was the murdering of six million people simply because they were Jewish during the Second World War, and we must continue to raise our voices in this House, as we have done.

And I want to recognize and thank members opposite. We have had—we don't agree on everything in this House. In fact, sometimes we don't agree on many things, but we all agree that the fight against anti-Semitism is one that we stand together on.

And I want to recognize the programs that have been brought into this House by B'nai Brith. The Unto Every Person There is a Name project has been sponsored every year in this Legislature since 1989, and every year, I know, many MLAs, from both sides of the House and from the Liberal Party, attend and read the names, and it's a very difficult moment. We read the names of family members, family survivors, who live in Winnipeg. We read the names of their family members who were murdered during the Holocaust, and it's a very sombre and sober event. And it's not easy to organize an event like that, and to have it carried out year after year but, again, we have the vision of B'nai Brith to thank for that. Each year, to mark Yom Hashoah, which is Holocaust Memorial Day, participants read the names of victims, where they lived, and where they died, including the names from the Holocaust memorial on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature. So it is important to remember and it is important to annually pledge ourselves to: "Never Again." And the vision of B'nai Brith is one of "Never Again" to people around the world.

And I remember the year they had a young man, he was one of the Lost Boys, who came, and the vision was to include others who had suffered, and I thought that was a very grand move to make and a very inclusive move to make. And the young man was from the Sudan, and he told of his story, and there was as much empathy and concern toward this man's story as there was towards the survivors or children of survivors within Manitoba from the Holocaust. So the education that they provide is very, very important.

I want to also recognize the work that B'nai Brith does with the First Nations people and the Métis people. We had a multicultural celebration of Israel's 60th last year through the round table, and it was through the efforts of B'nai Brith Manitoba that about 250 First Nations and Métis people came to celebrate with us that day, from Saskatchewan, from northern Manitoba and from northwestern Ontario. And it's another job to co-ordinate people coming from one location, but from so many was really something that I admired and respected. And it was very, very welcome to have the presence of people from so many different backgrounds at the event last year.

Other important initiatives that B'nai Brith have undertaken are: a clothing drive in support of Hurricane Katrina victims; the Heart to Heart initiative connecting Jewish families in Canada with their counterparts in Israel through letters, phone and e-mail; Operation Thank You, a project launched by B'nai Brith that urges Canadians, especially students, to send letters of support to our troops in Afghanistan.

Since 1918, B'nai Brith has been part of the B'nai Brith Camp, and while now officially it is a separate entity from B'nai camp—B'nai Brith, BB Camp, as it is kind of affectionately known—I wondered if it was named after the current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose nickname is BB, but apparently I was wrong—is dedicated to providing a comprehensive Jewish camping experience and leadership development opportunity for youth. They strive to teach the values and ethics of Jewish living by example, experience and creative expression. It was originally located in Sandy Hook, Manitoba. Now the camp operates just outside of Kenora. So there's another coming together of the community, another teaching of the values that we all share through B'nai Brith, through this camp and through their actions.

They also maintain an anti-hate hotline and track all crimes against minorities in Canada. And again, all crimes against minorities in Canada, shows the bigness of the vision and the effort to stamp out racism and hatred. B'nai Brith's Taking Action Against Hate initiative is an educational forum that brings together different segments of society, including community members and leaders, anti-racism experts, educators, students, media personalities, government and law enforcement representatives to increase networking and reinforce positive relations. And I have been at their Seder that they hold every year where they invite people from all over Manitoba, from all over the province, and it really is a wonderful evening and a very effective way of bringing people together and gently teaching that different is not wrong, that different is interesting and that sharing—by sharing our differences, we recognize the values that we have in common.

So I've been very pleased to be at those events, and I would just like to conclude by saying that it is an honour in Manitoba to have B'nai Brith here for the last 100 years, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of members of the Chamber when I say here's to another 100 years and certainly more beyond that. Thank you for allowing me to share these few words this morning, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I rise to join other members of the Chamber in supporting this resolution. I want to congratulate B'nai Brith on their 100th anniversary, to recognize those who have come today and the many in B'nai Brith in Manitoba and elsewhere who have been involved in the efforts that they have been involved with to help people and to reduce hatred and racism and discrimination.

\* (11:40)

I think it is—it is noteworthy the efforts that B'nai Brith as an organization and the people in B'nai Brith have made to help to raise funds, to organize activities for people with special needs, running breakfast programs for kids, visiting hospitals, seniors homes, helping families and in many, many other ways, helping to improve the community. Certainly, the organization of activities for young people, the camp in Lake of the Woods, helping families who are in need with gift baskets, helping provide scholarships, visiting hospitals and seniors homes. All activities which are very

important to helping create a better place in Manitoba and a better society.

