



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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



Vol. L No. 42B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, June 8, 2000

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 8, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

PRAYERS

Radiation Therapists

Recruitment/Retention Strategy

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery where we have with us today from the Souris School 43 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Glen Wallman and Mrs. Theresa O'Brien.

The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Also in the gallery we have from College St. Jean Baptiste 8 Grades 11 and 12 students under the direction of Madame Michelle Gatin.

This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

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

* (13:35)

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): We have seen time and time again the broken election promises by this New Democratic Government. We heard during the election campaign that if the NDP Government was elected they would end hallway medicine in six months. We know, Mr. Speaker, that that has not happened. That is a broken promise.

We heard that they were going to open 138 permanent new beds should they be elected, and we know that promise has been broken.

We heard that they were going to hire 100 new nurses immediately if they were elected. We know that that promise has been broken. In fact, the nursing shortage has gone from 700 to 1100 in the short time that the New Democratic Government has been in power. So we have seen, time and time again, the promises that they made during the election campaign have not been lived up to. They have not fulfilled those promises.

Again in November, this Minister of Health promised to bring the wait lists for cancer treatment, radiation treatment, down to four weeks within six to eight months. Well, it is seven months after that announcement was made, and we see the wait lists ten to twelve weeks. So here is another promise that has been broken.

I know that members of the Government are very sensitive because they have not lived up to their commitments, and that is why they might be making so much noise from their seats.

We know that Alberta and other provinces are actively recruiting radiation therapists and other health care professionals right here in our

province, a clear indication that one of their selling points is that the taxes are lower in those other provinces, the income taxes are lower. Now that radiation therapists in Manitoba know that they are the highest-taxed people across the country, what can this Minister of Health say to those radiation therapists to try to keep them here in our province?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): The Member was so wrong in her statements I do not even know where to begin to try to answer this in response. Mr. Speaker, using the same figures that the former government utilized for a number of nurse vacancies, the equivalent numbers when we came into office were 700; it was then down to 600 using equivalent to equivalent, because we always use the same figures the former government used. The Member is trying to screw things around for her own political advantage.

With respect to hallway medicine, we have a report of a national body that says we have done better on hallway medicine than any other jurisdiction in the country. With respect to radiation therapists, we have hired five new ones, and we are hiring the five from the class for a total of ten. And finally, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Cancer Treatment Waiting Lists

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): No matter what the Minister of Health tries to tell Manitobans, Manitobans know that there are still people in hallways. Even the nurses' union indicates that there is a shortage of 1100 nurses today in the province of Manitoba. So maybe the Minister of Health should take note and attempt to address the issue and be honest with Manitobans.

We have seen many, many broken promises by this government in the time that they have been in office. What does the Minister of Health say to those cancer patients, that he promised would have only a four-week wait period by this time in his mandate, that are still waiting 10 to 12 weeks for cancer treatment?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I thank the Member for that question because it allows me—Mr. Speaker, as I recall from the last numbers I saw, the wait of time for cancer treatment in this province is half of what it was at this time last year when the Member opposite was sitting around the Cabinet table. When we came to office, we put in place a program to send patients down to the States, something members opposite refused to do that decreased the lists in half for the benefit of all Manitobans, and that is why the lists are down to half of what they were. We did something that they did not do, even though they had a recommendation to do that, and they refused to do it. So that is what we have done, and that is why the lists are half of what they were.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:40)

Radiation Therapists Recruitment/Retention Strategy

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wonder who Manitobans are to believe.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Russell, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, we have been asking the Government to be truthful with us. The Leader, the Premier of the province just shouted across the way that in fact our party could not handle the truth, admitting that they do not tell the truth. I ask you to tell this government to tell the truth to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe you will note

carefully that the Member did not have a point of order. He was not even close to having a point of order.

I certainly did say that they could not handle the truth. We give it day after day after day, and they still cannot handle it when we provide it in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Interim Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I have only asked two.

Mr. Speaker: Are you going back?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, third question.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether Manitobans should believe Dr. Schacter who says the wait lists are 10 to 12 weeks today, or they should believe the Minister of Health who is telling us that things are significantly better.

In November, when they made the announcement about changes to the cancer treatment program, the Minister of Health said that the wait lists at 10 weeks were unacceptably high. They were not acceptable to his government. They would be fixed within 6 to 8 months. Dr. Schacter is telling Manitobans today that the wait lists for radiation for cancer treatment are 10 to 12 weeks. So I think most Manitobans would choose to believe the expert in our CancerCare treatment programs than they would the Minister of Health, who tries to spin this issue for his own political purposes.

My question for the Minister of Health—and I will table the recruitment letter from Alberta that indicates that radiation therapists will be offered \$50,000 to \$62,000 per year, lowest provincial income taxes across Canada, and no provincial sales tax, Mr. Speaker, exactly the salary that falls into the category of \$60,000 where Manitoba boasts the highest taxes across the country. What will the Minister of Health do

to try to ensure that those radiation technologists will not take greener pastures and take that route and not stay in Manitoba as a result of their tax regime?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon me to correct, again, the statements. Does the Member not realize there is a difference between radiation therapists and radiation technologists? I do not know exactly what the Member is asking. That is the first point.

The second point is that when we came to office, the lists for breast and prostate cancer were beyond the safe levels for people's lives, which were beyond those levels when those members were in office, which is why we instituted our program. The last stats I saw showed our waiting lists compared to the waiting list this time last year were I think somewhere in the neighbourhood of half on the last stats that I saw.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) introduced a balanced budget that had a program for nurses and a program for all of the citizens in Manitoba with respect to recruitment and retention, something that was totally overlooked by members opposite when they were in office, as well as a balance between tax cuts and tax savings, which were not a part of the former government's program.

I might add, for relief, Mr. Speaker, for information, I have the former government's information sheet about what they were going to do and what they were going to do to increase staff. It is very interesting.

* (13:45)

First Nations Casinos Revenue-Sharing Formula

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, questions still exist and arise in regard to the equity of the revenue-sharing formula proposed as a result of this government's doubling of gambling here in Manitoba. In Saskatchewan, 25 percent of the net profits are allocated to the provincial government's general revenue, contrary to the First Minister's (Mr. Doer)

comment in regard to the funding being from Saskatchewan to cover costs and overhead.

My question to the Minister responsible for gaming: Did he or his government make any requests that a proportion of the revenue sharing be allocated to this provincial government's revenue?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Member for Southdale for the question. Certainly, there is a formula in place that, through conversations and discussions with the AMC, the AMC has certainly put forward and the Government has looked at very closely, the 70 percent, -27.5 percent and 2.5 percent to an addictions trust fund. That is something that was worked at very hard and it was looked at to be very equitable for all First Nations people across the province.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, this government here seems to throw up the Saskatchewan model at their convenience. In regard to the Saskatchewan model for revenue sharing, I should point out that 50 percent goes to the First Nations fund, 25 percent to the First Nations casinos and 25 percent is retained for general revenue for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people. I am asking this Minister: Will he give the same consideration to the sharing of revenue for the benefit of all Manitobans at 25 percent?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan certainly is a model that we looked at. We looked at also the Bostrom report as a guide, and certainly we are very unique in a sense that Manitoba's approach to having an independent selection committee look into the proposals and to try to determine when they looked at those proposals to see which ones would be most successful. So our circumstances are different, slightly different, from even looking through a Bostrom report that was asked for by the previous government—certainly the selection committee that we put in place. So our circumstances are a little bit different from Saskatchewan's example.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I will then ask the Minister responsible for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the minister responsible for

gaming, whether, while he was travelling through Saskatchewan with the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) with the Government jet, visiting the casinos, did he not see that the revenue sharing that was implemented in Saskatchewan can be a benefit for all of Manitobans instead of the way it is proposed now with the funding formula that they have agreed to and which they have accepted in entirety? It would seem that they have given no thought to any type of formulation or the manipulation of the formula other than that that was brought forth by AMC. Did they have any input as to a different formula or an allocation of funding?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Member opposite raised the casino in Yorkton because it certainly gives an example of what a First Nations casino and successful business operation can do. The community of Yorkton, the business surrounding the casino in Yorkton, you have three new hotels there. Not only the First Nations community are benefiting from it, but the community as a whole has benefited from working in partnership with First Nations people. That is something we are very proud of.

First Nations Casinos Revenue-Sharing Formula

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, First Nations people in many communities have serious concerns about the 30 percent of revenues that will be taken by out-of-province casino management companies, revenue that should remain here in Manitoba with First Nations people. What is left to those First Nations not part of the successful bidding process is a very small wedge of the revenue pie. Can the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs explain why management companies are going to be receiving a far greater share of the casino revenues than Manitoba's First Nations people?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Certainly with regard to revenue sharing, the AMC in partnership with us, with the Government of Manitoba look closely at the revenue-sharing arrangement for First Nations people and how to benefit First Nations people as a whole. The formula that they came up with

seemed reasonable to the AMC and certainly seemed reasonable to us at 70 percent to the host community or proponents and looking at 27.5 percent going to all First Nations people and 2.5 percent into an addictions fund.

* (13:50)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs once again: What does this Minister of Aboriginal Affairs have to say to First Nations people who live in my constituency, including the Waywayseecappo First Nation, who were led to believe, as stated in the RFP, that they would have substantial economic benefits, jobs and economic development opportunities and are now left to receive a mere handout as a result of the policy of this government?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we are all very proud of the independent committee that was put in place by the AMC and the Government of Manitoba. We realize that there were some First Nations communities that were not happy with the outcome, as I would be if I were chief of a given community.

Certainly in my previous discussions with Chief Clearsky of the Waywayseecappo First Nation, I believe that a lot of facilities are open to that community and I think that Chief Clearsky is truly a businessman. He has led the way in economic development for his people, and I am very happy that the Member for Russell has taken that into consideration. I would like to say that we felt the process was fair. There are some winners, there are some losers, but above all, I believe that all First Nations are winners through this agreement that we have with the Government of Manitoba.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that there are few winners but very many First Nations losers in this situation. Will the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs explain why Manitoba's First Nations people are not going to realize the full benefits of the expansion of gaming, yet management companies from out of province are going to reap 30 percent of gaming revenues?

Mr. Robinson: Again, we have reiterated many times that we have embarked upon a very unique initiative, an agreement with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs which represents 62 First Nations in the province of Manitoba. We do not want to be in a position as a provincial government to tell First Nations governments how to run their business.

First Nations Addictions Foundation Establishment

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba First Nations Casino Project Selection Committee report calls for 2.5 percent of net casino profits to be provided to the First Nations addictions foundation, a new entity that exists only on paper. Can the Minister of Health indicate what increased levels of gambling addiction his department expects in the aboriginal community that has prompted the creation of this new organization?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as members opposite are probably aware, if they have had an opportunity to read the report, it indicated several things: Firstly that there was a provision that was put in advance, which I thought was very prudent, very preventative, in keeping, in line with experiences that in fact a provision of specific revenue should go towards treatment; the second issue I think the members opposite should note was that representatives of AFM, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, were one of the consultants to the report.

Mr. Jim Penner: Why, given that the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba already services all Manitobans, including Aboriginal peoples, has the Minister of Health moved to duplicate services by creating a separate addictions foundation?

Mr. Chomiak: I guess the premise in the question is that the Member opposite or perhaps the members opposite suggest that they have the answer with respect to a solution. A provision was set aside for a particular sum of money to be allocated towards addictions, and in addition the head of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba was a consultant to the process.

**Addictions Foundation of Manitoba
Government Support**

* (13:55)

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they are admitting to being the people creating a problem, so I am going to ask once more from the Minister of Health if he would advise the House if he has lost faith in the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, and if not, why does he not simply increase support to AFM?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have faith in the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. I have faith in the aboriginal first communities of this province to be able to have opportunity for economic development, something that was deprived them for a long period of time. Thirdly, I have faith in the process that was established, the independent process, a process that was reviewed with respect to the issue.

**Gambling
Addiction Statistics**

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, a study commissioned by the Alberta Drug and Alcohol Abuse Commission shows that the rate of problem gambling among aboriginals is 10 percent, which is nearly twice the average for the Alberta population. The same report indicates an alarming figure of 28 percent of Aboriginal youth were rated as problem gamblers, more than 2.8 times the aboriginal average.

Was the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. McGifford), who is responsible for the doubling of gambling in Manitoba, aware of these numbers before she became a proponent of increased gambling in Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): As I understand the question, Mr. Speaker, we do not want to predetermine what First Nations have in mind. Our partnership is to be solidified with the implementation committee. It could be that the First Nations will want to partner with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, as an example, to build in a cultural component relevant to First Nations' beliefs.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, we are asking the Government whether they are aware of the numbers, and the numbers are simple. As reported by the Alberta Drug and Alcohol Abuse Commission, the problem rate of gambling in aboriginals is 10 percent; in youth, it is 28 percent. Pretty alarming figures.

I am simply asking the Minister who is responsible for Lotteries, responsible for doubling gambling in this province, was she aware of those figures before she became a proponent of doubling gambling in this province?

Mr. Robison: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we are doubling gambling in the province of Manitoba. With the total casinos that are being proposed for First Nations, the total numbers again come up to about the same size as Club Regent or McPhillips Street Station.

One of the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry is that Aboriginal people only comprise about 10 percent of Manitoba's population, yet we have 60 percent of Aboriginal people in prisons, 90 percent, in some cases, in some of these provincial institutions. We are very well aware of the social problems.

What we are trying to do is create some economic activities and initiatives, trying to address the issues that were outlined in the Bostrom report: housing, poverty, unemployment. I believe that this is one initiative that will address that issue.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, these ministers and this government need to do their homework because there has also been three recent Canadian studies which concluded that Canadian governments failed to recognize it was—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the

Member gets up and goes on with a supplementary question and a preamble that is extensive. I do not know if he has a question coming, but I refer him to *Beauchesne's* Citation 410: "supplementary questions require no preambles" and further, *Beauchesne's* Citation 409: "The question must be brief. . . . A supplementary question should need no preamble."

Mr. Speaker, would you please draw the Member's attention to that and ask him to put a simple question as a supplementary.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Deputy Opposition House Leader): I would ask if the Government House Leader could have the Minister to whom the question was directed actually answer it instead of putting it off on other ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised, *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that three recent Canadian studies have concluded that governments appear not to recognize a—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would just like to remind the House I just made a ruling, and I have asked the Member to please put his question.

Mr. Loewen: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister a fairly simple question that, given these devastating numbers, will the Minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Loewen: It is a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

*(14:00)

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rose on a point of order on the first supplementary when it contained a preamble, and you made a ruling saying that there was no preamble allowed; a simple question must be posed to the House. The Member then got up and once again inserted a preamble just as you had told him not to. You admonished him in very clear terms. He has just got up and exactly repeated almost word for word the earlier question that you admonished him on.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the Member, in his shameful conduct, get up and apologize to the House. We recognize that the Member is new to the House, but it is not that he is without guidance on how to pose his supplementary questions. You provided not only guidance but the clearest guidance possible. This is wilful disobedience of the rules of the House. I ask that you direct him to apologize to the House and put his question at once.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Deputy Opposition House Leader): First of all, this is a new member who feels very passionately about the expansion of gaming. This is a new member who is very heartfelt in his concern about the damage that gaming may cause. Yes, maybe he made an error in putting a preamble, but clearly in the last time in which he rose he was asking the Minister a question. Clearly, he wanted to know why the Minister, who was so against these things before, has now changed her position.

She has put it off to other ministers to answer. She is refusing to get up. She is frustrating the Member for Fort Whyte. Yes, he may have made a mistake, but it has been done out of his concern for the people for whom he asked the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised, I will cite *Beauchesne's* Citation 402 once

more and advise that a supplementary question not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I will ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to you if I have overstepped my bounds. I am simply asking the Minister: Will she examine these figures and will she commit to her government having an economic and social cost impact study prior to proceeding with doubling gambling in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I sat as a member for 10 years on that side of the House during a time when the former government expanded gambling from \$40-million revenue to \$240-million revenue, and I thought it was a serious mistake not to have put in place anticipatory and addiction programs prior to their massive expansion with gambling revenue. I thought it was a very useful process and a very innovative and frankly practical solution on the part of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, on the Government of Manitoba through the process to put in place, in anticipation of perhaps some expanded gambling—set aside revenues to deal with the addiction issue as well as including expertise in the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba in that process. I think it is prudent to learn from the mistakes of the previous government.

E. Coli Bacteria High-Risk Wells

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the respected scientist, Dr. Schindler, predicts that the combined effects of climate change, acid rain, human and livestock wastes and so on and so forth will result in the degradation of Canadian fresh water on a scale hitherto unimaginable. Yet, when it comes to the environment, we have a Premier (Mr. Doer) who fails to step to the plate and chair the Round Table on Sustainable Development. We have a Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) who three times on Monday answered, instead of straightforward basic questions, I will take that under advisement and still has not got back to

me in spite of the fact that these are important issues on E. coli contamination of our water.

My question to the Minister of Health: Given, last week, the Premier's specific reference to the fact that he was looking at areas of high risk for contamination of E. coli, I ask the Minister of Health: Where are the high-risk areas for E. coli contamination of wells in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as a result of some of the inquiries with respect to livestock, we did inquiries in the Department of Health, and I understand that the particular strain of E. coli that was in the Walkerton incident, the 0157 E. coli, is only present in approximately 1 percent of the intestines of livestock. In fact, there are E. coli that are present in the intestines of livestock and in fact those particular kinds are not the kind, the 0157, that caused the contamination.

With respect to the question of the Member in regard to high-risk areas, we have been doing examinations. One of the difficulties was a former policy that saw the number of tests go down considerably with respect to private wells. We are actually compiling data on that. I can also inform the Member—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Minister of Health. With reports that suggest that even with 2 percent of 40 000 tests a year, which is 800 positive tests for E. coli, where are the positive tests and are there high-risk areas that people should be aware of?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, a process was put in place in order to map and determine this. I can indicate to the Member that there will be an announcement with respect to some of these issues that will take place tomorrow by myself and by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) with respect to the well testing. That will include the issue of well testing. The issue, as far as we are able to determine at this point, is that of the 50 000 private wells in the province of Manitoba, I want to point out that we have never had an incident

of E. coli 0157 in any drinking water in Manitoba.

But, having said that, we are putting in place an evaluation process and a long-term process to deal with those issues, and to that end we have done considerable testing around the province and will continue to do so.

Mr. Gerrard: My second supplementary to the Minister of Health: Given the number of positive tests, is there a relationship between test positivity and livestock operations?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is necessarily prudent for the Minister of Health to take a technical question of that kind. I will refer that to Public Health officials, who I think are the appropriate individuals to provide the specific answer either in writing to the Member through some course. I will return back to the House with a response on that specific question.

Farm Machinery Board Board Qualifications

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, last night at the committee meeting for Bill 20, The Farm Machinery and Equipment Amendment Act, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) questioned the advice given to the Minister of Agriculture and Food by the Manitoba Farm Machinery Board. He also questioned the qualifications of the Board members.

Can the Minister of Agriculture advise the House on the nature of the advice given to her and the qualifications of the Board chairman?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my colleague for that question because last night at the committee the credibility and the qualifications of the members of the Farm Machinery Board were called into question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I was at that committee last night, which lasted till eleven o'clock in the evening. The issue of who had given some recommendations to the Minister did come up. In no way—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are not going to get into a debate on a point of order. I would like to advise all members the purpose of points of orders. A point of order is to be used to draw to the Speaker's attention any departure from the rules or practices of the House or to raise concerns about unparliamentary language. That is the reason for points of orders and not to get into debates.

So I would ask: Does the Honourable Member have a point of order about breaking of rules?

The Member for Fort Whyte, on a point of order.

* (14:10)

Mr. Loewen: I believe the Minister said that the Board's credibility was questioned and that was simply not the case. I am just asking the Minister to be honest.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a point of order. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over facts.

* * *

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to bring some information to the House that was requested last night questioning the qualifications of the Board, and I would like to point out that the chair of the Farm Machinery and Equipment Board is Mr. Balmer who has 33 years of experience in the farm machinery industry in both manufacturing and on the dealership side. Mr. Balmer has served the Manitoba Farm Machinery Board for 22 years. In fact, he and the Board oversaw the agreed drafted Farm Machinery Equipment Act that the previous government brought in last year, and

they also helped us with the drafting of the legislation that we have tabled.

But I have to say that I have no difficulty with members of the Opposition, my critic, calling the Farm Machinery Board for information, and I welcome all inquiries to any of my boards. But I find it completely unacceptable for members of the Opposition to call into question the credibility of the chairman of the Board or the Board members and tell them that they are out of touch. That is unacceptable for members of the Opposition to do that to a board of government.

First Nations Casinos Economic Impact

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, when asked a very important question about the impact doubling gambling in Manitoba will have on Crown gaming revenue, offered up simply lame excuses. Can the Minister quantify the loss of revenue that Manitoba Lotteries is facing as a direct result of the introduction of five First Nations casinos?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): In fact, implicit in the Member's question or at least two questions, the first one with regard to doubling gambling, of course, we are nowhere near doubling gambling as the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) has pointed out. Secondly, as I have pointed out I believe twice this week in the House, the biggest threats to loss of revenues in this province are really leftovers from the Tory administration opposite. The \$70 million, pardon me, the \$70-million overrun in expansions to casinos, first; second, the \$170-million debt that is owed to the bank; thirdly, years of mismanagement.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question again. Can the Minister quantify the loss of revenue that Manitoba Lotteries will face as a result of the introduction of five new casinos?

Ms. McGifford: Now that we have potential locations, we can perhaps begin to make

estimates about the various impacts that these scenarios might have on Manitoba. We presume that there may be some impact. This party has always believed, we believed at the beginning of this process and we continue to believe, that this is not money lost, this is money shared with First Nations people who are Manitobans.

Mr. Gilleshammer: My question to the Minister of Finance: Can the Minister confirm or deny that he is looking at a loss of some \$30 million to general revenue as a result of the formation of these new casinos?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I think it is important to re-emphasize the point just made by the Minister of Culture that we do not see this as a loss. We see this as a sharing of revenues with the First Nations members of the Manitoba community. This sharing of revenues will be one that benefits them in terms of economic and community development and will allow the entire Manitoba community to benefit by their prosperity. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On Tuesday, May 23, 2000, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) regarding words which he had withdrawn on May 19. However, subsequently, after reading Hansard, the Member realized that he had not spoken the words that were allegedly attributed to him. The Honourable Government House Leader also spoke to the same point of order and indicated that in the raising of the point of order, the Honourable Member for Carman had used unparliamentary language directed towards the Government House Leader. The Honourable Member for Carman and the Official Opposition House Leader then spoke to the same point of order. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the point of order.

After having reviewed the information brought forward, it appears that the House has a situation where two members have contradictory accounts of the same episode. The Honourable Member for Carman states he said one thing; the Honourable Government House Leader asserts that he heard another.

Beauchesne's Citation 494 advises that it has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident. This citation is reinforced by rulings from Speaker Rocan on May 9, 1994, and March 20, 1995, and by rulings from Madam Speaker Dacquay on April 29, 1996; September 18, 1996; November 4, 1996; and April 20, 1999.

I am therefore ruling that the Honourable Member for Carman does not have a point of order, as the matter he raised essentially clarified for the record that the comments he said differed from the comments that were heard by the Honourable Government House Leader.

On the issue of the use of unparliamentary language in the raising of the point of order, the Honourable Member for Carman clarified that he had not used unparliamentary language because the words in dispute appeared in a list of parliamentary phrases contained in *Beauchesne's* Citation 490. Regarding the use of unparliamentary language, Marleau and Montpetit advise on page 526 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* that in dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner, and intention of the Member speaking, the person to whom the words were directed, the degree of provocation, and most importantly whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. They continue to state that a codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical, as it is the context in which the words and phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House

should not be used. This sentiment is also expressed in *Beauchesne's* Citation 486(1).

Although the words "barefaced falsehood" appear on the list of parliamentary phrases contained in the *Beauchesne's* Citation 490, Manitoba Speakers have ruled the word "falsehood" out of order and have requested the withdrawal of the word. On June 1, 1993, Mr. Speaker Rocan requested the withdrawal of the word "falsehood" as did Madam Speaker Dacquay on September 21, 1995.

* (14:20)

I note that on June 5, 2000, the Honourable Member for Carman rose and voluntarily withdrew the use of the word "falsehood" and I thank him for that. I would just like to reiterate for the House that the rulings on language, the guiding aspects for Manitoba Speakers are previous Speakers' rulings, and the context which the words are used, rather than relying on a list of words.

Thank you very much.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Income Taxes

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly respond to the Tory ideological rant that tax cuts single handedly lead to increased provincial wealth and that this wealth is then passed on to individual citizens. Members opposite want to believe that the sole factor in a healthy economy is low income taxes and that the economy will continue to grow by slashing taxes without adequate consideration of its effects on health care and education.

We all know that a stable and predictable economy is based on more than a single variable. This becomes evident when we look at the experiences of other jurisdictions. Ireland, a country faced with a history of economic challenges, has, since 1993, experienced an economic boom. Annual economic growth has grown in that country by more than 8 percent, employment grew by 25 percent and unem-

ployment has fallen from 18 percent in 1987 to less than 8 percent in 1998.

The roots of Ireland's economic successes lie not in this cutting of taxes but in a program of co-operation, social investment and transfer payments. Active dialogue and planning between government, employers, labourers and farmers enabled Ireland to develop agreements on the main lines of economic policy. It was through the social partnership between the state and economic and social interests that Ireland was able to improve their economic conditions, not through the cutting of taxes.

Our government, similar to Ireland and certainly unlike members opposite, recognized the advantages of a balanced and responsible approach to the economy and understand how this helps ensure a strong future for our citizens, a strong future for our communities and a strong future for our province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Osvita Foundation

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): It was my pleasure to attend the 19th Annual Osvita Foundation Testimonial Dinner on June 7 last evening. At this dinner, two extraordinary women in Manitoba's Ukrainian community received well-deserved distinction for their efforts. This year's recipients were Ms. Victoria Adams and Ms. Nadya Kostyshyn-Bailey.

Vicky Adams, the principal of Ralph Brown School, has worked in curriculum and professional development and conducted seminars for teachers and parents in second-language instruction. She has taught Ukrainian language classes for adults, brought various dance ensembles from the Ukraine to work with students and facilitated the Telebridge satellite exchange between Winnipeg and Lviv. She serves on numerous other boards within Manitoba and is a founder and director of Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School. Her countless contributions to Manitoba's Ukrainian community have been invaluable.

Nadya Kostyshyn-Bailey initiated conversational Ukrainian classes and in 1969 began work for the provincial government as creative arts consultant. She developed cultural and

leadership training programs in arts, crafts, drama, dance and music. Over 10 000 people have participated in these programs. She has been part of the negotiating team for Manitoba's immigration and settlement programs and responsible for conducting citizenship courts annually in Manitoba. Nadya has been part of the provincial team in the Canada-Ukraine Legislators Project and presently is the manager of Social-Cultural Initiatives and government and community liaison for the province's Manitoba-Ukraine Secretariat.

Both of these remarkable women have made significant contributions to this province's Ukrainian community. Through the efforts of Manitobans like Victoria Adams and Nadya Kostyshyn-Bailey, the Ukrainian culture has remained an important part of Manitoba's collective culture. I congratulate them for this important recognition and wish them both all the best in their future endeavours.

Bakers Narrows Day

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, June 5, it was my privilege once again to participate in Bakers Narrows Day 2000 at Bakers Narrows Provincial Park. This popular annual outdoor family celebration is sponsored by the Flin Flon and District Chamber of Commerce. Bakers Narrows Day started with a delicious pancake breakfast served by members of the Lions Clubs from Flin Flon and Cranberry Portage. At eleven o'clock there was an outdoor non-denominational church service. At noon, Queen Mermaid Melissa Strom made the official cast which opened the 50th trout festival. Melissa was ably assisted by first and second princesses Chelsie Miller and Jackie Bloxom.

There were many fun events during the day. To name a few, a tae kwon do demonstration, hoop dancing, horseshoe tournament, a recycling scavenger hunt, a comedian's performance, kiddies' games, a golf challenge and a zoo exhibit. Although the weather was not entirely co-operative, it was a great day for family fun.

I invite all my colleagues in the Legislature to bring their families and friends to northern

Manitoba. You will undoubtedly enjoy great scenery and wonderful northern hospitality and, who knows, you might catch that special trout.

Come and visit Flin Flon for the homecoming 2000 at the end of the month. Enter the fishing derbies. You will not regret it.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Jonathan Naylor and the countless volunteers who have made events such as Bakers Narrows Day such popular attractions. As well, I want to extend good luck to all Queen Mermaid contestants and offer a big thank you to their sponsors. Thank you.

Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, it was my great pleasure to attend the presentation of five very significant donations to local health facilities and initiatives from the Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee through their Poppy Fund on June 6. The Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee presented each of the recipients with a \$3,000 donation.

The recipients of these donations were the Victoria Hospital Chronic Care Support unit, the Riverview H. C. Chronic Care Support unit, the Eye Care component of the Misericordia Chronic Care unit, the Manitoba Nursing Research Institute at the University of Manitoba, specifically for research in care enhancement for cancer patients and quality of life in long-term care, and the Joint Hospital Sick Visiting program. I would like to point out to all members that the Joint Hospital Sick Visiting program involves Legionnaires visiting patients in Winnipeg hospitals. This program is very actively supported by the Fort Garry Legion and is most appreciated by the patients who are visited in the hospitals.

I would like to congratulate all of these programs for their invaluable effort to enhance the care the citizens of Manitoba receive in our health care facilities. I would encourage all members to join me in extending our gratitude to the men and women of the Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee for their significant contribution to health services in their community through both their fundraising and

volunteer efforts. Mr. Brian Cutts, the chairman of the Poppy Trust Fund, and all the Fort Garry Legionnaires should be commended for their great work on behalf of all Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Valleyview School

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand today to recognize Valleyview school in Brandon who has won the first \$1,000 School of the Year Award for its participation in the province-wide Learn Not To Burn fire-safety program. I was pleased to recognize Principal Lee, students, teachers and its parent council members for their outstanding efforts to promote fire-safety awareness in children.

* (14:30)

Through this excellent program, Manitoba children are being taught strategies that could save lives of not only themselves but others. We are very supportive in their efforts to reach this goal for the children in this important message. Learn Not To Burn is an internationally recognized fire-safety program developed by teachers and experts for students from kindergarten to Grade 3. The School of the Year Award is a five-year promotional component implemented to increase the use of the Learn Not To Burn program in Manitoba through our Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) and Minister responsible for Fire Commissioners.

Schools eligible for the award were judged based on the number of K to 3 students participating, creative use of the program resources and their use of the community resources in delivering the fire-prevention curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, Valleyview school's students and parents did it best. I congratulate them on their commitment and their fine work for the community. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Mr. Speaker do now

leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

JUSTICE

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

When the Committee last sat, it had agreed to have a global discussion on the Estimates of the Department of Justice, with line items to be passed once the questioning and discussion is completed. Is that still the will of the Committee? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Chair, I would ask the Minister if he has the staff here today to discuss the issue with respect to Corrections officers and a potential strike. I think he had agreed to have staff here today for that discussion.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I understand that the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corrections is expected here in a couple of minutes. He is on his way now.

Mr. Praznik: Perhaps we will just wait a few minutes for him. Mr. Chair, perhaps while we are waiting, if the Minister has the factum on the information that I had requested yesterday in the matter regarding the convictions arising out of the Waterhen situation and their appeals to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Mackintosh: I have been provided by the Prosecutions branch the factum of the appellants

and the factum of the respondent in the case of Her Majesty the Queen and Gabriel et al.

Mr. Praznik: I think we are just waiting. Is your staff here?

An Honourable Member: We are ready to go.

Mr. Praznik: Okay. My questions have to do with the dispute between the Manitoba Government Employees Union and the Province in the current negotiations. Today we saw a demonstration here at this building. Several hundred, perhaps a thousand, correctional officers and their supporters gathered here.

I had asked yesterday if the Minister would have for us—and I appreciate that the Civil Service Commission, the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) lead in these negotiations, but I asked, for the benefit of factual information, if I could be provided with a list of the rates of pay for correctional officers in Manitoba in various classes as well as a comparison to their counterparts in other parts of the nation.

Mr. Mackintosh: The Corrections Division has provided to me some compilation of salary scales for correctional officers in Manitoba as well as other jurisdictions, and I am pleased to provide that to the Member.

However, I think it is very important that, first of all, these numbers be viewed in the context of the negotiations that are taking place for all components in government but, second of all, that the information given is only with respect to wages and exclude other considerations that may be of importance to employees of the Government or correctional officers in this case. For example, with regard to vacation benefits or retirement benefits, that I trust the Member will recall has been an issue in Manitoba, there have been some specific treatment of those issues for the Corrections component in Manitoba in particular. So there is a context that I think is very important to remember when looking at these numbers.

* (14:50)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the comments of the Minister of Justice. I have been

around long enough to know that the wage rates are only one part of it, that the benefit side is certainly the other. Would he perhaps like to just add some comment for the benefit of the record with a little explanation? Maybe if our rates are lower in pay, they might be better on vacation and other things, what have you. If he would like to maybe just add something for the purposes of those who may read this record at some point.

Mr. Mackintosh: I thought pretty carefully about what I should say in the last statement for the reason that—I know that we talked about this yesterday—I do not want to be bargaining at this table or have the appearance of bargaining at this table. I have a long and deep respect for that process that is established, and I would have regrets if it appeared that there were negotiations, unwitting or otherwise, or there was a positioning on the part of the Government being made at this table. But I do not know if that will satisfy the Member or if he would like to go further on this issue.

Mr. Praznik: No, Mr. Chair, having been on that side of the table in these issues, I appreciate the difficulty with which the Minister is in, in answering my questions, and I certainly do not want to be negotiating on behalf of anyone.

I appreciate again that there are issues around other components to this. It was fairly clear in the demonstration today that the demands are about money. That was made very, very clear, and not working conditions, so I appreciate there are also other components.

The only comment that I make is that this information, I am wanting it on the public record, by and large, for purposes of accuracy so that my colleagues and I have an accurate set of numbers when we are queried by the public on whatever side of the issue. I always believe one should attempt to deal with the facts, and that is the purpose that I wanted that for.

Mr. Chair, my next area of questioning on this line I think is not about bargaining, but the part of the table that the Minister, of course, does not control is bargaining. That is dealt with centrally in Treasury Board on other issues. The money is flowed through his department. I recognize that his influence may be only that as

a member of Cabinet, et cetera, on a larger picture, but what is within his purview, of course, is should there be a walkout, legal or otherwise, the public's concern, of course, is for the maintenance of our security of our jail system, correctional system. I understand that some plans are in place, as they were when we went through this when we were in government, for the use of the RCMP. I was wondering if he could perhaps give us some sense today on those plans. We hope, of course, this does not happen, but if they do, if he could give us some sense of the plans that are in place to deal with a complete walkout, a complete strike of this component, and whether or not that will have an effect on policing in other parts of the province where members of the RCMP may be drawn from to fill the gaps created in our correctional system.

Mr. Mackintosh: First of all, it should be noted that the negotiations are resuming Monday starting at noon and are scheduled to continue next week. Second, the union is not in a legal strike position. Currently, there has been no strike vote. Third, in the eventuality, and, of course, the Department has to prepare itself for that of any strike action, the RCMP have been contacted and arrangements have been worked on with them to assure all that safety will be maintained and security is continued.

The arrangements that the RCMP make to fulfill this exigency is a matter for the management of the RCMP. They have assured the province that they can fulfill this need should it arise as well as continue to fulfill their obligations as Manitoba's provincial police force. We understand in the past there can be some reorganizations on a temporary basis of deployment throughout the province. Sometimes it is with regard to highway patrol or maybe other abilities available to them. As well, it may be available to them to draw on resources from outside the province, but that is a matter that has been left to the RCMP, which we understand has had a successful past.

Mr. Praznik: Two questions, Mr. Chair. The first one is: Are there plans in place should there be an illegal walkout or work-to-rule campaign or other such job action which may reduce the efficiency of the current correctional service?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes. Those arrangements were put in place in the event of any significant job action.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister is: Within those plans, does he expect a significant reduction in RCMP service in communities if we do have a job action and Mounties are drawn out of the regular detachments across the province?

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that if the RCMP determine that resources were reduced in certain capacities that could affect the ability of the RCMP to properly protect the public, they would go to obtain resources outside of Manitoba. There is a history of resource sharing or temporary deployment of resources from other places in Canada.

* (15:00)

Mr. Praznik: We hope that we do not see that happen and, as in all labour disputes, that it comes to an amicable settlement that is felt to be fair by both parties. I wish the Minister and his colleagues well in that endeavour. I think I have secured the answers to the questions I have wanted there.

My colleague from Portage la Prairie is quite interested in this particular case for which he has provided us now with a factum. He is in another part of the Committee and will be joining us shortly. I will just come back to that at one particular point. I want to thank the staff, the Minister for providing me with this factum. I have been just perusing it. It fills in a lot of gaps in the information that I was provided as a critic. So we may wait there for a few minutes till the Member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou) joins us.

If I may now ask the Minister some questions with respect to the issue of the applications for casinos for First Nations. I understand that staff from his departments were part of the review committee, with the so-called independent review committee of Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman. I just want to ask him if in fact staff of his department were assigned to that particular committee, and what was their role, if they were?

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my understanding that it was not the Department of Justice employees. Well, let us put it this way: it was my understanding that Civil Legal Services, a special operating agency, which provides legal advice and assistance to government, was called on to assist.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, since this is my first time as a critic in opposition, perhaps the Minister or the Chair could just indicate to me that the Minister does answer for the special operating agency.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, the Civil Legal Services as an SOA comes under the responsibility of the Attorney General, Minister of Justice. In fact, the Estimates there are set out, not the Estimates, but the balance sheets are set out, starting at page 102, and as well earlier on at part 4, on page 97, page 98, Civil Legal Services is described in terms of its responsibility, its mission, and how it operates.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, a number of areas of questioning that I have. My recollection from special operating agencies and Civil Legal Services, my understanding that the expenditure for work done for other departments and agencies is billed back to those departments or agencies. Is that correct?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, in the area of the work being done in support of the Aboriginal casino project, First Nations casino project, could the Minister tell me who was responsible for the bill for the services provided by the Special Operating Agency?

Mr. Mackintosh: We will have to determine what the client department was, whether it was—well, I will leave it at that. We can determine that and let the Member know.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, then I take it the Minister will undertake to provide me within the next few days, even if we are finished our Estimates, that information in writing.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, my questions in this area, what was the mandate or the role of staff in the work done on the First Nations gaming project? What type of advice was sought, and what role did they play? I am trying to understand what work was done in this particular area. You will see shortly from my questioning what I am interested in.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder if the Member could clarify. Recognizing this solicitor-client privilege in the treatment of legal opinions, is he asking for the nature or the substance of assistance provided by Civil Legal Services on this issue?

Mr. Praznik: I am looking for not the substance but the purpose or the intent. Was it to provide just general legal advice in terms of the current status of statutes and laws that had to be met as opposed to investigatory work that might be done with respect to matters? I will be very blunt, right to the point. There are five operators, private-sector operators, or four private-sector operators that made it into the recommendations of the report. One of them, at least, is from out of province. We would think, given some of the experiences in U.S. casinos where private-sector operators were used to manage them, and we have reason to believe that these companies may be receiving as much as 30 percent of the profit.

We are wanting to determine whether or not these companies have been investigated to see in fact if they are credible, legitimate operators. Have they been involved in any suspicious or criminal activity in the past? Have charges been laid against any of their principals or operators? These would be, I would suspect, the regular part of due diligence on behalf of a government in ensuring that, in granting, as Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman called it, the privilege of operating a casino, those who would be managing would be subject to a scrutiny by law enforcement officials to ensure that the public and First Nations communities were not, in fact, contracting with anything less than reputable operators.

I would like to know if the Minister's department, through this service, provided any of that type of check on these particular operators to the committee when they were

making their assessment and recommendation on five operators.

Mr. Mackintosh: We certainly can advise publicly whether advice was provided to a client department, but not the nature of the advice, of course. Now, the Department itself as the client may be able and willing to advise of the nature of the advice. That is why it would be important, I understand, to advise what department it was that was the client.

This may not be as direct an answer as the Opposition may want, but aside from going to the client department, we could make a list of questions that the Member has and determine the extent to which we can answer those questions, but I expect that the matter of privilege and opinion will prevent disclosure from this end. But, certainly, at the Department end, as the client, there may be much more freedom to provide that information.

Mr. Praznik: I appreciate the Minister's comment knowing that the special operating agency is acting like a law firm. There is solicitor-client privilege involved. I take it then the Minister is suggesting that the questions that I have in this vein should be directed at the client department in terms of their having the proprietary right over the information. I gather that he would be in breach of that situation if he were to provide it, and I appreciate that.

I just would like that clarification, that my question should be directed in another series of Estimates to the appropriate department that purchased the services that were provided by the special operating agency.

Mr. Mackintosh: Civil Legal Services has to be seen no differently than as if the client department contracted with a law firm, in this case in the City of Winnipeg perhaps, so the Member is correct. In the meantime, we will make inquiries to determine who the client department was.

Mr. Praznik: Then I will heed his advice, and we will be into those specific questions, and I am sure he will provide me with that information shortly with respect to who the client department was and other undertakings that he has given.

If I may for a moment in the same vein but in a more general way, I would ask the Minister if his department in their work in the activities of organized crime, given that we are looking at in Manitoba in essence having private casino operators, if his department has done any work generally with the RCMP or any other law enforcement agencies on the operation of organized crime in the gaming industry certainly in the United States and other places, and what concerns and fears as the chief law administrator of the province he would have in ensuring that we do not see any avenues for that type of activity come into the province.

* (15:10)

So I am looking for really two things, a sense of the kind of activity that his department is aware of that has been seen in other jurisdictions with private gaming operators and what kinds of concerns that he would have in ensuring that that did not come into our jurisdiction with the introduction of, in essence, private gaming facilities, gaming facilities outside the purview and the day-to-day management of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation?

Mr. Mackintosh: The first line of responsibility for identifying crime, of course, is the police and the law enforcement agencies in Manitoba. We know that at the City of Winnipeg level, the Winnipeg Police Service has now reorganized their structure and, in particular, their vice unit and have restructured how they are dealing with organized crime. We are advised that the changes will result in more efficient and effective deployment of law enforcement services as a result.

With the RCMP, that agency has identified organized crime as a very high priority, and, indeed, on a national level Manitoba is participating in the development of more effective modern strategies to deal with this challenge. The RCMP, as part of that strategy, have actually gone so far as to name a deputy commissioner that is directed solely at the challenge of organized crime.

At the second level of Prosecutions, we have announced and, of course, I extensively des-

cribed the Criminal Organization and High Risk Offender Unit, the 21-person unit in the Department of Justice to deal with the issue of criminal organizations, for one.

So those are some of the recent developments. It is a very quickly changing area of both law enforcement and prosecution as well as victim and witness assistance as well as corrections. Now, I do not want to assume nor imply in that answer that organized crime is alive and well or a dominant force in the current casinos in Manitoba, but I just answered that aspect of the question with regard to organized crime.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I recall from my days at the Cabinet table from some long ago briefings about the operation of gaming generally and the concern that Lotteries officials had had about organized crime, money laundering, et cetera, making its way into many of the private casino operations south of the border.

I know when the Crystal Casino was first established, and again, I am recalling briefings that Cabinet received and the security around that facility to ensure that it was being properly monitored, that any suspicious acts, the use of casinos from money laundering by clients, gamblers, et cetera was certainly a concern. But my thrust here is, of course, in the area of the private casino operators where, in the United States, not far away, we have heard of many allegations. Some of them proven, some of them not, of these private casino companies and managers who have managed casinos for First Nations communities, having ties to being involved with organized crime, using these facilities for money laundering efforts, et cetera. The concern, of course, is that if the same companies or same scenarios are established in Manitoba, what kind of steps or concerns will he as Minister of Justice and his department have to ensure that this does not happen?