As we move—as we move globally toward a more peaceful world, the work of B'nai Brith sets an important example of the vigilance that is needed, to note where hatred, intolerance directed for racial or other reasons is occurring. That vigilance is vital to making sure that all of us are aware of the problems because in that awareness we can be involved in helping to provide solutions and a better world and a better province.

Even in Manitoba today, there is still too much hatred, and whether it's based on religion or race or other parameters, whether it is toward those who are Jewish, those who are Muslim, Aboriginal people, those who are black, indeed, sometimes, those who are white. We must constantly work to identify and to end the hatred and the intolerance that is happening and, at the same time, work actively to build the co-operation, the tolerance, the building bridges, the ability to work and build a better society together.

As the former Manitoba Liberal leader, Izzy Asper, commented on many occasions, vigilance is vital if we are going to have an active democracy, if we're going to build the society that we want which is based on positive values.

I, as a number of other members of this Chamber, have visited Israel. I was very moved in going to the Holocaust Museum, seeing the names of people and reading and listening and seeing the stories of people in the Holocaust. And, clearly, we must dedicate ourselves to making sure that such similar genocide doesn't occur. And it is disturbing that events continue in the last 20 years in places like Rwanda and Darfur and the Congo and elsewhere. Events which, you know, we not only need the vigilance, but we need to build the global momentum to be able to turn the situation around and to provide more positive circumstances for people in these communities.

Genocide is terrible. There are too many who have come to Manitoba, in part, because of persecution in other areas. And, of course, that would apply to those who have come who are Jewish, but it would apply to those who have come who are Ukrainian because of the Ukrainian Holodomor. It would apply to those who have come, in more recent years, from places in Africa like the Sudan and the Congo and Rwanda, and it is good that we are a refuge here in Manitoba. And it is thanks to groups

like B'nai Brith who have exerted the kind of vigilance that B'nai Brith has exerted, that is going to be helpful, and continues to be helpful, in making sure that we have a society which is tolerant and embraces people with diverse backgrounds. But in doing so, we need to make sure that people who come here become, and part of, a tolerant society which respects others and which builds positively for the future.

And so I would also mention the activities of B'nai Brith in strengthening the relationships between Canada and Israel, and I think that in my visit to Israel, the work that Israel—the people in Israel are doing on water management in the Negev, in the Sea of Galilee, that these are important and vital leading—world-leading activities and some of what is happening, we can learn from here as we approach, for example, the problems of eutrophication and too much phosphorus in lakes, and so on, because we have a lot to learn and to work with people in Israel and to better our own province in this respect.

Certainly, there is much to learn, as well, in co-operation in biological sciences and in biotechnology. As a physician who's been involved in medical research, I note very well the contributions of scientists in Israel to progress in a whole variety of fields, and it's wonderful that we have the co-operation, the strengthened ties so that the—all of us can benefit from what we are doing, not only here, but in Israel, and be able to work together.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

So I will close by speaking specifically about B'nai Brith, reinforcing the congratulations that I extend on my behalf, on behalf of members of the Liberal Party in Manitoba. It is a big thank-you to those who are from B'nai Brith, who are here and for all those who contribute in one way or another in Manitoba and in Canada to the activities of B'nai Brith and the activities to decrease hatred, to decrease racism and to build tolerance and a more co-operative and healthy and positive society. Thank you.

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** It is definitely a privilege to speak in support of this resolution honouring a hundred years of the accomplishments and contributions that B'nai Brith has made to Manitoba.

In the time that I've come to work with some of the familiar faces up in the gallery there, and get a

more hands-on experience of what the community that is B'nai Brith brings to our province and to our community, and in listening to my colleagues speak here today, a couple of ideas came to mind, and what I realized is that there are three concepts that I guess, for me, B'nai Brith sort of embodies, and that's how I will address my support of this resolution.

The ideas of community, of conscience and continuity, that I believe that B'nai Brith speaks to the best of any community and the best within their community in that what they do to support, not just their own community in terms of the supports provided through social services and other activities that have been mentioned before, but support within the Jewish community and beyond, building those connections within Manitoba. And, as has been said by others, it is—we, as Manitobans, are privileged to have B'nai Brith here and to have a hundred-year legacy of community building that they have provided, again both within and into the broader community, we are all richer for that.