If I may just jump ahead of myself a little bit, the Premier (Mr. Doer) has indicated that agreements will have to be negotiated that we are now likely going to see an implementation process, and one of the concerns or questions that the public will have is what kinds of

safeguards, checks, balances are going to be in place to ensure the same private casino operators are not replicating the issues we have seen south of the border? And, as a minister of Justice, surely I would hope, knowing this minister of Justice, I would fully expect that he will want to be at the table to ensure that these agreements and the Premier has intimated there may in fact be legislation coming to govern the operation of these casinos.

What kind of thought today is his department giving to its input into this process in the weeks and months ahead, and I would say to the Minister of Justice, given that his government has not indicated in any way that these facilities would be audited by the Provincial Auditor, nor would there be value-for-money audits in this process. What other kinds of safeguards is he contemplating today in his department that they will be going to the table with in the negotiations that the Premier has said will be getting underway in the implementation process to ensure that we do not have this problem in Manitoba, and that the citizens of our province, that First Nations peoples who are supposedly the beneficiary of these facilities are not going to find that they are seeing many dollars disappearing into purposes for which they were never intended? So I am asking today, I know we have not started that process, but what is the Minister and his department contemplating they will be bringing to the table for those upcoming negotiations and implementations?

Mr. Mackintosh: It is at a very, very early stage of the development of this process, and we certainly as a department are open to working in consultation with AMC or the lead departments on this matter, and if any concerns are raised, I am sure the Department will be as responsive as it was in the development of casinos that are currently in place in Manitoba.

Mr. Praznik: Well, Mr. Chair, I would just point out that there is a very significant difference. The casinos that currently exist in Manitoba are managed by the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, which is a Crown corporation. As the Minister well knows, it is not a private entity. In the proposals that the Government accepted with less than 24 hours of

study, each of those proposals brings with it an operator who are private organizations. Two of them, I believe, are to be managed by the Saskatchewan Government Indian Gaming Commission. Three of the others, it is proposed, are going to be managed by private operators, and it does not identify even where they are from, other than one being from North Dakota.

So we do not know who they are; the public does not know who they are. We do know that there is a reputation coming out of what has happened south of the border in First Nations gaming with private operators having, in some cases, ties to organized crime, using those facilities for illegal purposes. Sometimes these are not proven, sometimes there is suspicion, sometimes they have been proven. We know that when large amounts of unaccounted-for money are available, I do not care who one is, it attracts a criminal element. It attracts temptation. We do know that his administration has indicated that they would not be providing for a full provincial audit of the operations that are taking place. We have asked for that as part of the safety check.

We would strongly recommend the use of the Provincial Auditor. We would strongly recommend the management to the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. We would strongly recommend value-for-money audits of the end use. These have been, it appears to be, rejected by his Premier to date, so we are asking then, what other types of safeguards is his department contemplating going in to those negotiations, to ensure that we are not having with these private casino operators that his government is accepting the kind of things happen that we have seen happen to some degree south of the border?

I think this is a very legitimate area, and because the public now knows from his Premier's remarks that we will be getting into these negotiations, I think the public would like to know what kind of safety checks are available to be negotiated into this. I, of course, would argue the use of the Provincial Auditor one. That appears to be rejected. So I would like to get a handle, and I am sure thousands of Manitobans, particularly First Nations people, on whose behalf this is being pursued, would also like to know. So I am not asking for in stone today, but I would like to know what kinds of tools are

available to the Minister to ensure that we do not have these things happen. I am only asking because I think the public would like to know, Mr. Chair.

* (15:20)

Mr. Mackintosh: Issues about the mechanisms to be put in place with regard to Aboriginal casinos should rightly be put to the Minister responsible who will be working in partnership with AMC and representatives. It is, I think, important though that there not be just an assumption that Aboriginal casinos in Manitoba will be run by or be controlled or may be related to organized crime. That is, I think, a jump that is likely not fair nor I do not think should be just taken as a given. In terms of the Justice Department, we certainly are available to provide advice on matters relating to any charges or investigations perhaps that could lead to charges being laid. We certainly are available to law enforcement agencies for that and if there are any specific requests to provide that assistance which would be through the Prosecutions branch, we certainly would be willing to do that.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I would agree with the Minister that one should not just be making an assumption if one has factual information and I would think that anybody who is going to be granted, as Mr. Freedman described it the other day in the press conference, the privilege of operating a casino, not the right but the privilege of operating a casino, the opportunity to take from Manitobans and visitors to our province, I would expect some visitors, literally millions of dollars with very little cost around that, to have that privilege, I think there is an obligation that security checks, all of those things be in place so that the public does not have that suspicion.

What I am asking today and I appreciate and I will be there to put these questions very clearly to the Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission in this province, for the Lotteries Corporation as well in their Estimates, I will want to have those same questions for them, but I am asking the Minister of Justice, who has in his department a wealth of experience and contacts to national policing organizations across

North America, given that his government has not committed to the Provincial Auditor, not committed to value-for-money audits, has not been forthcoming with a lot of the questions that the public, First Nations people have in this area, I am asking today not for specifics, but I am asking today for a sense of the kinds of tools, whether it be First Nations casinos, private operators, whenever the gambling is being managed out of the purview of a public corporation, then I am asking him what are the kinds of tools his department would recommend be included in any agreements or any legislation that are going to give them as law enforcement people, as prosecutors, they would have confidence, that the public would have confidence that everything is on the up and up, that is it being done as it is said it is being done. So I appreciate his difficulty with other ministers, but I am curious to know what kinds of tools his department, with their great wealth of experience, would recommend?

What should the public be looking for in those negotiations, in those agreements, in proposed legislation, to give the public, First Nations people the confidence that things that we have seen and heard happen in the United States are not going to happen here? I am not asking for things to be written in stone, but as a critic I would like to know what tools are out there that are available to us that we should be looking for to see in those agreements. That is the kind of advice I am looking for from the Minister of Justice and his staff today.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think the questions really surround the ambit of management issues that will be part of the consideration of the implementation committee process and the partnership work between the Province of Manitoba and the AMC. I trust that those management issues will be considered in light of experiences elsewhere, whether in Saskatchewan or south of the border, and presumably there will be some expertise in terms of how to best manage these kinds of facilities as a result of the experiences elsewhere that can be shared in Manitoba. In terms of the role of Prosecutions, it is, of course, to prosecute charges laid by the police and to assist the police in formulating those charges. But, in terms of how the structure of the casino operations will function, I would

urge the Member to solicit that with the Minister responsible.

Mr. Praznik: I appreciate that other ministers have responsibility here, and we will be asking them these questions when we are in their Estimates to ensure that we get answers for the public. But I would ask the Minister—

An Honourable Member: There are no Estimates for Lotteries, Darren. You have to go to the standing committee.

Mr. Praznik: Well, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux), though, does have Estimates, and he is responsible for the Gaming Commission. Although that minister chooses not to answer questions in the House, we hope he will answer them. I would hope the Minister responsible for the Lotteries Corporation (Ms. McGifford)—you know, she sort of smugly dismisses this, but it is a concern to the public.

My advice to the Government is that, if they want to find that they have success with this project—and I say this to the Minister responsible for Lotteries—that it is important to be up front with this. The public would like to know. First Nations people would like to know. What are the safeguards? What are the protections? She, of all people, should know, having been in Manitoba politics for some time, that there have been a number of First Nations communities where members of those communities have levelled charges against chiefs and administrators for misuse of funds, where we have seen money that was intended for the use of families, women, children in those communities, spent for unauthorized purposes. So those questions are there.

I would have thought she, of all people, would have wanted to ensure that proper safeguards are in place. Perhaps, with the lure of Cabinet office, one abandons one's principles, but that is regrettable.

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice—and I appreciate his situation here—in his opinion, the opinion of his department, if not one of the key methods of ensuring that a private casino operator is, in fact, doing his job, living

up to his agreements, is a full public audit by the Provincial Auditor. Is that not, would he agree with me, a good tool that engenders public confidence in the administration of an agreement with a private casino operator?

*(15:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Now that is an area that should best be put to the Minister responsible. In terms of what the implementation committee process will be, and how it will prove in its outcome, that has yet to be seen. The particular opinion of a particular minister is really, I do not think, perhaps that interesting to the Member, as much as the opinion of the government and, initially at least, the direction of the responsible minister that can be elicited through questioning of that minister.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the Attorney General of the province is a Cabinet minister like none other. He has a responsibility that goes well above that of other colleagues in terms of being the chief administrator of justice and the law in the province. What I am trying to ask from him—a very simple question—this will be the first time that we have had private casinos in Manitoba, and a very simple question: Would not the auditing of the books of those casinos, and their operations, by a public official, the Provincial Auditor, who is responsible to the Legislative Assembly—would that not be an effective tool in ensuring the proper conduct and operations of those facilities? It would be a proper tool in ensuring that dollars were spent where they were agreed to be spent.

I am asking his opinion as the chief law enforcement officer whether or not this would be a good tool.

Mr. Mackintosh: Whether that particular option is the best tool, I am not in a position currently to determine. I would like to see what the range of options might be. I would like to hear what the views of other partners in this process are and, as well, have a discussion in the context of my colleagues in Cabinet and caucus, and come to a determination that way. That is the best way to answer that question. There is a process, of course, in government for considering options. I am attracted, of course, to providing an answer

in that context. So it really depends, I think, on the range of options. I look forward to that consideration in the near future.

Mr. Praznik: I appreciate that there are options. I am asking if the Minister can tell me what those options are, and why this one would or would not be an effective tool. What is concerning me, Mr. Chair, from the comments of the Minister about this being a discussion with the other parties, a discussion within the political process of a caucus, within the political process of a government, about deals that we can cut with partners, about how we are going to monitor this—this is a question about public trust, about ensuring that people live up to the commitments that they make.

As Minister of Justice, as he well knows, he has taken a step in accepting his responsibility in accepting his oath of office. He has taken a step away from that political deal-cutting process that his colleagues may be involved in. He has taken a position of being responsible for the administration of the law, and the law in Canada and in Manitoba puts certain restrictions and requirements around gaming. It has certain expectations. It certainly would not want to be part of supporting any criminal element having an opportunity to get in through the appointment of a private casino manager.

So I am asking him, I asked him initially, could he give us a sense from his department what the range of tools might be to give to the process of ensuring that we do not have any problems, that we do not have organized crime entering our province through these private casinos, that the beneficiaries of these casinos are, in fact, getting what they believe they should be getting?

So I asked him initially: What are the range, what are the kinds of tools that are being contemplated by his department to be advising the other ministers as part of those negotiations? If he would do that, I have raised one that would appear to the public to be a very solid tool, the use of the Provincial Auditor to audit those books. It is done in the province of Saskatchewan. Their Auditor, in fact, has been somewhat critical of the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority on some of their practices.

That is in their recent Auditor's report, and the result is they have things they have to improve.

But the beauty of that is, of course, it is public. The people know, the First Nations people know that it is not some hidden deal being made with just some people benefiting to the detriment of others, with characters who may be involved in organized crime participating in this process.

So Saskatchewan has used the Provincial Auditor as a tool. In fact, the Auditor has even gone to the step now of recommending that they have the authority to have value-for-money audits on how dollars are spent.

So this is very real. These are tools that are being used in the neighbouring jurisdiction, and I am asking the Attorney General of the Province of Manitoba, the chief law enforcement officer, the person who will be responsible to ensure that what is supposed to happen happens. I am not asking the Member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) as a politician. I am not asking the Member of the Executive Council as a deal cutter. I am asking the Attorney General of the Province of Manitoba as the chief law enforcement officer of this province. What are the tools that the public should be looking for to be worked into this agreement to ensure that there is public accountability, that these agreements are operating within the Criminal Code and that all of us can sleep at night, that First Nations people who are supposedly to be the beneficiaries of these dollars, are, in fact, having happen what is supposed to happen?

If we do not know what those tools are, if we do not know our Attorney General has given some thought, his department has given some thought as to what those tools should be, how can we have any confidence? How can First Nations people have any confidence that these casinos will, in fact, be operated as legitimate, honest operations doing what they, in fact, were intended to do and are publicly accountable in a transparent fashion?

So I ask him, I beseech him today to give us a sense of those tools and what his thinking is on those tools.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, beyond the issues in the Freedman and Nadeau report which starts off by requiring successful proponents to agree to certain auditing, the requirement for operating agreements with the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation on the issues of accountability for casinos is a matter that is within the competence of the Minister responsible for Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux), and, as well, the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) has been involved. So whether and by what means management tools will be put in place to ensure accountability is best put to those ministers, because, essentially, I understand the thrust of the question is what management and accountability tools will be developed.

But, again, I conclude by saying it would appear to be a matter that is developing, and whether advice is required from Civil Legal Services or the Prosecutions branch or any other divisions in the department, we certainly will be available. It would be my understanding that Civil Legal Services will continue to provide advice which may deal with the matters raised by the Member.

* (15:40)

Mr. Praznik: I would like to ask the Minister of Justice as the Minister of Justice for the province: Will he be involved in advising his colleagues the Minister responsible for Lotteries (Ms. McGifford), the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux), the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), will he be taking a role in advising his colleagues on the types of checks and balances and tools that must be in place in this agreement in order to ensure public accountability for the dollars that are flowing through these private casinos, or is the Minister telling this committee today that he is abrogating his responsibility, will not participate in this process and just provide legal services as the master of a law firm?

Mr. Mackintosh: If there is any advice or information sought from the Department, whether through legal services, whether it is through the Prosecutions branch or Constitutional Law branch, we are willing and

able to provide that advice as the Member knows there are some provisions in the Criminal Code that may bear on the implementation process, and we certainly would provide that service as a department. If, at the political level, there are issues that would require or would benefit from opinions or expertise in the Department, I will certainly ensure that that is obtained.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the Freedman report says that "As required by the Criminal Code of Canada and The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act it is a requirement that the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation conduct and manage gaming as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada at the proposed casinos."

Now, I would like to ask him and his staff how they interpret that: conduct and manage gaming to fit in with the hiring of private managers who could be drawing 30 percent of the proceeds. I mean, where do each of these roles fit in? I want to ask him, how does his Prosecutions branch, what tests would they be looking for to ensure that the MLC pursuant to the law is managing and conducting gaming in these casinos when each of these casinos has a management contract or proposal that has come forward? I am trying to understand the system that would work. So I ask him as the chief law administrator of the province who is responsible for the Prosecutions branch, how would the Prosecutions branch view management relationships to fit within the existing Criminal Code of Canada and Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act?

Mr. Mackintosh: If an opinion is sought from legal counsel to this process from Civil Legal Services, I am confident that the advice would be provided, and it would be good advice. In terms of the Prosecutions branch, the police are the ones, of course, that would pursue any investigation, and we refer evidence and charges to the Prosecutions branch. At that time the Prosecutions branch would certainly consider any of the information that was brought to the Department's attention in that way. At the same time, if the police became aware of a situation which could be criminal in nature, the Prosecutions branch could provide advice and opinion to the Law Enforcement Agency to

ensure that the charges are in accord with the evidence in the Criminal Code.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we are about to see his colleagues enter into negotiations with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and five consortiums of operators, each of whom has a private manager that they are going to work with to establish and manage five new casinos in the province of Manitoba. The law says that they must be, according to the report that the government put out, conducted and managed by the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. So what I am looking for is someone who is a member of this Legislature who is going to be watching this happen over the next number of weeks or months or what have you. I am looking to the Minister of Justice today to give me a sense of the parameters by which five private casino operators, managers are going to be able to operate within the scope of the law. I am not looking for every exact point, but I would like to get some framework here to know what is going to govern the operations. Or is the Minister responsible for Lotteries just going to bumble into this? The Minister responsible for gaming bumble into this and come up with something and then find out after that they are being prosecuted because they broke the law? Surely to goodness, they have to operate within some parameters.

I am just trying to get a sense today because you have your excellent staff here who have had to deal with this issue in past days around other gaming activity and other communities that have brought in machines and set up casino operations. I remember those days. I am just trying to get a sense of what are the parameters within which his colleagues can negotiate without fear of being in breach of the Criminal Code.

Mr. Mackintosh: The Department certainly, if it is asked by either client departments of Civil Legal or other departments of government ask for advice on criminal matters, we will be more than pleased to do the necessary research, look to determine what experience has developed in Manitoba and perhaps elsewhere and provide that information back to the person or the department that has requested that information. In terms of those management issues and the

role of the Auditor and any options with regard to the operating agreement with the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation and auditing, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would have the responsibility and the answers for the Member.

Mr. Praznik: I would hate to think that if I came here today and asked if I saw the Minister's briefcase, and I picked up the briefcase and I walked out, knowing it was not mine, and I take it with me, that he would not be prepared to give me advice that I would be committing theft, that I could not get that advice from him as the Attorney General of the Province of Manitoba.

Is it just simply because this matter is so politically sensitive? Is it simply because his colleagues are trying to hide behind an independent report? Is it simply because there has been some secret deal cut that they are trying to implement? I do not know, but I must say I am a little disappointed that the Minister cannot today at least give us, in the general sense, the parameters under which a private casino operator could be brought in to operate a casino and still be within the laws that now stand. I think this is going to have to be out there. The public wants to know. It is a contradiction, so it has to be talked about.

Mr. Chair, I have two colleagues who have joined me in Estimates, the Member for Portage (Mr. Faurshou) and the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). The Member for Portage (Mr. Faurshou) has some questions arising around the factum and the case that was in fact provided. I believe the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) has some questions, and if the committee would indulge them, I am going to allow them some time because we are trying to juggle between committees. I will be back to pursue the same line when they have completed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe the Member for Portage La Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) would like to address the Committee.

* (15:50)

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Chair, I believe the Minister of Justice is

familiar with the case that resulted from dispute between members of the Waterhen First Nation's band. Currently the persons that were dislodged from that First Nation's reserve are continuing their legal battle in front of the Supreme Court of Canada next week. I am wondering if the Minister could tell me how well versed he is in the current situation as this emanates from the provincial judicial system that found a number of persons guilty of Criminal Code offences.

Mr. Mackintosh: This is a matter that of course is very much an issue before the courts and indeed the highest court in the land.

The role of the Attorney General, as I am sure the Member appreciates, is not to interfere or appear to interfere in a particular case. The role of the Attorney General does include general direction in terms of policy directives, prosecution policy, as well as funding, of course, of prosecutions and working with our counterparts in other jurisdictions in Canada to make amendment to the Criminal Code or make improvements otherwise, and as well, to look at how criminal procedure can be improved. Therefore, I have to be extremely careful. I am in a different position than the other members, I am the only one in this position, not to be in any way seen to give direction to Prosecutions branch or prosecutors or be seen to be attempting to influence, judge or indeed even counsel on the other side.

So having said that, all I can do is provide just information that is public to the Member, I think the Member will understand that, and the information that I have from the factums that have been distributed. So that is done without any argument or any interjection about the strengths or relative weaknesses of those arguments. We provide the factum of the appellants and the respondent to the Member. The Prosecutions branch and ADM and the Deputy have just pointed out to page 5 in the factum of the appellants that sets out the points at issue.

The first one is that the Court of Appeal for Manitoba erred in ruling that there was no bias or reasonable apprehension of bias on the part of the trial judge, such as to render his hearing of the trial incompatible with the principles of

matter of a fundamental justice. The second being that the Court of Appeal for Manitoba erred in denying the appellants an adjournment for the purposes of formally bringing in a motion to admit new evidence to the said court to further establish a reasonable apprehension of bias on part of the trial judge. Those points at issue, of course, then provide the framework within which the parties will argue their case before the Supreme Court of Canada. If there are any other questions that are not apparent on the face of the factums, I will endeavour to obtain that information from staff here.

Mr. Faurschou: I appreciate the sensitivity of this particular case. I was just interested, though, as to the progress of it through the Crown counsel. To the Minister's knowledge, the resources are being dispatched to Ottawa to in fact argue the position that was previously held. There was to just a recent date, no argument provided by Crown counsel, and I am wondering if this has now changed.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the hearing, I understand, is indeed next week in the Supreme Court of Canada. In addition to the factum provided by Prosecutions branch and filed with the court, Gregg Lawlor, who is a senior prosecutor with the Prosecutions branch, will be travelling to Ottawa and will be presenting argument. The argument will be that which is set out in the factum of the respondent.

Mr. Faurschou: Forgive me for showing that I do not have, and I am not in the possession of, the factum that has been provided by Crown. I only have the appellant's factum, so forgive me for asking questions that perhaps were answered in that document. So understanding then that they will in fact, on June 15, of next week, have the opportunity for that hearing and that both positions will be argued, I think I perhaps will leave that specific point.

However, I want to revert back to when in fact this whole case took place. We, and I am saying as elected officials, are certainly not involved in any of the actual court proceedings, but I am wondering if the Attorney General could, because it is his department that provides resources to Legal Aid. How in fact individuals that are completely without resources, ones that

have been dislodged from their residence with not more than their clothes on their back, can be considered nonqualifying for legal aid? It was clearly documented that they entered into this particular legal battle with no supports, and as far as other government agencies, one is very clearly spelled out that had no resources, and were completely dependent upon the state to provide for their daily requirements.

Mr. Mackintosh: The legal aid system in Manitoba is governed first by statute and as well by a board that is appointed by the Government, and the board has a certain amount of discretion. When it comes to the ability of an individual to apply and receive assistance through Legal Aid, there is a process in place whereby an application and a fee is paid. Where there is dissatisfaction with the outcome, for example, if the application is denied, there are avenues of appeal ultimately to the actual Legal Aid Society or the board itself, I understand.

Mr. Faurchou: Well, it is indeed a complicated situation because I know that Legal Aid had started out in support and then there were different counsels appointed that ultimately withdrew for varied reasons and particular arguments of conflict of interest. It is extremely hard for even a person of legal background to comprehend, let alone someone that does not have that training.

But it is to me unconscionable to consider individuals having to represent themselves on such serious matters without the avenue of legal counsel. Whether these appeals were exhausted or whether they were even known to the individuals is something that I am wondering whether the Attorney General is very clear in the premise in support of Legal Aid that the appeal mechanism is clearly spelled out to individuals that perhaps are denied at the outset.

*(16:00)

Mr. Mackintosh: I believe that every time a decision is made by Legal Aid, there is advice to the applicant as to how a further appeal can be advanced. Now, if there is a particular situation where Legal Aid did not agree to fund legal assistance, that can be brought to the attention of the board. I do not know if there is a live issue

here, someone that is currently in need of legal assistance and is under charge. It would be important to know whether the individual was actually under charge and what the circumstances were. Of course, as Minister, it is not as responsible for the Prosecutions branch. There is a division of responsibility there. That is why the Board of Legal Aid has the decision-making power in the case. If the Member has specific information about an individual applicant, that should go to the Board. I know, as an MLA, that we have referred people from time to time to the Board. I know that MLAs sometimes assist people in helping to draft their application and their appeals. If the Member has more information in that regard, I know there are people there that would want to help, at least in terms of the process issues.

Mr. Faurchou: I thank the Minister for his response. I am not clear as to whether the individuals which are named in this particular factum, whether they were referred to the Board for an appeal for representation or not. So I will leave that particular subject.

My honourable colleague from Charleswood has some questions that she would like to follow up on as well. However, I would like to have the opportunity to return to this once I have had an opportunity to review the Crown's factum at a later time.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I understand we are approaching this from a global basis so that I am allowed to ask questions in different areas. I guess the first one, a very short one, would be to ask the Minister what his views are toward community policing.

Mr. Mackintosh: One of the first expressions of Justice policy by myself when I was elected as Justice critic was to indicate support for the concept of community-based policing. We had looked at the models that have been developed elsewhere. In Canada, of course, one of the predominant models was in the city of Edmonton. I had discussions with Chris Braden, who was one of the progenitors of community-based policing in that city, and had some readings on that and had discussions with a number of individuals, including community people. It was thought at that time that this was

the right way to go. I know subsequently in the United States President Clinton brought in a major initiative which became known as Clinton cops to spur the growth of community-based policing.

In Winnipeg, we have had, I think, some very positive growth of community-based policing. I know when we look at that model, there are sometimes arguments that develop as to what community-based policing really means. In my mind, it means that an officer is assigned to a particular neighbourhood. Sometimes that officer is then referred to as the ownership officer in the sense that that individual will have responsibility for matters that arise in that particular community, with some obvious exceptions. There is still a need for what I call 911 justice, or responding to crimes after they are committed.

The other element of the concept is for proactive policing, where the police officer is actually involved in working with the community, knowing the hot spots. Often the calls for police assistance come from very few residences in a community. Where an officer can be attuned to that, know where people, for example, on probation may live, know people who are at greater risk of criminal behaviour, they can then take a role in trying to stop crime before it happens. As well, I know that partnerships can develop between elements in the community, whether they are schools or community centres, whether it is a justice committee.

Edmonton has developed a model that also has the community service centres, which is an element in Winnipeg's policing model, but that has expanded to other jurisdictions in Canada. I think it has become quite popular, although the models vary somewhat. I think the challenge for government is to work with law enforcement agencies to encourage that model of policing, recognizing that there has to be acceptance of that by those who would be community-based police officers as well as the general population.

I know outside of the city of Winnipeg, the RCMP has developed as a philosophy the community-based model and is making some positive steps in this direction. The answer to the

question is that we support community-based policing and we hope to build on experiences and help to encourage the greater reliance on that model.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, Charleswood has been very fortunate to have what we call a Community Police office. I believe there might be two of these offices, this type of office, in the city. I am assuming we might have inherited one because our district is such a large district, encompassing a lot of Fort Garry and River Heights and Charleswood. We have recently found out, and there is quite a lot of concern in our community, that the Community Police office is closing down for the summer, we have been told, due to a manpower shortage. I wonder if the Minister has any knowledge of this.

Mr. Mackintosh: That would be an issue, of course, within the ambit of the City of Winnipeg and the City of Winnipeg Police Service. That would be, I presume, a matter of vacation scheduling or resourcing issues internal to that level of government.

Mrs. Driedger: I do understand that this might be a common procedure that could be happening. We have been led to believe that at this point in time the Community Police office may not reopen in the fall. I guess with the commitment that our previous government made to community policing and funding more officers for community police with designated funding for that, if this closure of a Community Police office fits at all into the previous funding that we had committed to and, I understand, that this government has committed to.

Mr. Mackintosh: The change in administration at the provincial level has not made any difference to the commitment to the City of Winnipeg Police Service in terms of funding community officers. So, this would appear to be a matter of management of the Winnipeg Police Service, a matter of their priorities. I do not know anything beyond that. As well, of course, the political accountability of the City of Winnipeg Police Service is through a committee of City Council and ultimately to the Mayor and Council of the City of Winnipeg. In terms of my only advice—and I trust the Member will appreciate this; she does have a concern about

that, because I would have that concern as well in my community—she should raise that with the Chief of Police initially and perhaps through her area councillor. The chair of the protection committee may be another focus of the Member's concerns, and I would urge that.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister could tell me if he has any ongoing discussions with the City in terms of their commitment to community policing. Does that ever come up as a specific item in meetings that are held, and if the Minister would be prepared to, at his level, follow up on—I guess what I am wondering about is the City's commitment to these Community Police offices on a long-standing commitment.

* (16:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: I would be prepared to raise this matter with the chair of the committee who is my counterpart in the City of Winnipeg and the Chief of Police. In terms of the Charleswood offices, I suspect that there is a meeting coming up soon on that, or soon on a number of issues; as well, I would be interested in determining whether there is any pattern there, but, just as a point of information, recognizing that these are two different political systems and orders of government. If there is any information there that could be of value to the Member in accounting to her constituents, I will pass that on. In terms of the general question, we have had ongoing discussions about policing in general, and models of policing. Perhaps that answers the question.

Mrs. Driedger: I thank the Minister very much for his willingness to do that, and I certainly look forward to hearing what the City might respond to that. I am also trying to find out from the City specifically what is happening, too. There is certainly a bit of sensitivity in Charleswood right now. We are not used to gunshots being fired in that part of town. With the recent situation that has happened there on an afternoon, we certainly have some concerns. We certainly have our issues of crime, and crime in the suburbs is certainly an issue that is one that I think we all need to take heed of because not only do we see crime in the core area, crime is certainly an issue that happens throughout all

of the city. I certainly do appreciate the Minister's willingness to address that.

I would like now to move on to a different topic, if I might. I was interested and pleased to see that Manitoba is going to lead a campaign urging the federal government to introduce Criminal Code amendments to combat Internet pedophiles, a topic, a subject matter, I guess, that I have been particularly interested in. Coming from my background at Child Find, the whole issue of exploitation of children is one that has kept me very busy for about 12 years.

I would like to ask the Minister where Manitoba is in addressing this issue, how long we have been involved, or how long his government has been involved in looking at this and what it encompasses.

Mr. Mackintosh: First of all, I just want to say that I sure appreciate the attention by one local media outlet on this issue. I think that is very important to develop community support for initiatives that we are pursuing. I raised this issue actually with the RCMP the other day in terms of emphasizing how this is such a critical area and so new and so challenging, because of course the Internet knows no provincial boundaries, let alone national boundaries. As well, when people are using this system of communication or information and need not be identified, it poses challenges unthinkable only a decade or two ago.

Now, a key focus of the media attention has been the need for criminal law to prohibit the activity of sex offenders luring children via the Internet. Now, luring is one form of sexual exploitation, but there are other forms as well that can be used on the Internet. But in terms of luring specifically, and that is where I think the Member is concentrating, the issue of Internet technology, the law of course encompasses a wide range of issues. If it is the inability of the law to deal with it, well, then we have to get working on it, because when it comes to children we have to prioritize our attention.

Governments and justice agencies have to consider this need for legislative intervention, I believe. As well, I think there must be training for justice and law enforcement officials on

technology and its potential use in criminal offences.

We recognize that there is also value in enhancing the knowledge of parents for effective parental supervision or supervision by other agencies, whether it is schools, libraries. But in terms of the specific mandate of the Justice Department under criminal law, there is a co-ordinating committee of senior officials that is examining offensive content on the Internet, which includes a subcommittee specifically on luring. Glen Lewis of the Justice Department represents Manitoba on this committee.

A meeting of federal, provincial and territorial officials is being planned for late June to develop strategies to address the issue. An options paper is going to be brought forward in the fall to determine whether legislative amendments should be recommended to deputies.

We support legislative intervention. I think that has been made clear publicly. We also support the need for an in-depth action plan that is comprehensive to counter Internet-based offences. Manitoba, though, will also be preparing a resolution on luring to be presented earlier. That is at the Uniform Law Conference that will be held this summer. The need for federal action on this issue is critical, as children and families remain vulnerable to manipulation and potential victimization by sex offenders using the Internet to access child victims.

It is absolutely sickening. I cannot imagine how this kind of evil can exist in the community, let alone any offences against children, but to be sending offensive material exploiting children who are using this new technology, they are excited about it, they are using chat rooms and these other developments, and then along comes this kind of heinous activity, is just unbelievable.

Manitoba will be pressing the federal government to adopt legislative provisions which would be in the Criminal Code, I presume, to address this. We are also urging the federal government to engage in consultations with the private sector to address the responsibility of Internet service providers and

others who have a role to prevent this kind of criminal activity.

So it is important that we play I think a very active and vocal role in the Canadian Federation to move the federal government on this one, recognizing that the larger the jurisdiction the better. Since there is the federal government that we have access to, it is a good place to start. Hopefully, we can lead to international agreements and so on.

As well, Public Prosecutions in Manitoba has designated two prosecutors to deal with Internet-based offences targeting children, which is not just a matter of a staffing issue, but this will develop expertise within the Prosecutions branch in this new area. This is a very, I think, innovative and responsible development.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

* (16:20)

We are also participating on an ~~overall~~ governmental cross-departmental committee on the protection of children on-line. This ~~ad hoc~~ committee brings together officials from key departments to begin to address the ~~specific~~ issues of preventing exploitation of children via the Internet. We will also be examining the ability for legislative and nonlegislative action at the provincial level, because it is not enough simply to ask the federal government to move on this one in a criminal way and not enough simply to look across departments at policy change, but also I have had discussions with the Law Reform Commission suggesting that they consider this as an area for study. I recognize their independence, but we suggested that they could have a role here in a leading edge area.

As well, we have had discussions with the Community Notification Advisory Committee, which deals with the public disclosure of sex offenders who pose a risk to the public. I might add that Rob Finlayson, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Prosecutions, has been involved in working with other community organizations. I believe Child Find is one of them, as well as, an individual who the City of Winnipeg Police Service has identified for consultation and

advocacy on this matter. I have a feeling that we are well positioned to provide some leadership in Canada on this issue.

There are two other matters actually. We are writing to the federal Minister of Justice to call her attention to the pending submissions that Manitoba will be making and the contributions that Manitoba will be making in this regard. I mean, we are looking for everything that we can do in terms of our dealings with the federal government. There is a Justice Ministers' meeting expected to be held in the fall. We are expecting soon a call for agenda items, and this is one that we will be putting on the agenda. I hope that the movement with the Uniform Law Commission this summer will jumpstart and move the federal government more quickly on this.

It is a challenging area. I think, too, just having discussions with my counterparts in other jurisdictions in Canada will be important, because we cannot have one or maybe two or three provinces that are interested and particularly concerned about this. We really have to all get together on it. In my brief experience in dealing with the federal government and promoting changes to the Criminal Code, we do have to develop a consensus. Again, the clock is ticking on this one, so we will do our best in that regard. I hope that fully answers the question.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to thank the Minister for that response. I know that Child Find Manitoba has been particularly interested in this issue for a number of years. I am very familiar with the committee that they have set up to look at this issue of Internet luring. I have spent considerable time with one of their members, Wayne Harrison, who is a City of Winnipeg police officer who has become quite an expert on the issue of Internet pornography.

I guess, I am wondering what the relationship is going to be between the Government and this committee that Child Find has struck, knowing that the people on the Child Find committee are, indeed, very well representative of the community and some of the issues that the community feels strongly about.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Finlayson, I know, has had ongoing discussions and communications with this group and has had discussions with the Executive Director, I understand, and had been urging and pledging our support for what is taking place, and as well to urge that Child Find Manitoba, indeed Child Find Canada, have a role in pressuring the federal government. That would be very important. As the Member knows, when you are trying to make changes, it is important that community groups be vocal and that we work together on that one. I think it is very promising that Child Find Manitoba has provided some leadership role on this one, and we look forward to strengthening our partnership with that body. I think, too, though it is developing some focussed and specialized linkages so that we can get on with this challenge.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to thank the Minister for that. Certainly as a former children's advocate, I have spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the issues of child pornography, pedophiles, luring, enticing of children, abductions. Those certainly are issues that I am very interested in seeing pursued, and I would be thrilled to hear that the Manitoba Government is strongly moving forward as a leader in Canada to take on this issue. We, I know, had years ago been quite concerned about it and are hoping that maybe on an international level we could get the Department of Foreign Affairs or somebody involved in trying to take this on, because it has such a huge scope to it that there are a lot of things that need to be addressed.

As a mother, certainly, the whole issue of exploitation of children on the Internet is one that I have huge concern about. When my two boys were younger, one of them probably about the age of 10 was on the computer and Mom was not in the room. He somehow accidentally found a site that was buried in the computer and came upon it very, very accidentally. It was on there in the form of a screensaver and somehow buried within that. He decided to get into that. He looked at it. It was a whole document, pages and pages long, on pornography. It included everything from sexual exploitation of a young girl in school. It included bestiality. It went on to a number of different issues. My son, I guess,

being a boy, decided he was going to download this. Then Mom came into the room and the button stopped. He pushed the "end print" button. Mom had to use the computer, but of course it was not going to print out for Mom until the previous job was finished. So I happened to get my hands on all of this. My son, of course, was very embarrassed that Mom knew anybody in the police department that she would take this to, but I did. It ended up actually being a neighbour that was, I guess, typing this up as a story. It shows you how easily children can be preyed upon, how this can be happening next door to us.

I think there are major issues that need to be addressed with this, because I am sure that it is not going to cease to be a problem. It is probably going to be a growing problem. Having been to a child pornography, sexual exploitation conference and sitting through a number of lectures on the topic and having to watch actually what some of this actually consisted of is certainly disturbing. As one sees it visually and hears it, you become much more aware of the sickness of people in trying to harm little children, using various ways of trying to exploit them. So I am really pleased to hear that Manitoba is willing to address this in a very, very aggressive way. I will certainly be watching with interest to see the successes that we will have.

I am now going to move onto another topic. In looking under grant funding under Public Safety, where I know all the crime prevention initiatives are taking place, and of course it is one of those topics near and dear to my heart. I notice that the funding for that has not changed from last year's budget to this budget. I would like to ask the Minister what emphasis and importance he places on crime prevention initiatives. I guess I would like to see what vision he has for this and where he might be coming from in addressing these initiatives.

* (16:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Crime prevention initiatives take two forms. First of all there is the form of reducing opportunities for crime or dealing with environmental factors that cause crime—for example, unsafe places. Reducing opportunities

for crime can include that but also can mean that we are talking about citizens on patrol, for example, those sorts of initiatives.

Then there is the broader and second form of crime prevention, and that is more focussed on the root causes of crime and targeted attempts to provide alternatives to criminal involvement, to provide positive opportunities, whether they are recreational or cultural or employment. So when it comes to crime prevention, one should not look only at the efforts of justice departments, for example, but also what is taking place in areas of education and employment, indeed housing and community development generally. What we see developing over the course of the mandate is a greater emphasis on a balanced approach to public safety. We see a greater emphasis on crime prevention or stopping people from getting involved in crime in the first place through social development as well as reducing opportunities for crime in environmental design.

In the area of public safety in the Department of Justice, we find ~~some~~ areas of funding as well, in the Justice Initiatives Fund. That is another area. There are some other programs within the Department that go to the issue of crime prevention. There are some initiatives that will be announced and other ministers may well be the lead over the course of the mandate. As early as the next weeks and months, that will as well represent a focus on reducing criminal involvement by way of community development. I think of the Neighbourhoods Alive! concept, for example. There will be announcements on due course on that. But that is no surprise to anyone, of course. There have been announcements in a general way about this. It will deal with the challenges of housing in older neighbourhoods, the need to rebuild a sense of community and community pride, community involvement, the need to provide community resources and activities. So I see all that as part of crime prevention.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to thank the Minister for that response. I wonder what the Minister feels are the most effective kinds of programs to detract kids from committing crimes.

Mr. Mackintosh: By definition it is a philosophical matter, I suppose. At the same time, I do not think one can ever conclude that there is one single response that can effectively reduce youth involvement in crime. Sometimes even an effective justice system response after a crime is committed can provide a prevention tool for relapse or for further criminal involvement.

But I think it has been identified that there are a number of risk factors that can be associated with criminal involvement. For example, the National Crime Prevention Council has done a lot of work on this area and has come up with a list of risk factors. I do not think a lot of the risk factors are that surprising.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

It goes without saying, I suppose, that every child needs a nurturing adult in his or her life, needs to be loved and feel loved as well as encouraged and is able to grow up in a safe environment, but I think if we started to list the risk factors we can then start to list the types of programs that can most effectively reduce criminality. I think one of the largest and most important risk factors surrounds the dynamic of despair. I think personal or family despair will disproportionately lead to acting out and to criminal behaviour. People in situations of despair can often feel that they have nothing to lose by engaging in criminal activity. In fact they may have a false sense that they can enjoy some gain.

What is the reason for despair? It can be many. But those are broader systemic challenges. I think that employment opportunities, I think the provision of child care, I think that the provision of recreational and job opportunities, I think it is important that we not only provide recreational opportunities not just to keep children busy but also to provide mentors. To provide leadership opportunities for the youth involved is important, but also it is important to provide cultural and other kinds of opportunities. We have got to get beyond, I think, thinking of the basketball as the main crime prevention technique. I am not suggesting that everyone buys into that, but I think that there has been a disproportionate reliance on basketball courts as a solution. I think we can do

much better than that. Those are some general thoughts. I am more than happy to keep talking about them if the Member wishes, but I will leave it at that for now.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to thank the Minister. I was glad to hear him talk about crime prevention through social development, because that is certainly another topic that I have spent a lot of time studying over the last several years. It is one that makes a lot of sense to me in terms of addressing the issue of crime and making lives better for children. Certainly the National Crime Prevention Council has done a lot of good work in the last decade in terms of putting out more information, interesting to note that they feel that a more effective strategy for preventing crime includes social development programs that strengthen individuals, families and communities.

They do also go on to say that social development programs can address those factors that are associated with youth delinquency and adult criminal activity, for example, violence in the home, unsupportive family life and parental behaviours, poverty, poor housing, failure in school, illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse and unemployment. They also mention that family support, parent training and early intervention programs are estimated to reduce child abuse by as much as 50 percent and thereby reduce also the lifelong consequences and costs of living with abuse. They also go on to say that similar programs can prevent the highly aggressive behaviour among young children that is often associated with failure in school and later with delinquency and criminality.

They cite a couple of success stories. The first one was one in Lansing, Michigan, where they said crime went down by 60 percent in two neighbourhoods there after police, local schools and social service agencies opened a neighbourhood centre and launched an extensive youth development program.

* (16:40)

That, of course, is one that is of particular interest to me in hearing how much crime went down there because having a local partnership in our community, our police, our local school and

our Department of Justice, it has been interesting to see where some of the success rates can be, and I am going to get into that in a little bit more depth in a minute.

In Fort Myers, Lauderdale, they also talk about success through an academic and recreational support program which was responsible for reducing the juvenile crime rate by more than 30 percent. I am sure the Minister already has an idea where I am going with this set of questions, and it is on to the police athletic clubs, which is something that I guess we are hearing some concern about from the community when we heard from police officers and from people in the community that there was a possibility that the police athletic clubs, the 13 that are in the city might be closing.

These particular clubs are open to youth aged 10 to 17, and they are free of charge. That is a particularly good thing because all these clubs have been set up in economically challenged areas of the city. Not a lot of people might think of Charleswood as being economically challenged, but we do have a couple of areas of our community that are economically challenged. The children from that particular area are thrilled to have a police athletic club. They call it Free Gym. That is what the kids in the community have been calling these, Free Gym.

Parents feel really good about them because they know that their kids can go to them five evenings a week in the school gyms from 6:30 to 9:30 or in that vicinity, and parents are feeling somewhat secure because there are other young people there supervising. That is another piece that is interesting and I think a really good partnership, is that these clubs are all run by 48 young people that have been hired from the university, from Recreational Studies, so we have 48 jobs actually attached to the police athletic clubs. They also use young volunteers from the community, youth volunteers, to help in delivering the program.

When this program was set up, the goals were to provide recreation but also to give the kids some sense of local community ownership and responsibility and to bring police and youth closer together. There was also a hope by the

police that community crime would decrease and also to provide mainstream athletics and creative recreation to young people within their own community in a safe environment. Attendance at these police athletic clubs has been actually very, very good. In January and February of 2000 alone, there were 8000 in total attendance, and during last year there were 22 000 total contacts for the police athletic clubs. That, I think, is a fabulous number, especially in view of the results that have come out of the evaluation that the police department has done on this particular program.

I would just like to put on the record right now, I guess, and I will ask the Minister to comment on this shortly, what this evaluation showed. The first point that is very significant is how good the youth felt about themselves after having attended some of these clubs. They found an improvement in their athletic skills, in their physical conditioning, and they found an increase in their activity level because they had more energy. Mr. Chairperson, 24 percent of these kids had never participated in organized sport of any kind. They called themselves mall rats. Well, we know what happens when kids hang around malls too much or 7-Elevens too much. Certainly that is an invitation to find some activities that might intrigue them a little bit more than just hanging around the malls.