And it is in those activities again, that I've been privileged enough to be involved through the Manitoba-Israel Shared Values Roundtable where we've seen just the strength of that community-building and how much so many of us have to learn from that strength, that sense of family and community that is there and that sense of giving. So, thank you to B'nai Brith for what they have given us for the past century.

On, I guess, you'd say a sadder but much more—a much-needed note, is they have also been our conscience. Their work in human rights advocacy, in terms of things like the anti-hate hotline, in terms of things like the Yom Hashoah events and other memorial events, they are our conscience in many ways. Human beings are fallible and, far too often, we have too short a memory.

\* (11:50)

And while it might not be the most pleasant thing to be reminded of the horrors that have happened, we need to be reminded and B'nai Brith gives us those places by which we can remember so that those mistakes are not repeated, so those tragedies do not occur and, unfortunately, we are reminded on a daily basis of how much we need B'nai Brith because of the events that continue to occur, and, as was mentioned earlier, I'm sure that they would love to hang a sign out one day saying, closed for business we've done our job. I'm sure you're all working towards your own unemployment

in that respect, but the sad truth is that we still need you and we are still thankful for you. And, again, it is unfortunate to see how often these events hit close to home.

I know, very shortly after my own election and my becoming involved with various activities that have now tied me to members of B'nai Brith, that an unfortunate event happened at my son's own high school. And it was interesting because it was when we were beginning a process, or getting further into a process of addressing our own ancestry on my father's side, and a rather unfortunate event involving anti-Semitic remarks from a student in my son's high school towards students at the Gray Academy who were visiting really brought home to him something in a way that he had never ever experienced before.

He had always had a problem with people demonstrating racist behaviour, but suddenly when he found that this was something happening again within his own immediate environment, and towards a group of people that he was now a part of or felt himself, to be part of because of our ancestry, it was being able to go and he went to the B'nai Brith Web site—he's gone and done other research to find out ways of dealing with this.

So, again, it's a sad tragic thing that this hits home to so many of us, but it is because of B'nai Brith that we are able to move forward and to keep countering this.

And I, again, had the privilege of taking part in the Yom Hashoah and it's always been a moving experience and I believe it's something that more people should take part in because it does really bring it home. It humanizes something and does so in a way that brings dignity and respect to those who were murdered for no other reason than what they were as people, their identity, their belief system.

And, finally, I would like to speak to the continuity that B'nai Brith brings to us, brings to this province, that in providing a community base, in providing that outreach and providing that conscience, so many organizations come and go with good intentions, but you've been around for 100 years. You're obviously doing something right.

Again, as much as you'd like to hang out the shingle that says, we've met all our goals, we've eliminated racism, it's good to see that despite all the ups and downs in the cyclical behaviours that happen with human society, thank you for being there

through those ups and downs. Thank you for providing, not just continuity within the Jewish community, but thank you for providing continuity and support for Manitobans as a whole. So thank you to B'nai Brith, and I look forward to the unanimous passing of this resolution.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I'd just like to put a few words of commendation as well in congratulating the 100th anniversary of the B'nai Brith in Manitoba, and, coming from a rural constituency, I wanted to make sure that my words were added to this celebration, if you will, and, of course, it's at a time when Tel Aviv is celebrating its 100th anniversary as well.

And I note with interest that, because I was there last year, Mr. Speaker, that the second annual multicultural celebration concert will be held on October 21st at Pantages Theatre and I think it was a great celebration of multicultural celebration last year, and I've wanted to extend to the organizers, of course, my congratulations, and I understand they've gone even further this year in organizing in having the opportunity of Tel Aviv's mayor Ron Huldai to be available, and to bring greetings personally as well through media communications mechanisms today as well, along with Hila Plitmann, singer of note as well.

And so it's my special interest in this as well because I know that several of the entertainers will enjoy—or the citizens that come to the event will enjoy the entertainment of the Chai Folk Ensemble dancers as well. And I've had a number of opportunities to have the pleasure to view them and, of course, a special interest in the fact that I have a family member dancing in that group as well, and I'm very interested and supportive of their entertaining opportunities, whether it's at this type of an event or at Folklorama or, of course, the professional acts that they have done throughout North America, Mr. Speaker.

And I—so I think with those few words, I'd just like to add my congratulations as well on this tremendous opportunity and celebration.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is resolution, 100th Anniversary of B'nai Brith in Manitoba.

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

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Acting Government House Leader):** I think—just like to put on the record that, indeed, this resolution was adopted unanimously by this Legislature, and, secondly, if we could call it 12 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** 'Kay, we'll put it on record that resolution was passed unanimously.

And is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, October 6, 2009**

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