The report also showed that they got along better with others, and their level of self-confidence, their sense of self-worth, their sense of fairness and their school grades improved. From the children's point of view, when you see self-esteem improve to this degree, when you see school grades improve because of a program, I think that is saying a lot about the particular program. Parents also cited improvement in family relationships as the most important benefit of the program. They reported that the child who attended the police athletic clubs listens better now, listens to directions. Family arguments were reduced. There was improved interaction between the child and their younger siblings, and there was actually better communication between the parent and the child. Being a parent, this sounds like heaven to have a program like this that can actually create situations where you can have improved

relationships in your home from a community program like this.

The findings of the evaluation reveal that the Police Athletic Club program was far more than just a justice initiative; it was a health initiative because it improved the mental, emotional and physical well-being of the youth. It proved to be an educational initiative that improved academic achievement and behaviour of the youth, and it was a social service initiative that improved family relationships.

So with one simple program which came about through the development of partnerships, I think we have seen some incredible results. The one result that is very hard to measure was the goal to reduce crime, and although we have heard from people in the community, particularly the Citizens on Patrol program and the Westdale Residents Association who believe that there has been a decrease, a dramatic decrease in crime in their area. The local police officer has also indicated that. We are not sure exactly what leads to the actual reduction in crime, but because the reduction in crime happened at the same time that the police athletic clubs were in effect operating, one has to think that there might be a link between the two. Certainly the people in my constituency are very, very concerned to hear the rumour that there could be a loss of its police athletic club because we have the second-busiest one in the city.

I guess I would like to ask the Minister of Justice where he is in terms of supporting the police athletic club, from the government perspective.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I have said this in the House, from time to time, that I think there is some misleading information that the Opposition is acting on. It should be remembered that this program was developed by the City of Winnipeg Police Service. I believe one particular person, who is now an inspector, I know the Member may know, has been very active in getting this service up and running and working in partnership with other orders of government.

There were three core partners in this initiative, the City of Winnipeg, the Province of

Manitoba and the federal government. The federal government pulled out in September, part way through the two-year commitment. The City of Winnipeg was unable to maintain or provide its commitment. So the only one left at the table that is the only one of the three funders continuing with its full commitment in accordance with the original agreement is the Province. So we are still at the table.

Now we know that the former government had made a decision that the provincial government would contribute to this program only for two years. After that, the program would be self-sustaining or would receive funding from other sources. That was the decision made by the Filmon government, not one made by our government. That was the expectation I understand as to how matters would unfold. I might add that, unlike the former government, I would like to see this kind of program continue and have us build on this kind of program.

On February 8 of this year, a report was provided by Prairie Research Associates on the police athletic clubs. I can just quote from that report, page 85. It said: The community perceptions of PAC are extremely varied and depend on the location. Along with giving youth an activity and alternatives to the streets, the association with Winnipeg Police Service was noted as the greatest strength of PAC.

However, the greatest complaint about PAC was a lack of adequate supervision. As well, although the design of the program included the presence of a police officer at all times, there is actually little or no Winnipeg Police Service involvement with the sites. Each PAC is to maintain a staff-participant ratio of 1 to 20. Volunteers are needed to ensure that this ratio is met.

* (16:50)

In some cases this ratio may exceed the supervisory capacity of the staff, particularly in locations where there is considerable distance between the entrance and the gym facilities. Appropriate supervision of participants often requires more volunteers or staff. This responsibility lies with the site co-ordinator.

However, the leadership competency is reported to vary considerably among the sites. The inconsistency in management among the sites has an impact not only on the quality of supervision but also on the way in which numbers of participants are tracked. Information provided to us, that is to Prairie Research Associates, varied among sites and was difficult to obtain.

On that page, they go on to note a number of recommendations. First of all: Accounting procedures need to be streamlined as well as the tracking of participants at each individual site. Staff training should be provided in a number of areas including program planning in development and leadership. An increased emphasis on recruiting volunteers is needed. Marketing the program will assist with attracting volunteers from the communities. Then, and I note, a police presence is required at the program sites.

The simple answer to the question, reiterating what I said in the Legislature, is that we are committed to working with other partners to build or strengthen this kind of program. We are having discussions, and indeed I have had a discussion with an inspector who is taking a lead on this one with the City of Winnipeg Police Service, assuring them that we, despite the position of the former government, are interested in trying to maintain these programs, bearing in mind the analysis and recommendations of Prairie Research Associates.

I understand that there have been some discussions ongoing between the Province and the City. I also would expect that the federal government get back to the table. It was inappropriate that they leave during a two-year agreement. As well, of course, we will look for contributions from the City of Winnipeg, whether they are financial, or in-kind services is contemplated, but the ultimate objective is to put in place an arrangement whereby this kind of a program can continue and can continue in places where, in particular, it is shown to indeed be positive and has as its core and main feature crime prevention, recognizing that the Department of Justice is involved because of the crime prevention expectations of the program.

So I hope that negotiations will unfold in a positive way, and it will come to a good positive conclusion, recognizing that our financial contribution is for the period, I think, into September. As I recall, the requisition for funds was provided in February. I think we provided \$150,000 in March of this year, and as I recall, the funding was for a period up to September.

Now, reports in the media, and that is what I have available to me, indicated that there was an agreement by the City of Winnipeg Police Service to cease programming at the end of June, I guess at the end of the school year, the end of the availability of the facilities. So I hope that over the course of the next number of months and hopefully by the fall we can have some agreement, and we can look forward to this kind of a program.

I might also add that the Province, and I know the Member was advised that the Department and the Government generally is developing after-hour school programming to a greater extent than the PAC program.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister if he has actually made a request of the federal government to reinstate their funding, and how much of a push has been made in that direction?

Mr. Mackintosh: The strategy to date has been to develop an arrangement or strategy with the City of Winnipeg and the Police Service, recognizing that there have been some misleading statements, both from the Opposition and from other parties, to the extent that the Province is now being blamed, which is actually, I guess, pointing a finger at the former Filmon government for pulling out. We are the only ones that are at the table. We are very interested in this kind of programming continuing, but we have to work on a strategy. I will be having discussions with the City of Winnipeg in the next several days, which will include this issue.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would just like clarification. I am not sure I totally heard the Minister right, but did I hear him in his answer indicate that he has not asked the federal government to reinstate funding?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the Member perhaps did not understand my remarks earlier. This is a City of Winnipeg program. This is a program which is paid for almost entirely by the Province, but is administered entirely by the City of Winnipeg. It is politically responsible and accountable for this program. It is administered, governed by the City of Winnipeg, and I understand it is through the Winnipeg Police Service, so it is their program. Until we have some arrangement with them and strategy in mind, it is their prerogative. It is their responsibility to look for other funding partners, but it would be my expectation that at an early date, there will be some engaging of the federal government in this project.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I guess I am just a little bit surprised because on election night we heard the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province indicate we are going to turn on the lights in the gym. Well, the lights were on in the gym for two years prior to this.

If the Premier and the NDP were so committed to programming for children in schools, partnerships with schools, partnerships with police, which sounds like a good partnership to have because there are so many benefits to it, I am just a little bit surprised. I mean, the Premier was grandstanding that night, saying he is going to turn the lights on in the school gyms. Well, it looks like there was never enough of a commitment to do that, not enough of a commitment to make the efforts to even talk to the federal government to see if they would be willing to continue funding this, if this was such a priority that it got mentioned on the night of the election.

* (17:00)

Here we had a really good program. There have been months and months to address the problems that have happened. Any new program on the scope of this, the size of this, of course, is going to run into problems. Do you trash a whole program that has some obvious good benefits, or do you actually get in there and try to fix them if you truly believe that that is a good program? I guess I am just a little bit surprised that with the talk of turning lights on in school gyms, that a letter or a phone call would not

have been made to the federal government to come back to the table, let us sit and talk on it. I do know it was a police initiative; it was driven by them. They secured partners.

A two-year commitment does not seem unreasonable, because nobody who runs a good business or who puts on and develops a new program is going to commit to ongoing funding. That would be irresponsible. You only commit to a certain number of years of funding and then based on an evaluation, you would look at either making a commitment to further funding or renegotiating it. Certainly, this government has had seven months to look at this and, if they believed it was a good program, had an ability to commit to trying to make it work.

I am almost getting the sense that there is no commitment to make this particular program work, because it was a program that was begun under our government. Despite the fact that there are some very good evaluations that have come out of the police evaluation on this, it appears to me that the fact that it was a previous program, as the Children and Youth Secretariat was, it has the potential here of being trashed because it was not an invention of the new government. When the Minister says "unlike the former government, we would like to see this type of program continue," I think it is a very erroneous statement to make. We would like to see it continue too.

We have 22 000 young people out there that have been benefiting from this, and I guess I am quite concerned that these kids have come to believe in this. When you work with street kids, when you work with kids who have run away from home or kids that are on the curb sort of thinking of running away from home, or kids that have been let down by adults for so long that they can find something good that they can turn to—so many times kids have been let down by adults, especially kids that need these kinds of programs, and then they stop believing in adults. They stop believing that there are good things that can happen for them. This potentially could be a vulnerable group of kids, and what are we reinforcing to them if a program that they are used to, if there is no attempt to try to fix the problem which any new program is going to have, what kind of a message are we giving to kids? Having worked with runaways for 12 years

and seeing other groups out there who have worked with them or talking to social workers who have worked with vulnerable kids or kids at risk, to put something out for kids and then to pull it away from them is probably one of the worst things you can do in order to make that child feel better about themselves or to trust adults. Well, why should they? I guess I would like to hear what the Minister might comment on in terms of that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, if the Member listened to a word I said, we are at the table, everyone else left. The City says they want to continue the program. We are here, as a funder, that is what we are. We are not the administrator of the program. It is a city program that is wholly administered and designed by the City of Winnipeg. In terms of after-hour school use, as I said in the House, they ain't seen nothing yet. The province will be doing more than funding programs. It will be providing some leadership, but in the meantime I look forward to further discussions with the City to build on this type of programming.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister what his understanding is of the City's role in funding police athletic clubs.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, it is my understanding of this agreement that the former government entered into, which by the way the former government was aware of the withdrawal of the federal government and to my knowledge I do not know what the Member did or why the former government did not pursue that, but this is a program that was, I understand, envisioned to go forward with some private-sector funding. I think there is some nominal funding from the private sector right now, but it was to proceed after the second year without funding from the province, according to the Filmon government's view.

I have a different view. I think the Province should have an ongoing role; as well, I hope the City will consider the review conducted and we will be able to work together to ensure that the recommendations in that report can be acted on, because I am sure the Member would share her concern that lack of adequate supervision, and this may not be on all of the sites, is a very real

concern. Having received now a report that has identified that as an issue, it is critical that the City be able to assure funders, including the Province, that that issue can be dealt with. As well, the presence of a police officer at all times was a condition that the former Filmon government had specified for this program to proceed and for provincial funds to flow. The finding that there is actually little or no Winnipeg Police Service involvement with the sites should also cause concern for the Member, and so we will be looking to the City on that recommendation as well.

So, if there is anyone who is trying to turn out the lights, it is certainly not us. As I said earlier, the federal government walked away on this and the City did not come through on its commitments, the nature of the commitments that it had made when the program was developed and initially implemented. We are the ones that have maintained our full commitment—our full commitment—in accordance with the original agreement.

Mrs. Driedger: Certainly from the evaluation I had the opportunity to read which was prepared for the Winnipeg Police Service, I am aware of the problems that they had or some of the kinks they had to work out in terms of setting up a program of this scope. I do know that in a small number of sites, there was a supervision issue. I have been told by police officers involved in this that those types of issues were addressed so that the children indeed were in a safe environment, so that the children were going to a place that they thought was safe. I know in talking to my school in particular, I am quite aware of all of the issues that they had to face when this first started, and I am informed by the principal of the school that these, in fact, were addressed very well, and, in fact, the kids have benefited very much from the program.

Certainly the partnerships that have evolved out of this program, too, I think are very positive. I understand that there have been some corporate partnerships that have been put in place, and I think that is what makes for a very effective program, when you can see police officers, when you can see other young people, recreational supervisors who are there, when you can have the schools partner in it by their

absolute willingness to open their gyms I think has been a very good initiative.

The other thing that would bother me in seeing this particular program cease to exist, beyond that fact, is that I think we are going to be sending out a very sad message to children, that it is easy for adults to put something out there that is of benefit to children and then to change it. That to me is a very bothersome situation, the fact that children get to believe in something, the fact that kids can trust that there is a program out there for them. I think they are going to feel tremendously let down. A lot of the children were starting to form quite a different opinion about the police, too, because in many situations young people are a little bit leery about police. They have a misconception about what police are. The fact that they were going to police athletic clubs had such a positive, positive sound to it and I think was making a difference in how children perceived what a police officer was and that a police officer was somebody that was there to help young people.

So I guess my response, from what I think I am hearing today, is that a good initiative that has been put forward seems to be on the chopping block in this budget, and I guess I am wondering under the Grants line what other programs or what other grants have been chopped from there in order to make room for new initiatives that might be coming forth from this government.

* (17:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: None.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess I would ask for clarification. I understand there is the Lighthouse Program. I would ask then where that funding is going to come from if it is not going to be taken from the Grants line in the Budget.

Mr. Mackintosh: The funding for that program is under the Urban Safety program.

Mrs. Driedger: Where would that be in the Budget?

Mr. Mackintosh: That is under the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, Winnipeg De-

velopment Agreement, but the funding is administered by the Department of Justice, or directed, in accordance with the Winnipeg Development Agreement.

Mrs. Driedger: Are there any other Justice initiatives that can be found elsewhere in the Budget outside of the Department of Justice?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, as I said earlier, when you look at crime prevention through social development or otherwise, there are initiatives found throughout. We can make long lists of them. We could start, for example, even with our renewed investments in public education, our child care. We can look at the Neighbourhoods Alive! programming which will be found in the Department of Family Services and Housing as well as Intergovernmental Affairs. We can also look at aspects of the Healthy Child program and allocations there are made from five departments.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask the Minister under the WDA funding, are there other Justice initiatives that will fall specifically under that particular grant?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, there is a Neighbourhoods Alive! appropriation, and as well, there is the Justice Initiatives Fund that the Member may be referring to.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister, when they are looking at new initiatives for funding crime prevention in any new and innovative programming, will that encompass the suburbs as well as the core area, or will most of the money and new initiatives be targeted towards the core area?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the answer to that question depends on what program the Member is referring to. For example, the Citizen on Patrol Program, the funding for that is available to applicants across the province. Indeed, most of the Citizen on Patrol initiatives are outside of Winnipeg. When it comes to the other social development programs, of course, they are of general application but presumably the monies will flow to where there is greatest need. But again, I think it just depends on the particular program.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I asked that question because I had heard that the police athletic clubs would continue, but not in the suburbs, only if there was a commitment to do four of them in the core area, along with getting involved in Turtle Island. I wonder if the Minister might comment on that.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am not aware of any such announcement or plan.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, there was not an announcement about that. How shall I put this? Certainly that information is out there in terms of the comment having been made by somebody. I guess I am wondering if there is any truth to the statement that might be there that police athletic clubs were going to be gotten rid of in the suburbs, but that this government would be willing to fund them if they were reallocated to the core area, despite the fact that of the 13 police athletic clubs that are out there, they are all placed in financially challenged parts of our city.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am only speculating here, but perhaps the misinformation—I would label it—might have come from some discussions or understandings about the Urban Safety program, but I am only speculating. There is no plan as the Member describes it.

* (17:20)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairperson, I guess for the moment I would like to end this part of my questioning, wondering if under the Grants line under Public Safety, if I made a request, would I be able to have a list of all the grants that are being funded within this budget? Would the Minister be willing to table that?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you very much. I certainly appreciate that, and I am wondering when you are tabling that list of grants, besides just listing them, can there be an indication of the monies involved, who the grant is to, what the time frames are of that grant, and a synopsis of each one. Is that reasonable to ask for?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we will undertake to provide that information.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have for today. I hope I will be allowed to come back. I would like to continue some questions along the line of child prostitution or sexual exploitation of children, another very, very strong interest of mine. I would like to be able to attend again to bring that back for questions. Thank you very much.

Mr. Faurschou: Having the privilege of representing Portage la Prairie constituency, the topic of justice is undoubtedly the highest concern with the residents of my constituency. I might just express that the former minister of justice and attorney general attended to Portage la Prairie, was there to garner an understanding of what the situation was in his portfolio, and randomly selected a street to make contact at the door with residents. Coincidentally, the very first home that the former attorney general had the opportunity to visit had a bullet hole in their picture window. This was on a very quiet street, very much away from the more hectic pace of the downtown area, and this was an occurrence of a random drive-by discharge of a weapon. As the former attorney general canvassed through the streets for the people's thoughts in regard to his portfolio, he found that virtually every person he spoke with ranked the concern for personal safety as either No. 1 or No. 2.

Portage la Prairie has undergone a significant rash of criminal activity over the last number of years, although more recently, I believe, to a lesser extent. But I want to stress that the community of Portage la Prairie is very well aware that these concerns are best resolved by getting everyone involved, and the Department of Justice over the last two years has funded the Crime Prevention Office, which is the headquarters and clearing house for six programs that are underway within the community of Portage la Prairie. I am certain he is familiar with Community Watches, Block Parenting, Eyes and Ears, Citizens on Patrol, Ride Along and many others.

The original working arrangement was that the Province would assist in the operation and financing of this for two years. I am wondering

at this time, though, would the Province consider further assistance to this office, seeing that there has been a very positive influence through this activity? I wondered if the City of Portage la Prairie and the respective community organizations which this office is involved with would make application, whether this would be a consideration of his.

Mr. Mackintosh: That was an initiative, I understand, that was funded through the Justice Initiatives Fund on the understanding that there would be a decreasing funding commitment from the Province with its gradual movement to community funding. What stage that is at now, I do not know. Perhaps the Member has information as to whether the community has developed the capacity to continue funding that program.

My understanding and advice is that the program was envisioned as a model as to how we can plant seeds in other communities in Manitoba, recognizing that the Province could not afford to do this kind of programming in every community or neighbourhood but that it could, nonetheless, be a catalyst for positive change. So, if the Member has any further information on that one, I certainly, from my end, can seek out further information and determine the current status of that from what our knowledge is.

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the Minister's response. It was a two-year funding program, and the City of Portage la Prairie is currently wholeheartedly supporting that office and the co-ordinator who is employed within that office. We see the benefits of it, and there is certainly an ongoing need for this clearing house affair, and I believe that it certainly serves as a model.

Another program that the Minister of Justice previously supported was the Youth for Christ operation that provided for persons considered as conditionally discharged and on probation to attend to and to garner schooling. I am wondering what is the current status of that particular program, or is it, again, a one-time support?

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my understanding that that was a program similar in design and funding to the earlier safety office that the Member discussed. It is my understanding that under the Justice Initiatives Fund, there is not an intention to permanently fund these kinds of initiatives but rather to spur the development of innovative change with crime prevention as a focus. In this case, I understand it is up to the proponent to have developed independent funding sources, but if that is not accurate I can get back to the Member. If the Member has further information, I would be pleased to receive that.

Mr. Faurshou: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate once again the Minister's response. It is excellent to have the opportunity to construct and pilot programs like this. I think we are all wanting to recognize alternative avenues, alternatives other than incarceration for persons who have had run-ins with the law, and to provide for rehabilitation through education and alternative activities. It is, I think, a very worthwhile program and maybe just to say let us give it a shot one time only, maybe there should be further evaluation and consideration that these programs offer the potential of alternatives to incarceration. I would like to certainly have the Minister recognize that.

Going through virtually every area, Portage la Prairie has some contact within the budget allocations. I might just perhaps try and start through the Law Enforcement Services. Portage la Prairie, through the reallocation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, has found itself as a regional office with inspector in charge of the forces in Portage la Prairie, which has allowed for a greater degree of co-ordination of those enforcement services. Although recently reading the need of over a 1000 police officers in the ranks of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I am just wondering where now is the situation for Manitoba in regard to open positions? Are we down from the prescribed number of officers within the province at this point in time?

Mr. Mackintosh: As the Member I think knows, the RCMP is responsible for its own management and deployment. It is our understanding that there have been some changes in the delivery of policing services by the RCMP as of late and that some of the initial

projections about the success of that change has been short-changed by a shortage of graduates from what is called Depot. New recruits, it is my understanding that that problem has been rectified and that more recruits are expected to graduate and be deployed across Canada. The challenge for the RCMP now is to attract and ensure that the RCMP complement in Manitoba is increased and I hope to its full complement, and in that regard the RCMP has the full support of the Government of Manitoba to fund to the complement. It is my expectation that over the next year or two that we will see some positive change with regard to the deployment of RCMP in Manitoba.

Mr. Faurchou: I appreciate the Minister's support that the complement that is prescribed for Manitoba is indeed fully complied with. However, in discussions, there is a very stinging point that came to light on a couple of occasions over the last two years and that is the involvement of female police officers on maternity leave. In discussions that the Minister will no doubt have with the RCMP, the residents have grave concern when the public announcement is made through a press release that there is no reduction in service when a police officer is on maternity leave. Under the current arrangements, that police officer is not replaced.

When the press announcement says that there is no reduction in service, I think, it is an insult to both the residents of the area and to the competence of that individual on maternity leave. The press release states that she is of no consequence, you know, and the residents are getting the same amount of service whether she is there or if she is not there.

So I think there are two points that I would like to raise here. First, to be very selective in the wording of the press release or the commentary to the press when someone does take this particular leave, and to recognize that this is part of policing and individuals require this type of leave from time to time. There should perhaps be consideration in float positions as there is within, say, the employees of a school division recognizing that there will be teachers that leave for maternity leave or personal leave and require a substitute. So you

do have a casual role or substitute role and need perhaps a floating contingent of officers that can comply with this situation.

Mr. Mackintosh: I first became aware of this situation of maternity leave while at the AMM convention in Brandon. There had been some general concerns expressed by a number of representatives on rural municipalities. That was expressed to the RCMP representative who attended those sessions with me. I certainly would be pleased to pass on the concerns and the remarks of the Member to the RCMP, because I share that concern. We recognize, too, that the federal government has now increased the maternity leave to one year, so the challenge will continue. I hope, too, though, that, with the enhancements to deployment and to the complement, this issue can, in part, be dealt with, but we will wait and see.

Mr. Faurchou: I appreciate the Minister's response, and it is an ongoing concern. It is not to slight or put any heavier burdens upon the female members of the RCMP. It is just a recognized fact and one that we hope can be resolved for the benefit of all.

In regard to policing, in the Portage la Prairie area, there was deep concern with a shooting incident on Long Plain First Nation reserve, which involved personnel from the Dakota Ojibway Police Service and a situation arose where in fact the RCMP was called upon to bring resources to a situation where police officers of the DOPS essentially all went on stress leave. There was essentially a doubling of the resources necessary to continue policing. We were continuing to support the DOPS, as well as we were having to support the RCMP at the same time. So we were paying twice for the same service.

How is this now being resolved? I know the RCMP have continued their detachment responsibilities on the Long Plain reserve.

Mr. Mackintosh: I will have to get back and advise the Member on the status of that situation.

Mr. Faurchou: I appreciate the Minister's response, and it is a complex one. In the state of flux that the DOPS seems to be in, I think it is

definitely an area of attention for the Minister to resolve the level of support and the funding. If that is the direction that we are going, as a government, to continue to recognize the importance of Aboriginal policing on Aboriginal reserves, we have a very defined role to play. If, in fact, that something like this arises, the contract, perhaps, should be modified, where we are not continuing to pay for services that we are not receiving.

Also, I would like to leave with the Minister concerns of recruits for this particular program. I truly believe that there should be opportunity provided for individuals that are looking at the Aboriginal police services to have a program that would enhance their skills, that they could be considered to qualify for training in this area. So often we find recruits with good attitude and good interpersonal skills and yet do not have the educational training that is necessary to meet the qualifications for further training, as well as not having the resources to even relocate and provide for tuition and other necessary elements to bring themselves to a qualified stance. If the Minister has a response in that matter, I would appreciate it.

* (17:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: Although I respect the Member's views on this one, we have to recognize that many of the officers with DOPS are recruited from RCMP training. I also look forward to receiving the insights and recommendations of the AJIC in this regard. As the Member may well know, Aboriginal policing was a major part of the report, and I agree with the thrust of the recommendations in this regard. I look forward to seeing what practical and timely suggestions they have.

Mr. Faurschou: Mr. Chairman, once again I appreciate the Minister's response because I do support the program. It is one that I believe was working well in the Long Plain First Nation until this unfortunate incident that took place a couple of years ago.

I was wondering if I can move on to a situation which I know the Minister in his critic's role raised about Portage la Prairie involving the consideration of the Crown attorney's office and

the lack of funding that was obvious throughout, not only Portage la Prairie's office but throughout the province, and that ultimately, I am going to say claimed the career of the former Crown attorney for Portage la Prairie, that being Ed Sloan, and caused him to resign his position, which was one of respect within our community. I am concerned as to whether this situation has in fact been addressed, because it was one in which I know the current minister was very much involved.

Mr. Mackintosh: The review by Ernst & Young, which is a six-month review—I cannot recall now when it is expected to report exactly, but I believe it is in the fall—has as its ambit the regional offices, not only the Winnipeg offices, of Prosecutions branch, and the Portage office is one aspect of that review. So we look forward to receiving their findings and any recommendations with respect to the Portage office. It is a matter, I think, of just a bit more time.

Mr. Faurschou: I thank the Minister for his response. In regard to the Crown attorneys, their responsibility for prosecution on behalf of the peoples of Manitoba is one that is very demanding, and currently I believe the backlog and the time it takes to proceed with the trial of individuals who have been charged with criminal activity is nine months and sometimes rises as long as a year before a court date has been established.

It is very widely known within the Prosecutions branch and Crown attorneys' offices that if we had a much shorter time frame between the actual charges being laid and court date being set we would not have as many individuals taking the stance of not guilty pleas, because it is recognized that the longer the time that elapses, so many other elements involved within the trial change. Witnesses move away. Police officers are transferred, and in some cases even the individuals who have had the crime committed against them pass away. So these are grave concerns that residents not only of Portage la Prairie but of Manitoba have. I would like to hear from the Minister what his target is for the delay between actual charges being laid and seeing their particular case upon the court docket.

Mr. Mackintosh: I regret or maybe I just do not recall, but I never heard the applause of the Member when I was raising these issues in Question Period from time to time and indeed on a regular basis over the last number of years, but I am glad now that people have moved to the other side of the House that there is a newfound interest in court backlogs. I guess it is that cybershield I think I described in the House, that once they go through that shield, all of a sudden now they see things they could not see when they were there to make change.

I believe that we have to make some fundamental changes in how we do business to reduce backlogs, but what we have done is, first of all, ordered a review of the Prosecutions branch to determine how well it is functioning and support it. As well, we have begun the child victim support initiative, and we thought there is no better place to start than victim cases where children are involved to put in place new protocol to reduce backlogs. As well, with the criminal organization high-risk offender unit, it is our objective to put in place protocol to move more quickly gang violence cases and home invasion cases.

With the child victim support initiative, there are a number of initiatives that we hope can make a difference. We will be monitoring these. We recognize that this initiative is a work in progress, but we also think that it can make a difference when the Prosecutions branch is able and has as a matter of protocol the job of moving a case along as quickly as possible and not simply being prepared to go to trial. They I think can make a difference by challenging excessive requests for remands, by securing early trial dates. We are also looking at the development of technology through computerization so that we can better monitor and track cases as they go through the courts.

We also, of course, are committed to the appointment of two more Provincial Court judges. As well, I think we always have to look at the bigger picture and ask ourselves what charges should even be referred to the courts in the first place and which can be dealt with more effectively in terms of both victim satisfaction and changing behaviour of an offender by allowing certain matters to be left in the

community. I know the former mayor of Portage la Prairie is taking a leadership role in community justice in the Member's community, a position that I highly respect and which I think the Member will see develop over the course of our mandate. So I think that is the answer. It is a one-line answer, but we have to make a significant change and we have begun on that process. We have to attack the remand culture that has built up in our courts.

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the Minister's response and to say that I was inactive when sitting on the government side of the House in the previous administration, I will not say the floor is worn out because it is a pretty tough marble floor, but it was definitely well travelled between my office and the Minister of Justice during my short tenure here.

I made on numerous occasions this particular point in regard to Portage la Prairie and the Crown Attorney's office, and I believe that we would not have to have long-term sustained resources dedicated to the Crown Attorney's offices if we were to allocate a significant amount of resources at one time to clear the backlog, because once the backlog has been cleared, then we are in a shorter time frame and there will be a lessened amount of cases referred to the courts. Speedy justice is a deterrent in itself and you have mentioned the alternatives that are available, such as the Youth Justice Committee operating in Portage la Prairie, and I believe it has significantly taken numbers upon itself to resolve rather than seeing it through the court system.

* (17:50)

I still would like to see the Minister respond, in fact, to say that significant resources in a very concentrated effort would not then have to be sustained in the long run. Also there are varied areas within the province that sustained crime waves in various communities which elevate beyond the long-term averages, which are planned for within budget that perhaps the Crown Attorney's office could have the opportunity to have a floating individual that could be reassigned to make certain that the backlog in a certain community is addressed and reduced and then we are back once again to our

normal situation. So those are just two considerations that I would like the Minister, if he has a response—it is really not a question in that, more just a consideration in this regard.

Mr. Mackintosh: We will consider those remarks, of course, and it may well be that the review will propose for consideration that kind of approach. There is no doubt too, though, and I think the Member is getting close to it, that reducing the crime rates can make a significant difference of course in backlogs and resources needed in the Prosecutions branch.

Mr. Faurshou: Mr. Chairman, I think Portage is a model in a lot of cases to looking at just what the Minister alluded to in trying to provide for individuals who may be headed down the criminal pathway. We have come a long way to recognizing the concerns as well as addressing the situation of the financially challenged, as my honourable colleague from Charleswood alluded to, but Portage does have a considered population that comes from that financial background. We do have our concerns and we are trying to address that.

Within Portage la Prairie, we are still faced with a number of criminal acts each and every day. The public is really gravely concerned that these individuals are out on the street almost immediately after being charged and not kept off the streets. There was a very violent attack on a youth in the Portage Collegiate Institute a week and a half ago. In that incident, the individual was arrested by the police officers and never missed his supper, back at home under what was a conditional release that he was confined to his home, and within days it was noticed by others that he was not considerate of this order whatsoever and was again arrested and looked upon in the courts, well, do not do it again. This is the concern that we have as residents not only at Portage la Prairie but all over this province.

I am very interested in the Minister's response in this regard because it was a very violent attack. This individual is still in the hospital and will have long-term health-related problems from this attack.

Mr. Mackintosh: I can discuss with the Member, I suppose, the system that is in place

when there is a wrongdoing and a violent crime. I do not know if that is where the Member wants to go or not.

I just remind the Member, and this may be useful when he discusses these matters with his constituents who may complain to him from time to time about the perceptions of the justice system in instances like that, that when one is charged and apprehended, sanctions or consequences do not flow until there is a disposition, there is a finding of guilt and then sentencing.

Bail itself is not to be a consequence. One is presumed innocent, of course, until proven guilty. Nonetheless, when it comes to bail, there is a policy in Manitoba that in matters of a serious, violent crime, the Crown prosecutor should argue in opposition to the granting of a release. If there is some concern by the prosecutor, there is a process in place that that individual is to seek the advice of somebody more senior in the Prosecutions branch for some direction.

I do not know what the circumstances of this particular matter are, and I would not want to comment on them. But there was a growing frustration on the part of the public that perceived the early releases or the release on bail immediately after a serious and violent crime was detracting from confidence in the justice system. As a result of that, the Criminal Code was amended fairly recently to add a new consideration when bail is applied for and argued before the court, that is that one may be kept incarcerated on remand if that was necessary to maintain confidence in the justice system.

In any event, those kinds of matters are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. I do not know if the Member wanted more of a reaction or explanation than that, but if the Member has any other further questions or would like to discuss it more, I would like to hear from him.

Mr. Faurshou: I thank the Minister for his response and appreciate just the points that I wanted to convey. That is a concern, and whether it is perceived or otherwise, it still remains so. So leaving that case, at the present

time, my time is short, so I would just like to maybe perhaps move on to some very quick short snappers here, if I can say, on behalf of the residents of Portage la Prairie.

The contingent of rural attorneys is one that has been greatly diminished over the last number of years. Many rural attorneys had opportunities to supplement their practice by working on behalf of Legal Aid. It still remains a concern because we are finding that attorneys-at-law are remaining within the city to make their practice, and we do not have the numbers of attorneys practising within rural Manitoba. *[interjection]*

I believe the Minister is probably familiar with an outspoken individual of the Law Society that practises in Portage and most certainly has been conveying this message. I would very much like to hear the Minister's response, having the knowledge that he is familiar with the individual who has raised this concern.

Mr. Mackintosh: There has been a long-time concern about the provision of professional services in smaller communities, whether in Manitoba or even elsewhere, but in particular with regard to rural lawyers, or lawyers outside of Winnipeg. I know that there was some hope and expectation, on the part of members of the Bar and the Law Society or the Bar Association, that the ability to incorporate, which has now been proclaimed, could make some difference in making some practices marginally more viable in smaller communities. That will have to be borne out by experience, but I recognize that concern. It is important that there be access to justice, whether it is civil or criminal, throughout Manitoba.

Of course, it is free enterprise in terms of the private Bar, and our concerns in the Department of Justice can more directly bear on the provision of public services, whether there be the Prosecutions branch services or the provision of legal aid.

Mr. Faurschou: I thank the Minister for his response. Turning to the correctional facilities that are in Portage la Prairie, I had asked previously of the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton), who referred me to yourself, in regard to the women's correctional

facilities that are in Portage la Prairie, currently operating out of a facility that was constructed in 1906. There are significant concerns about the continued operations of the women's correctional facilities due to two factors; one, that being of overcrowding, and the other being the constitution of the inmates who are currently in the facility being of a much more violent orientation, and these factors are causing great concern to those who are employed in this facility.

I do know that there was discussion as to the long-term renovation and potential expansion of these facilities. I wondered if the Minister could comment in this regard.

Mr. Mackintosh: With regard to the remands being held at Portage, that will be dealt with when the new facility at Headingley Correctional centre opens in a number of months. That is my understanding. That will allow us to move the female remands back to the Remand Centre.

In terms of the facility itself and its future, I have asked the Department to prepare options for consideration. As I indicated privately to the Member, it is my understanding that there have been some discussions, and I confirm that today, with the federal government to determine if they are interested, in any way, in working in partnership with Manitoba Justice for the housing of female inmates in this province.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., the Committee shall rise.

LABOUR

* (14:40)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Labour.

Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 129 of the Estimates book, resolution 11.1. Labour Executive (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$500,100. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Madam Chair, I would like to continue with the response that I was giving the Member yesterday when we had to end because it was six o'clock. I think my response will be in several parts.

One is the specific question that he had asked several times. It was about the Minister's Web page, and he also referenced the Deputy Minister's Web page. As I stated, I took responsibility for the lack of detail on the Minister's Web page and that I was going to ensure that very quickly that information would be updated.

I do have, however, some additional information that I would like to share with the Member this afternoon. That is, in particular, the Deputy Minister Web page that the Member was referring to and the lack of interactive ability that Web page had, the Web page for the Deputy Minister was designed by the previous government. The current government's new home page is far more interactive than anything that the previous government had.

So I just wanted to bring that to the Member's attention, and as we quickly work through this, we will make sure that as the Government's Web page is far more interactive than the former government's Web page, that that goes throughout the entire process.

The Member also spoke at great length about the fact and excoriated the Minister, I might add, for not having provided accurate information on the Web page and on the home page. The Member never spoke, and I wonder, I rhetorically will ask him when the Member has an opportunity to respond perhaps he could address this question too, that the Member has not spoken nor has he asked any questions about the portions of the Department of Labour Web page that deal with the various divisions. I wondered if he had had an opportunity to peruse those Web pages, and perhaps when we get to the specific divisions he will ask me a question about that. But I just wanted to remind the Member that those Web pages, which are really the heart and soul of the Department of Labour, are up to date, are updated regularly and have over 30 000 hits a month.

But I just wanted to carry on with the response that I have to his concerns that the information on the Minister's Web page was not up to date and I would like to share with the Member the biography of the Minister of Labour. I will not read it into the record but under Executive Council of Cabinet the biography of the Minister of Labour is up to date. It is the biography that recognizes the fact that I am now a Cabinet minister, recognizes the number of portfolios that I hold and then goes on to state my background and information about my past experience and groups that I have belonged to, so I will tell the Member that my biography is up to date.

The Member, as I said, has been very concerned about the lack of up-to-date and accurate information on the part of the Minister's Web page, and I just would like to share the fact that staff this morning perused the Progressive Conservative Web pages which perhaps the Member might have done, might have saved himself and us a fair bit of dialogue yesterday had he taken the opportunity to peruse his own caucus's Web page.

These are as of this morning. The MLA for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), second sentence in the biography of the MLA for Ste. Rose, he is currently the Minister of Natural Resources. The MLA for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), her biography states at the end of the second paragraph, most recently she was elected as Speaker in May of 1995. Again, I would like to remind the Member that these are Web pages that were explored this morning,

An Honourable Member: By the Minister?

Ms. Barrett: No, not by the Minister, as I have explained to the Member. I am a Luddite and therefore am not to that point yet. But this is 30 weeks, as the Member was very clear in his pointing out yesterday on numerous occasions, 30 weeks after the government changed, and if he is counting that from October 5, it is 32 weeks, approximately, since the election, but whatever date it is, for instance, September 21, 1999. The biographies, I will carry on, from the Progressive Conservative caucus, the MLA for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), second sentence: Following her re-election to the Manitoba

Legislature as the Member for River East on April 25, 1995, she has continued in this ministry. That would be the Minister of Family Services. I think Mr. Sale would have something to say about that.

The MLA for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), people who were not even Cabinet ministers in the former government, on the second page of the MLA for Pembina's biography: He is the legislative assistant—oh, and I might add as I read this, assistant spelled a-s-s-i-s-t-a-n-c-e—to the Minister of Education and Training. I wonder if he undertook his Grade 3 exams in spelling. *[interjection]* The spell-check, in response to the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), I do know enough about computerization to know that the spell-check cannot tell you the difference between whether—they will tell you whether a word is misspelled; they will not tell you whether it is the right word to use, and, in this case, somebody, some human did not take a look at not only the content but the spelling of these.

I carry on with the biography. The biography of the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer): Having been appointed as Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Minister responsible for Seniors, he has proven to be a capable team player. The MLA for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer): As Minister of Finance, he is committed to, and the sentence carries on. Then it says that he is a former "Minister o Labour"—another spelling typo. The MLA for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson), according to the Progressive Conservative Web page, is Health Minister, and then it says: Prior to his current Health portfolio, he served as other ministers. The MLA for Fort Garry's (Mrs. Smith) biography that we accessed today, thirty-plus weeks after the election, according to the biography: is currently employed for—not by, but for—Manitoba Education and Training as the co-ordinator for parental and community involvement. I wonder if the constituents of the Member for Fort Garry realize that she is not only an elected member of the Legislature but also a civil servant. I just think that is quite unusual.

The MLA for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) is a member of the Board of Directors of the

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Well, I am here as the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to tell the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) that the Member for Emerson has not been a member of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Board of Directors since I believe late October 1999. Just as a parenthetical comment, the new appellation for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is not MPIC but MPI. We are leaving off the corporation.

Finally—no, no, two more. The MLA for Carman (Mr. Rocan): in government is an active committee member, serving on the Public Accounts Committee, the Statutory Regulations and Orders Committee and the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee. I want to note for the Member, in case he is not aware of this, the verb form and the verb tense are very important in this because the verb tense in all of these cases is in the present tense—is currently; currently is. For the Member's information, a present tense verb means that that sentence is currently a statement of fact.

* (14:50)

Arthur-Virden, finally. For the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), it says: helping farmers recover from this spring's flooding, on his Web page, and, I mean, my constituency is not rural, but my understanding is that this spring actually was quite dry, that farmers in the southwest part of the province—and I believe the Member for Arthur-Virden has even stated this—have actually been able to get a crop in this year, for which they are very grateful and for which we should all be grateful. So, again, this spring's flooding, I am wondering if there is an alternate universe we are talking about here. It certainly is not the Manitoba of the year 2000 that I am aware of. Just one tiny typo there, the start of a sentence, the first letter was not capitalized.

I raise these examples for the Member because I think the Member made a statement that I agreed with yesterday. He made it several times in his questioning, and I am quoting here from page 2268 from yesterday's Estimates. The Member says, and I quote: "I would suggest to the Minister that perhaps a little bit more effort should be put into this"—and that is the

modification of the Minister's home page. "This is a new way of communicating with the public. It is a new way of getting her message out, and I would suggest to the Minister that her department has not really kept the Web site or the relevant information up to date. I was wondering if she will commit to this committee that this Web site will provide relevant information to the public." As the Member knows, I did on several occasions yesterday commit that this would happen.

The Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) in a later question states: "But there seem to be some glaring omissions on your home page and all the way through." Then again, quote: "It is intriguing that last modified is February 21, 2000. That is pretty current. Unfortunately, there is information on the site that is glaringly absent."

Well, I would suggest to the Member that the information on the Department of Labour's Web site that deals with the various divisions is up to date, is accurate, is reflective of the current situation, and that the Member should perhaps look at his own backyard before he continues to castigate the Minister for what she has already agreed was an oversight on her part and what she has agreed to fix and to make accurate.

But I would suggest that actually the fact that there is not a minister's welcoming statement in the Minister's home page is actually in the scheme of things of far less importance as an information tool than the fact that the MLA for Ste. Rose's (Mr. Cummings) biography says that he is still currently the Minister of Natural Resources, and the examples that I have given of other MLAs, particularly other ministers. The Member rightly said that it is very important that we use this new communication tool to broaden access for people. It is vital that that is the case. But information is only useful if it is accurate. Any tool is only useful if it provides accurate information. I believe there is a phrase that even a Luddite like myself understands and that is garbage in, garbage out.

I would suggest that there is some major work that needs to be done on the Web site of the Official Opposition. I assume the Member is likely to say that there is—and I believe I heard

him say actually—that there is a difference that I am confusing a government Web site with a political Web site. I am suggesting to the Member that when the New Democrats were in opposition, when we got the Web sites up and running as we moved forward all of us as MLAs, all 57 of us, started to acknowledge and understand the importance of the Web site, the importance of being able to use this new system, that we had our biographies up to date. We had our Web page updated regularly. We had no more resources at our command than the current Official Opposition has. There is no excuse for the Official Opposition not having the information on its Web pages up to date and accurate.

Up to date, my goodness, we are talking October 5. The Member for Ste. Rose has not been a Cabinet minister since October 5. The Department for which he was a Cabinet minister does not even exist anymore. It is very important that the—

An Honourable Member: It is a shame; it is a pity.

Ms. Barrett: I am wondering, Madam Chair, if you would please call the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) to order. I listened more or less politely. I had my momentary lapses yesterday, for which I apologize, but I listened to the Member for Springfield's questions, and I would like you to ask him to listen to my responses.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would at this time like to possibly avoid situations of yesterday where people were speaking out of order. I would very much appreciate if all members would speak through me in turn.

Point of Order

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): A point of order, Madam Chair, I have let quite a bit go in which the Minister is being terribly unparliamentary when she refers to an individual on the Committee. If she has a problem with something, she should refer to the Committee. The last time I listened, there were three individuals on this committee, and all of them were having something to say.

So perhaps the Minister should have said to the Chair that the Committee should be spoken to about speaking out of order when their microphone is not on or they have not been recognized. You know what, the minister is fast and furious with—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Schuler: On the same point of order, Madame Chair, the same thing happened yesterday, and I do not remember any of us making a big issue out of it, and I do not know why the Minister, now just because she got caught and she is cheesed off, is all of a sudden making a point of order, but it should not be directed at personal members when it was the complete committee.

Madam Chairperson: I would point out it is not a point of order, and I am sorry if you misunderstood me. I was speaking to the Committee, and it occurred to me as the interchange began that I would appreciate trying to avoid that situation. I was addressing the Committee and not just one member. So my apologies if that was misunderstood, but I would appreciate your co-operation all round. Thank you.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chair, I think that the Member for Springfield when he spoke yesterday about the need to have accurate information on the Web site, I never disagreed with that. I think that it is very important that all 57 of the MLAs in the Legislature have accurate information on the Web site, because it is important that people when they access the Web site have a degree of comfort that the information they are taking away from the Web site is accurate.

I have explained to the Member and I have taken responsibility for the failings of the Minister's home page. I have explained that I will ensure that that, actually more a lack of information, is rectified as quickly as possible, but I do think that the Member needs to look a little closer to home perhaps before he says that it is only the Minister of Labour that is providing lack of information or incorrect information. So

I would just like to say to the Member that perhaps he will share with his staff or the staff of the Official Opposition the fact that perhaps they need to monitor their own Web site a little more assiduously.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, meanwhile back at the Department of Labour Estimates committee, I would like to ask the Minister a question. Yesterday, Minister, you used the word "Luddite" to describe yourself. What exactly did you mean again?

* (15:00)

Ms. Barrett: The word "Luddite" comes from England in, I think, around the period of the Industrial Revolution when massive changes were taking place in the English countryside when people's lives were being torn apart, particularly in rural England, due to the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the machines that were then coming on. As we know today, we have the same type of thing happening when a robot can do the work of 10 or 15 people. The same thing happened 400 or 500 years ago in England when the Industrial Revolution began and people's lives were being overturned completely. Many people got very angry. They had no power; they had no sense that they could control these changes that were devastating their lives and the lives of people around them. A group of them banded together and in frustration began to destroy machinery wherever they found it.

I cannot now remember the exact genesis of the word "Luddite." It might very well have been the name of one of the organizers, one of the founders, if you will, of this movement, although I am not sure if you can even call it a movement. I think it was more a lashing out in frustration and fear and terror, if you will. They smashed and destroyed machinery wherever they found it, and they caused a fair bit of damage. Ever since that time, that word has come into—obviously not totally popular usage, but has been used by people who have less than an affinity for a new technological advance.

I must caution the Member that my sort of semi-facetious use of the word "Luddite" yesterday did not mean that I anticipate taking a

hammer or any other such instrument to my computer or my printer or my voice mail or my e-mail or even the Web page, or my cell phone, although I think there are times when we all would like to live in a simpler era. But that is the genesis of the word "Luddite" and the context within which I used it.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, Minister, I, too, was very interested in the term that you used, so I went to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, and admittedly I was surprised at what I found. There are actually two definitions present. The first reads, and this is from Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, and I quote: "half-witted Leicestershire workmen."

Minister, obviously you are not from Leicestershire, nor are you a workman, so I guess my question is would you, then, consider yourself to be half-witted?

Ms. Barrett: You know, I think the Member for Springfield has done something that there are many people in this building thought would never, ever, ever happen. He has caused the Minister of Labour to be rendered speechless. I cannot believe that in a discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Labour where there are many important issues to be raised with a finite number of hours to go—I believe we have 158 or 157 hours in Estimates throughout all of the three committees—where we have many departments still to be heard from, where we are supposed to be answering questions of import, where we are supposed to be being held accountable as ministers and as government for our plans for the coming year in the Department of Labour, that the Member for Springfield has the audacity and the temerity to ask me such an inane question.

Of course, I do not consider myself half-witted. I am very surprised at the dictionary definition using that term. That is certainly not ever been the experience or my understanding of the people who were involved in the Luddite movement, and I would never, ever use that phrase in any context. Certainly I wish that the Member would spend his time focused more on the issues that are related to the Department of Labour.

Mr. Schuler: Well, perhaps the Minister was referring to the second definition and it reads: one of an early group of 19th century English workmen destroying labour-saving machinery as protest.

I am wondering from the Minister: Do you feel the destruction of labour-saving machinery is an appropriate method of protest?

Ms. Barrett: I wonder if the Member for Springfield actually listened to my answer when I explained to him my understanding of the meaning of the word "Luddite," because if he had listened to my answer, which did not go on for that long and was just given short moments ago, he would know the answer to his current question.

I stated very clearly and I thought with a certain modest degree of humour, that I did not intend the self-definition of Luddite to in any way, shape or form state that I was in any way, shape or form in favour taking a hammer to any piece of labour-saving technology, although I could understand the frustration we all feel at one time or another at the insistence of our cell phones or that e-mail that keeps coming at us. I made that proviso quite distinct, I thought. I wonder if the Member did not hear my earlier response or if he just has a certain list of questions that he is programmed to ask no matter what the answer to the earlier question might be.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: What would be an appropriate method of protest for individuals who feel that the conditions under which that they are labouring are not adequate?

Ms. Barrett: Our modern society has evolved over time a number of avenues to protest, to share concerns, to provide suggestions as a response to situations that people feel are inadequate or wrong. We have the avenue of verbal protest through meetings with people in authority. We have written protest in letters, e-mails. We have petitions in the Legislature. We have the right of all members to table petitions from members of the public on issues of importance to them. We have the right to freely congregate, to get together, to go in a group to a protest.

The members of the labour movement have often used that method, peaceful method of protest of rallies, of marches, of demonstrations. Members of groups like the child care community, in the early 1990s when I was first elected, rallied quite extensively several times on the steps of the Legislature and even inside the Legislature sharing their concerns about cutbacks to child daycare. There are a number of ways to show your disappointment or disapproval or anger at current policies or situations that have evolved over time in a democracy. I fully support those methods of seeking redress for grievances.

Mr. Schuler: Speaking of protests, Minister, there was a protest of some sort earlier today. Were you in attendance?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I was.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell us what took place at this particular protest?

Ms. Barrett: There were several hundred Corrections officers present on the steps of the Legislature. They had signs and there was a mike. The President of the Manitoba Government Employees Union spoke. The Minister of Labour spoke. The president of the National Government Employees Union spoke. Then there was a peaceful walk around the Legislative Building.

Madam Chairperson: Order please. I would just like to repeat my previous request that people not speak out of turn unless they are recognized and respect the speaker of the moment. Thank you.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: Was the Premier (Mr. Doer) in attendance?

Ms. Barrett: No, the Minister of Labour and the Minister responsible for the Civil Service were in attendance at the meeting, rally, forum, whatever you want to call it, of the correctional officers of the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Minister, after you were booed down by the people who have supported your

party since its inception, did the Premier (Mr. Doer) then come out to address the crowd?

Ms. Barrett: I find it interesting that the Labour critic, who was not in attendance, or certainly I did not see the Labour critic in attendance—

* (15:10)

Point of Order

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): I would just like to emphasize for the record here the difference between what I heard when I was out there when the Minister went out and what the Member opposite has mentioned about booing down. It would appear to be a lacklustre use of words in saying the Minister was booed down. I believe that maybe the Member opposite wants to redress what he has said of booing down the Minister. That is not the way that I heard it when I was out there.

Madam Chairperson: Could I suggest, this is not a point of order. This is a dispute of the facts.

Point of Order

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Chair, I am not sure if this is a point of order or not, but I was a critic of Highways for five years, I believe, and I always thought that Estimates was the process in which you talk to the Minister about some standard issues, basically line by line, how money is spent and maybe an overall philosophical discussion.

I have not been here that often, I would admit, but all I have heard so far are fine points on terms like "Ludditism" and being a Luddite, which is maybe an interesting historical perspective, but I assume it was meant in jest, and sarcasm was involved. It was misinterpreted by the Member, the way I see it.

Now we are getting into subjective interpretation of what a crowd did or did not do. I am wondering if we are on track here, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairperson: I am afraid this is not a point of order.

* * *

Madam Chairperson: Would the Minister care to continue?

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Madam Chair. The issue under discussion—discussion is not what took place—the issue that was raised by the Corrections officers who were in attendance this morning was an issue dealing with the collective bargaining that is under way between the Manitoba Government Employees Union and the Government of Manitoba.

I went to address the group of Corrections officers because I am not only Minister of Labour, but I am also the Minister charged with the Civil Service, and as such am the Minister that is responsible for the Civil Service and deals through that role, not directly with, but has responsibility for the Government's role in the negotiating procedures.

I would just like to say that in my nine and a half or close to ten years in Opposition, I do not recall a time when there was a rally at the Legislative Building—I do recall a time, many times actually, when there was a rally at the Legislative Building when the Minister or a member of government did not come to address the group, but I do not ever remember a time when a member of the Opposition, and most virtually always the critic responsible for that area, did not go out and, if not address the group, at least be there to get first-hand what the issues are that were of concern.

I looked around this morning, quite extensively, I might add, and was unable to see the critic for Labour for the Progressive Conservative Party in attendance. I would suggest that, in the interest of good information gathering and good documentation of issues as the Member has spoken so extensively about in dealing with the Web site, his presence first-hand might have given him a better understanding of what actually took place at that meeting.

Madam Chairperson: Before I recognize the next speaker, could I please—I did not clarify that the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) did not have a point of order, but it was indeed a dispute of the facts.

But I would like to take this opportunity to thank both him and the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) for their contribution.

Mr. Schuler: The question that I had asked, after the Minister was booed down by the people, did the Premier (Mr. Doer) come out to address the crowd? The Minister is obviously not going to answer that, and my question is: Were the protestors not calling for the Premier?

Ms. Barrett: Actually there was a fair bit of comment made by the people who were there. I did not hear a request for the Premier. That does not mean it was not there; I did not hear it. I made my presentation, and I am prepared to share that with the Member if he is interested in what I actually said and some facts about the event. I did not hear boos. That does not mean that they did not take place. I did hear people being very vociferous, legitimately sharing with me and with their fellow workers and their correctional officers and the leadership of the union their concerns, their degree of frustration, and their statement that they wanted their issues raised.

As a matter of fact, now that I remember, the president of the Manitoba Government Employees Union, who spoke just prior to my addressing the group, said: We want the Minister of Labour to take back to her caucus, her Cabinet and the Premier the concerns that we are raising here. I did not hear him nor did I hear the president of the National Government Employees Union, nor did I hear the president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, who also addressed the group, say that they were disappointed in any way that the Premier was not there. And I made the point very clearly in my remarks, which, unfortunately, were not heard by the Labour critic for the Official Opposition, that I would take back—and it was with a great deal of pleasure that I would take back—to the Cabinet, the caucus, and the Premier the issues that had been raised very effectively, I said, by the group, not only in their presentation this morning but also in the information that they have been sharing at various workplaces for the last week and information that they have been sharing with the Government throughout the negotiation process.

Mr. Schuler: Minister, how do you deal with the members of the MGEU not feeling that you as Minister of Labour can address their concerns?

Ms. Barrett: I did not get that feeling at all. As a matter of fact, what I felt was that they listened to me when I made my statement. They were animated, and legitimately so. They were sharing with me their concerns about being treated as professionals. They were sharing with me their concerns about the fact that they felt that they had been mistreated, which I agreed with over the last 10 years, that they had a lost a great deal of parity both with wages and benefits and sense of professionalism over the last 10 years of the former government.

I heard—actually I believe it was the chair or the head of the MGEU say in his opening remarks—that in some cases the Corrections officers were being forced to, when they became employees, use second-hand uniforms, were not even being provided with new uniforms, which says a lot about the lack of respect that the former government gave to these Corrections officers.

They talked a lot about respect, and I believe I gave them respect, and I believe they gave me respect that I came out as a minister who has some authority and who has a legitimate reason to be out there talking with them and listening to them. I believe they feel that they were heard. They were very frustrated, were in negotiations. I did not expect them not to share with me their level of frustration.

I accepted it, I respected it and I believe they respected me for having the courtesy to go out and listen to them and say that we were paying attention to what they had to say, that we respected the job that they were doing for the safety of the people of Manitoba, that, as a matter of fact, in government, since we came into office, we had hired 122 more correctional officers in recognition of the fact that their working conditions have deteriorated to such an extent over the last 10 years.

Mr. Schuler: Is the feeling of ineffectiveness on behalf of the Minister of Labour a feeling shared by other unions across the province?

Ms. Barrett: I do not know from whence this member is gathering these kinds of ideas because, as I stated in my opening remarks and as I have stated in response to several questions over the last several days in Estimates, in response to questions placed by the Member for Springfield, I have had very good meetings and connections and contacts with everybody that I have come in contact with as Minister of Labour, as Minister responsible for the Civil Service, as Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, as Minister responsible for Autopac, as Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board and as Minister responsible for Agencies, Boards and Commissions.

I have met with literally hundreds of groups and we have had a very open and respectful dialogue. I believe that to date if you asked virtually every person and organization that I have met with since October 5, you would find that, while we may not agree on every issue that was raised and we will not agree on every decision that is made by government dealing with these issues, they would say to you that the Minister of Labour or the Minister of whichever responsibility I held in the context of my meetings with whichever groups or individuals at the very least was respectful of their positions and gave them a hearing and has followed through on what I have stated that I would do in regard to their concerns. So I do not believe that any labour union, I do not believe that any working group, I do not believe that any management group, any multicultural group, any group or individual dealing with MPI or Workers Comp feels that they have been short-changed or that they have not been listened to or respected.

If the Member for Springfield has any individual or group that feels that they have been slighted in any way by me, I would appreciate him sharing that information with me, so that I can contact those individuals and attempt to rectify that situation.

An Honourable Member: You did a good job on MPI, too. Thanks for lowering my rates.

Madam Chairperson: Did you wish to speak, Member?

An Honourable Member: Just a comment.

Madam Chairperson: Okay. I would again request that the Chair be addressed if people have a comment. Thank you.

Point of Order

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, when rules are applied they cannot be applied through convenience. In fact, throughout the whole time that the Minister spoke there were a certain amount of comments that were coming from the other side of the table, and I would appreciate it if the same rules that the Minister seems to want to apply to this side of the table would also be applied to that side of the table. I think that is only fair.

If members cannot abide by it, then perhaps they should be asked to go to another committee. But if we are all going to live by a set of rules—and the Minister called me on it and would not call her colleagues on it—I think the rules should all be applied fairly.

Madam Chairperson: Is this the same point of order?

Mr. Smith: Just on the same point of order, Madam Chair, the Member opposite seems to be quite confused in calling a point of order. However, he did hear some things over here.

I am just wondering if the Chair could advise, if we are speaking amongst each other quietly in a tone not directed at anyone other than ourselves in some discussion, whether that is acceptable here at the meeting.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): On the same point of order, Madam Chairperson, what the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) has actually done is challenge your rulings in this committee.

I am wondering if he is aware of the rules involved in challenging the Chair. It was not so much a point of order that he brought forward but a challenge of the rulings that you have been

making. I wonder if the Member for Springfield is willing to carry that through to its logical end.

Madam Chairperson: I am going to take this particular point of order under advisement and get back to the Committee.

In the meantime, I would, once again, remind and request all members to respect the person speaking.

* * *

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, Madam Chair: At one point in time, her leader, the Premier (Mr. Doer), was president of the MGEU, or as it was known at that time, the MGEA. I guess the concern we have on this side is that at that point in time he had no problem taking money out of the members' pockets when he was their president. At that time, he had all kinds of time in the world for them. Now, as Premier, he has no time for them whatsoever.

Why would the Premier have all kinds of time when he was president and taking money from the membership to meet with his members and now as Premier he will not even listen? I was wondering if the Minister would like to comment on that.

Madam Chairperson: Before I ask the Minister or recognize the Minister, I would like to respond to the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith). I neglected to clarify that speaking quietly amongst each other is acceptable as long as it is not disruptive.

Ms. Barrett: The Member is making several assumptions, and we all know—no, I will not go there. He is assuming that the Premier (Mr. Doer) was unaware of the issues that were raised. He was assuming that the Minister of Labour would not take the information and the concerns back to the Premier.

He was assuming that the Premier had nothing better to do, that he was twiddling his thumbs while the correctional officers were there. He was assuming that the Premier would not be paying attention or had not paid attention to the legitimate concerns of working people in the Province of Manitoba.

All of those assumptions are incorrect. The Premier has met on numerous occasions with representatives of business groups. He has met on numerous occasions with representatives of labour groups, and he continues to do so. I shared, virtually immediately upon the conclusion of the event in front of the Legislative Building, the concerns that had been raised and my comments to those concerns to the Premier. The Premier said that the positions that I had taken and the respect and the concern that I had shared with the correctional officers was that I had represented the feelings and the views of the Government perfectly, actually, or very well.

I think the Member is, well, grasping at straws, to put it mildly.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: It is clear that the MGEU will not listen to her as Minister. The Premier will not listen to the MGEU. My question is: What exactly is her government doing?

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, the Member assumes that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is not listening to the MGEU, that the MGEU is not paid attention to or that any labour group is not paid attention to, or, for that matter, any business group, any management group, any group at all, any individual.

I think, if the Member were to take a little straw poll out in the public today, he would find that the vast majority of people feel that we have been, in our eight-plus months in office, far more open, far more accessible, and far more respectful of the diversity of the population, of the diversity of views that are found in Manitoba, of the concerns that real people have.

* (15:30)

For the Member to state that the working people in the province of Manitoba, either individually in their workplace or through their elected representatives in the labour movement, are not being heard and are not being listened to and do not have the mutual respect with the government is an inaccuracy.

I would like to ask him to contact, please, Peter Olfert, who is the President of the MGEU,

Rob Hilliard, who is the President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, Paul Moist, who is the President of CUPE 500, Dale Paterson, who is the President of Canadian Autoworkers, Bob Desjarlais, who is President of the Thompson local of the United Steel Workers, and the list goes on and on, Brian Hunt who is the local representative here in Winnipeg of the United Steelworkers. They have had a number of meetings individually with the Minister of Labour and with the Premier (Mr. Doer).
[interjection]

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, Madam Chair, would you please call the Opposition members to order.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. There are obviously new members at the table. I have twice before asked for respect for the speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Schuler: On a point of order, Madam Chair, there are clearly individuals who have been here for a considerable amount of time who want to test the patience of the Chair, and the heckling happens on this side continuously.

Madam Chair, I believe that they should be called in order and told that it is time to cease and desist with this.

Madam Chairperson: On the same point of order, the Member for Brandon West.

Mr. Smith: Madam Chair, it was very, very clear in your previous ruling when you had mentioned that we are able to communicate and speak quietly amongst each other. Obviously, the other members who have just entered did not realize and hear that ruling. I think their voices were raised a little, and I thank you for your ruling.

Just to reiterate for the members who have come in late, that basically was a ruling, to converse back and forth quietly is one thing. It seemed to me they were getting a little loud, as well, Madam Chair, so I thank you for your ruling.

Madam Chairperson: Before I recognize the other speakers, I am not sure where I am going wrong in addressing the Committee, but I think I have made it very clear that I have been addressing both sides. I have been addressing the Committee in my request to please respect the speakers.

Perhaps the two newest members at the table were not here when the point was raised, is speaking amongst themselves acceptable. Yes, it is, as long as it is not disruptive. Catcalling across the table would not be acceptable. *[interjection]* I know where you are from, but you had had your hand up.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Madam Chair, if I was being disruptive, I would apologize to the Committee. I was merely pointing out to my colleague from Springfield that the Minister seemed to recollect all the members and leaders of the labour union but none of her staff when asked about that.

Madam Chairperson: I would like to reiterate, please, I could not tell who was being disruptive. My comments were directed to the entire committee on both sides. I would once more request co-operation, speaking quietly amongst yourselves on either side, as long as it is not disruptive.

* * *

Madam Chairperson: Madam Minister will conclude her answer.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chair, I was about to mention, as I have on other occasions, the number of groups and individuals that not only I, but the Premier, have met with, and all Cabinet ministers have met with and all caucus members have met either with cabinet colleagues or on their own. It is not only for the Minister of Labour.

The Department of Labour for which the Minister is responsible works with, if it is an effective, efficient department, all stakeholders, all partners that are affected by the legislation, that are affected by the regulations, that are affected by the guiding principles and vision, which is to have a partnership to make sure that

workplaces in Manitoba, whether they are unionized or not, whether they are civil service or not, whether they are in the industrial north or not, whether they are in the small southwestern or southeastern Manitoba communities, that these workplaces are safe, they are harassment free, they are productive, they are places where workers can go and feel that they are respected and honoured as workers, where management feels that it has a work force that will be as effective as it possibly can be.

That requires not only attention to legislation and regulations and changes within the department, which I hope at some point in the next few hours or days or weeks we actually get to discuss, but it also requires, at the ministerial level, dialogue with all of those stakeholders, with all of those partners. I think that what has happened in the past 10 or 11 years, prior to September 21 last year, was that necessity, that absolutely critical element of recognizing that there are partners here, not good guys and bad guys, got lost.

The former government had some very difficult times with workers. I am not going to spend a whole lot of time, although I could, itemizing the situations that arose, that the dialogue that took place today pales in comparison to the huge outpouring of anger and mistrust that was generated in no small part by the directives of the various ministers of Labour in the former government. That is not how I operate, and it is not how our government operates, and it is not how we, in this department, are going to operate.

I have met with, as I stated earlier, probably more management groups than I have labour groups. We have had very frank, open discussions. They have raised their concerns. I have thanked them for their concerns. I have discussed our views about some issues, and I believe, as I stated earlier, that if the Member were to canvass even a portion of the groups that I have met with—I am prepared, if the Member wants, to provide the Member with a representative list of the groups I have met with, and the person that we contacted to set up the meeting, and suggest that the critic might want to go have a meeting with those individuals, just

to see if I am being accurate in my representation of the dialogue to date.

* (15:40)

I think that the Member would find out, if he were to take that time, that the mood—that is not the right word—the tenor and the tone of the dialogue between the various stakeholders, the people and groups and organizations that have a stake in what goes on in the Department of Labour, in all of its ramifications and implications, is far more balanced, it is far lower key, it is far less hysterical, it is far less confrontational than occurred in the time between, I believe, April 26, 1988, and September 21, 1999.

Mr. Schuler: The offer that the Minister makes, I would be most interested in that list. If she would be willing to table it, yes, we would love to see it.

Again, I would just like to ask the Minister, seeing as we are having some difficulty on this particular one: Minister, the MGEU will not listen to you. They boo and heckle you outside. The Premier (Mr. Doer) will not listen to the MGEU, the former president, an individual who made a living off of the members of the MGEU. Why would the Premier not show the courage and go out and speak to these individuals who clearly have a point? You have stated you are validating that they have a concern, as we all know, that they have a very valid concern. Why will the Premier not go outside? Why would he not go show some courage and speak to his former colleagues?

Ms. Barrett: I believe I have answered that question before, but as appears to be the format that is being followed, if you can call it that in these proceedings, I will answer it again. I am the Minister of Labour. I am the Minister responsible for the Civil Service. The negotiations are ongoing with the correctional officers as part of the master agreement—part of but separate from, there are two tables, and I have direct responsibility for the negotiating process, ultimate responsibility.

As far as the Premier (Mr. Doer) being willing to address people with issues of concern,

I believe if you ask your colleagues, that they will acknowledge that the Premier, since he has been Premier and also in his role as Opposition Leader, was very open and forthright in meeting both with groups that agreed with our position and groups that did not agree with our position, unlike the former premier who, when we had a huge rally, the home care workers, one of the darkest days of the former government's tenure, skipped out the back door and refused to meet with the people who had legitimate concerns and legitimate complaints. I am not sure if the Minister of Health or the Minister of Labour actually came out to address the group at all or not, but I venture to say that did not happen either.

So, again, as in the case with the Web page, I think the Member should take some time and talk with his colleagues, two of whom are here who have not as extensive a background because they have not been in the Legislature as long as I have, but there are members in his caucus who have been in this Legislature for over 20 years, in one case over 30 years, who could provide him with a bit of background about the labour relations climate under the former government, about the degree of willingness of the former premier to meet with people who had different views than he did.

I know that the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) was in the House when the former premier took advantage of the rules of the House which provided for a certain degree of immunity and the former premier, when he was premier, said to the Member for then Crescentwood: I will kick your lights out, Timmy, which was a cowardly, despicable statement for him to make, but that was in a long line of cowardly things that the former premier did.

I think that the Member for Springfield should get some historical perspective on these situations, and I would like to reiterate that perhaps the Labour critic, the next time there is a meeting at the Legislature, might grace the meeting with his presence. The MGEU correctional officers might like to have heard what the current opposition's position is on their concerns, and they might like to have heard how the current Labour critic would justify and reflect on the almost 11 years of Conservative

rule that led to the situation that the Corrections officers are in today. So I think that before the critic for the Conservative Party casts any more aspersions on the character or the professionalism of the Premier, he ought to look in the mirror first because he did not have the courtesy to go attend that rally in his role as Labour critic.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): The Member is referring to a lot of things in the last few minutes in regard to her experience, and she and I both have shared the table on both sides of the view. I remember when the Member was in as a critic, and we talked at times about not being personal in our attacks. I am surprised that the Minister now has a change of heart in her attacks and her personalization of questions in regard to questions that are put forth by the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler). I just find that it is a bit disconcerting in how it changes in venue from one side of the table to the other when at that time we tried to accommodate the Member for Wellington—pardon me, at that time it was Wellington, now it is Inkster—in some of the remarks that were made.

So I thought I would just bring that out as a point of order, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Barrett: On the same point of order. I believe that the Member for Southdale perhaps was not in attendance earlier in the proceedings this afternoon when the Member for Springfield made some very personal comments about the Premier (Mr. Doer). I take the Member for Southdale's admonition to heart and want to keep these proceedings on a tone that is professional and not behave inappropriately.

I guess I am experiencing a certain degree of frustration in this regard because we still have not dealt with any of the issues of the Department of Labour, many of which are very important, and I would expect to be challenged on some of the items in the Budget. I just think it is a pretty pitiful—it is a waste of time, frankly in my view, to spend these hours discussing things which, if not irrelevant, are certainly not germane to the Department of Labour Estimates

and which have on occasion been mired in the gutter by the Member for Springfield.

Madam Chairperson: I thank all members for their advice respecting the point of order raised. I will take the matter under advisement so that I may peruse Hansard and will report back to the Committee.

* * *

* (15:50)

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: On the first day of Estimates, you briefly mentioned a Joanne Cerilli works for you. What is it again that she does for the Department?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated in my opening remarks, and I think I referenced it again this afternoon, one of my responsibilities is chair of the Cabinet Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions, and Ms. Cerilli is the Secretary to that Cabinet committee. She provides the administrative support and background so that the Committee can complete its work efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell this committee, is this an Order-in-Council position?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, it is, as I responded when the Member asked me that question several days ago.

Mr. Schuler: So is this a similar appointment to that of perhaps your EA or your SA?

Ms. Barrett: It is similar in the sense that it is an Order-in-Council appointment, but it is actually more parallel to the appointment of a woman named Sue Hoplock, who I understand performed much of the same jobs, among others, I might add, for the former government.

Mr. Schuler: What is the salary that that position draws?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated in my earlier response on the first day of Estimates where I think—and I believe that the Hansard is available for that day.

I might parenthetically take this opportunity to congratulate Hansard on their ability to turn around the Hansard for three Estimates committees for the next day. That is quite remarkable, and they deserve a great deal of appreciation for that.

I believe the question was the salary; the salary is \$50,000.

Mr. Schuler: Is it a straight \$50,000 or is it around \$50,000?

Ms. Barrett: Ms. Cerilli's categorization is Professional Officer 8, her civil service classification. The salary—oh, I apologize, I put misinformation on the record. The salary is actually \$50,006. That is the bottom end of the range for Professional Officer 8. She started at the bottom end of that range.

Mr. Schuler: When was she hired?

Ms. Barrett: I do not have the exact date, but it would have been within a month of the Government being sworn in on October 5, 1999.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell this committee: What would you say the qualifications for this type of a position would be?

Ms. Barrett: Oh, the temptation is almost overwhelming, but I will avoid it. The qualifications are an ability to handle a great deal of paper, a great deal of organizational ability, an ability to connect and work with a large number of people, an ability to provide—I think basically the single most important qualification is the ability to be organized, to be able to handle a large amount of information expeditiously and keep a number of things in the air at one time.

Mr. Schuler: So would this have been one of the first acts that you did as minister?

Ms. Barrett: In the context of what happened in the first month of being in government, this was one very small part of that and certainly not the first decision that I made. I met with enormous numbers of people at the very beginning. The appointment of Ms. Cerilli would have taken place at approximately the same time as the appointment of my special assistant, and I

believe it was a little earlier than the appointment of the executive assistant. But it was at the beginning of my having taken over as Minister of Labour.

I would like to say that it is a position that has been seen as very important by a number of governments over the past years because agencies, boards and commissions are an integral part of any government's operation. I think the appointment was a very good one. Ms. Cerilli is a very competent person with a lot of administrative organizational background and experience. It was incumbent upon us to ensure, as quickly as we could, that we got a handle on agencies, boards and commissions, what were they, what were their roles, when were vacancies coming up, appointments and this sort of thing. So it was fairly early on but certainly not in the first wave of decisions.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: Cerilli is not really a common name in Winnipeg. Could the Minister tell us if she would happen to know, Joanne Cerilli, would she happen to be a relative of the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli)?

Ms. Barrett: I do not know precisely what—and maybe the Member will clarify the rationale or the reasoning behind his questioning, but, yes, Ms. Cerilli is a sister of the Member for Radisson, as the former occupant of this position Sue Hoplock was the common-law wife of Julian Benson.

Mr. Schuler: What exactly does this position entail?

Ms. Barrett: Before I answer that specific question—well, it is sort of a combination, but I would like to share some comparisons with the Member. As I stated, Ms. Cerilli started at the bottom end of the Professional Officer 8 category classification, and she is making \$50,006.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I would like to share that the former person in this position was categorized at the Senior Officer 1 level—oh, pardon me, the classification range for Ms. Cerilli's position, the PO8, is

\$50,006 to a high of \$61,202 and Ms. Cerilli started at the bottom of that scale. The co-ordinator, boards and commissions—which I believe was the title that Sue Hoplock had in the former government—her classification was a Senior Officer 1 level. I do not know at the end of her term what she was making, but the bottom end of her range was \$60,219, which is more than the top end of the Professional Officer 8 range that Joanne Cerilli occupies.

So, even in our appointment to the Secretary for Agencies, Boards and Commissions, we were following through on an election promise to make the Government administration more efficient, more effective and less expensive. *[interjection]* I would like to finish the question and then perhaps we can take a five-minute break, if that would be acceptable. You will have to ask the Committee on that.

* (16:00)

The Secretary to the Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions provides the support for the work of the Committee, and basically she is responsible for co-ordinating the names and resumes of people who are interested in serving on boards and commissions. She also works with the various ministers and ministers' assistants to identify which boards and commissions have vacancies that need to be filled. She sends out minutes of the meetings and notices of other meetings. She does the work, so that the Committee, when it meets, has all the information it needs and also so that there is as broad an accessibility to the Committee for good people to fill these boards and commissions vacancies.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Struthers): Is it the will of the Committee to break for five minutes? *[Agreed]* The Committee will reconvene at 4:05 p.m.

The Committee recessed at 4:01 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 4:10 p.m.

* (16:10)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Struthers): The Committee has been called back to order.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: Further to my questions yesterday regarding the lack of action by the Minister on her home page, we did some more looking into it this morning. We went further into the site, and we realized that the lack of French is not restricted just to the home page.

Minister, do you think that members of Manitoba's Francophone community make use of the Manitoba Labour Board?

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Barrett: Yes, as I have stated in my answers yesterday, we will be undertaking, as quickly as possible, updates to ensuring that Web pages are accessible—*[interjection]* Thank you, I am sorry for the delay; I was given some additional information.

As I said to the Member yesterday, our commitment is to have the entire Web page in both official languages. Much of that has been translated. In the case of the Labour Board, I understand that has been translated. It is being checked for accuracy, because, as we discussed earlier today, it is important not only to have information on the Web page, but to have accurate information on the Web page. We are in the process of translating all of the Web page, as, I believe, are all other government departments. As the Member knows, approximately 30 weeks ago, there was a change in government, so we have had to make, the whole entire government has had to look at the information on the Web page. As the Member pointed out yesterday, there have been some glitches in my department in the ministerial home page that are being rectified.

It is our commitment, as quickly as possible, using both governmental and external-to-government resources, to translate the information and to check for accuracy and then to put it on the Web site as soon as that is available. If the Member knows, translation, particularly of technical information, is not the easiest thing to do, especially with technical information, and information, not only technical, but in use of words that may have a different

meaning in a particular context. You have to make very sure that you have chosen the right word to reflect the meaning that you want, that you have chosen the spelling.

As I referenced earlier in one of the Web pages of the Opposition members, spelling was inaccurate, so the word itself sounds the same but it had a completely different meaning. If you are not very careful, that can happen in translation. It can have, when you are dealing with technical information on employment standards, mechanical and engineering issues, workplace, safety and health, very serious consequences.

We are in the process throughout government, and certainly in my department, of translating all of the information on the Web site, making sure it is accurate. Then as soon as that has been done, it will be put on the Web page. We expect that to happen, not everything all at once but certainly as the information is translated. It is all in the pipeline, one way or another, but as I said we have had to make many changes because it is a change in government. Maintenance will be far easier; putting the information on the first time takes a little longer.

Mr. Smith: Madam Chair, as the Minister has mentioned, the technicalities of the Web page obviously needs to be looked at. Can the Minister assure this committee here that she will not release any social insurance numbers on that Web page once it is complete?

Ms. Barrett: I thank the Member for Brandon West for that question, and, yes, he raises an interesting point. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the information is not only accurate but that it respects privacy. I have mentioned this to the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) on several occasions that he did not follow those very specific and very basic principles.

There are some legal issues here and I would like to suggest that while the Member has intimated directly and indirectly on several occasions that we have been lax in our implementation of the complete update of the Web page in both official languages, the Member for Springfield has, so far to my knowledge, not responded to the letter from Mr.

Lloyd Schreyer that was sent over a month ago asking him to respond to him as to what he was going to do about the fact that he made public Mr. Schreyer's social insurance number in a press conference that he held.

Mr. Schuler: The Labour home page has roughly three words of French. Perhaps the Minister feels this is an appropriate provision of French on her site. However, the Manitoba Labour Board section does not even have a single word of French on the site. Does the Minister feel that this is appropriate?

Ms. Barrett: The Workplace, Safety and Health portion of the Department of Labour's Web site is completely translated, and that is, I would venture to say, probably the Web page that would have, if not the largest number, close to the largest number of hits on it. The Research division and the Labour Board are translated, and they are being checked, as we speak, for accuracy.

Again, I think the Member would want us to take the time that we need to, particularly, I will just use as an example, the Labour Board because the information on the Labour Board Web page must be as accurate as possible because workers, unions, management, business organizations, anyone who might have need of, at some point, the services of the Labour Board has to have that information as accurate as possible.

So, as I have stated on numerous occasions in the past several days, we recognize that we are not as far along as we should be nor as we would like to be, and it is not only our intention but we are actually working very hard to ensure that the Web page is as accurate and up to date as possible as quickly as possible in both official languages.

* (16:20)

Mr. Schuler: Has the Minister discussed the lack of French on her particular Web site with the Minister responsible for French Language Services (Mr. Selinger)?

Ms. Barrett: I have not to date because, as I mentioned yesterday, it was only yesterday that I

was made aware of this lack, and I have not had an opportunity yet to discuss that. I will be talking about it with the Minister, but this is also information that will be shared at a departmental level because the staff of the Department of Labour are here, and they have made a commitment to ensuring that that takes place.

As I just stated in my two former answers, while there may not be French on the Web page in all instances yet, each of the component parts of the Labour Web page are in the process to one degree or another of being translated, of being checked and of being put up on a Web page. So it is not that it is not happening; it is just that each of the divisions is in a different stage of being made bilingual.

As I stated, the Workplace Safety and Health division is on the Web page in both official languages.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister responsible for French Language Services approve of the inability of many of the constituents and French speakers from across the province to access information on your Web site? Just to recap, does the Minister responsible for French Language Services approve of that inability?

Ms. Barrett: The Minister responsible for French Language Services (Mr. Selinger) and the rest of the members on the Government side of the House have a long history of supporting, both in government and in opposition, the right of every Manitoban to be served in either official language, particularly in the Francophone communities. I think, again as I stated earlier, that the Member should ask his colleagues who have been in the Legislature for longer even than I have about some of the historical issues that have been raised in this context over the past 20 years.

As I stated, we are working in each department to ensure that as quickly as possible the Web sites will be completely bilingual. So the concern is there that we do it, but the concern is also there that we do it as effectively as possible, so we must guarantee that the information is accurate in both official languages. There would be a huge concern if we were not working on it. I think the Member is

intimating that we are not working on it, and that is inaccurate. We are working on it. I have explained in the Department of Labour what the status is in a representative sample of the various divisions and that this is our commitment, and we are going to make it happen as quickly as we possibly can.

We are not sitting on it; we are working on it. It does take time. I am sure the Minister responsible for French Language Services is monitoring each department's progress in that regard, and we are working as quickly as we possibly can with the resources available to us to ensure that that happens.

Mr. Schuler: If we were to look at the new sections of the Government Web site as trumpeted in the Government's news release, the news release we discussed yesterday, I am sure it will come as a surprise to the Minister that that particular Web site actually does have some French in it. However, if one looks at the Department of Labour, there are certain things missing, and this would now be in the Government's Web site. If you click on the Department's link and go down to Labour, there are numerous links to the various Labour Web sites. However, when one does the same on the French site, several of the links found on the English page are missing.

Could the Minister tell us why that would be?

Ms. Barrett: First of all, I would like to suggest that the Member knows that I am not technically expert in this area. I would think that perhaps the Minister responsible for French Language Services would have, under his responsibility, more ability to answer that specific technical question. But I will reiterate the point that I have made several times this afternoon, that the Government as a whole, and certainly myself as Minister of Labour, are committed to providing French language translation to all of the Web site as quickly as possible.

I know the Member is, as I think he said, deputy critic for French Language Services. I am wondering if he is aware in his role as deputy critic of French Language Services that we have a current initiative in this government to take

service in French into three more communities this year so that the residents of those communities can have access to all government services in both official languages. It is not just the Web site that we are working on, but we are actually working on taking French language services into communities where people live and work and play. I suggest that the Member, if he has more specific questions dealing specifically with the French Language Services, that he should perhaps address those to the Minister responsible for French Language Services.

Mr. Schuler: In last year's Estimates, the Minister of Labour referred to a meeting of all the ministers of Labour which was to be planned for late 1999 or early 2000. Did this meeting take place?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, it did. It took place in early February in Winnipeg. I was pleased to be co-chair of that conference with Claudette Bradshaw, the federal Minister of Labour. It was the first time in three years that a meeting of this nature had taken place. We had a good two days of dialogue and discussion, and we plan to meet next year in February. Boy, this is a junket you will all be sorry you are going to miss—in February of the year 2001, in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Mr. Schuler: What items were on the agenda?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated, the ministers of Labour had not met in a group for three years, largely due to scheduling difficulties, elections and things like that. It was an opportunity for us all to get together. Actually, it was quite interesting because most of us were new ministers of Labour. Minister Bradshaw and myself were both made ministers of Labour very recently, as well as many of the other ministers. So we had an opportunity to share our concerns, our perspectives on various labour issues from the different regions of the country.

Three of the items that were specifically dealt with were the International Labour Organization convention on the worst forms of child labour, which we as a government have supported—many large issues which we have only begun to discuss on balancing work and family life. Another issue that was raised, that is

a federal jurisdiction but that all the provinces said needed to be addressed to protect workers, and that is the issue of bankruptcies. When businesses go bankrupt the workers' rights are unsecured. They are unsecured creditors, and they get the short end of whatever is available, virtually every time. Because that comes under federal jurisdiction, we asked, and the federal minister agreed to work together with provincial governments on looking at changes to that federal legislation.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell us—she did mention that there is another conference coming. Is this traditionally a regular conference? Does it happen traditionally yearly, or does it happen every two years, every three years?

Ms. Barrett: Prior to approximately six years ago, it was an annual event. Then between six years ago and three years ago, it met twice. So it did not quite meet annually. As I stated earlier, in the last three years it had not met for a variety of reasons, largely elections, provincial elections taking place and new ministers coming on and not being able to get everybody together. One of the things that we did at this conference was to say we committed ourselves both provincially and federally to ensure that we met annually.

Madam Chairperson: I would just take this opportunity to remind the new people at the table, we have on a few occasions requested respect for the speaker. Talking among yourselves on other side is acceptable as long as it is not disruptive. Thank you.

Ms. Barrett: I finished.

Madam Chairperson: Did you? Oh, okay.

Mr. Schuler: I have to admit I did not hear an awful lot of the Minister's comments. It seemed to be very spirited conversation that was taking place, and knowing the Minister across the way, I can understand where that would come from. I would like to place another question to the Minister: Is this something the Minister would like to see take place on a more regular basis?

* (16:30)

Ms. Barrett: The provincial ministers and the federal minister all agreed, unanimously, that at the end of this conference that was held in Winnipeg in February, that it was incumbent on us to get back to a regular annual meeting. So we committed ourselves to that. We established that we would meet in February 2001 in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Point of Order

Mr. Schuler: On a point of order, you took quite a hard line on our members. Perhaps reminding members on this committee one more time.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind you that that is not a point of order, but I will remind all members one more time to please not be disruptive.

An Honourable Member: I think she is talking to you.

Madam Chairperson: No, I am talking to the entire committee.

* * *

Mr. Schuler: On May 11 to 12, the Manitoba Federation of Labour held a health and safety conference in northern Manitoba. Minister, you and several of your colleagues attended. Is that correct?

Ms. Barrett: I had planned to go to the conference on the 11th and 12th. Following tradition, the request for a pair was asked for and denied by the Official Opposition, so I was unable to go to the entire conference. I was, however, attempting to go, I believe it was on a Friday afternoon, I have to look in my book, when the house was not sitting, to address the group. It was one of the days that we were not sitting, so it must have been a Friday. I was at the airport. I was planning to go to Thompson for that late afternoon and address the group on that evening, and come back. The plane did not take off. It was scheduled to leave. It was a scheduled flight, and it was scheduled to leave at two o'clock. At two o'clock, they announced that it was not going because of mechanical failure. I was pleased that they announced that before the plane had taken off.

The next scheduled flight was not until six o'clock. I would not have got up there until almost eight o'clock and that would have been close to their adjournment, so I was unable to attend any of the conference. However I would suggest that the major reason why I was unable to attend was that I was not given a pair to attend ministerial business, as had been the case in previous governments.

Mr. Schuler: Which of your colleagues, Minister, were present? Would you know?

Ms. Barrett: I do not believe anyone was able to go, because we were not given pairs to go. To be perfectly honest, I do not believe anybody went because the Opposition has been very cavalier in their decision to give pairs. They were prepared to give the Minister of Labour a pair to go to Calgary to give a speech to the steelworkers, but they were not prepared to give a pair for the Minister responsible for health and safety to attend a health and safety conference, in the province of Manitoba. Go figure.

Mr. Schuler: Meanwhile, back at the Labour Estimates Committee, is this something that the Manitoba Federation of Labour does on a regular basis?

Ms. Barrett: This is a regular biannual—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would remind the members one more time to please respect the speaker and not be disruptive.

Ms. Barrett: The Health and Safety Conference is held on a biennial basis, sponsored by the Manitoba Federation of Labour and as has been custom, I understand, several members of the staff of the Department of Labour attended both in their role as making presentations to the conference, as well as observers to the conference.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: From January 27 to February 29, the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) held public consultations in 13 communities across the province with respect to graduated driver's licences. The Member, at one point in time, was the critic for your portfolio, as I am sure you remember. Once this review of legislation is complete, would the Minister

consider such broad consultations on any substantial and significant changes she might propose to a particular piece of legislation under her responsibility?

Ms. Barrett: We have evolved over decades in the Manitoba Legislature and in the parliamentary system as a whole, a system of consultation which includes—actually I think Manitoba is unique in Canada, in the Legislature, in requiring public hearings on every single piece of legislation. I know one member of the Committee here today was a participant in such a hearing last evening, I believe. *[interjection]* Well, I said participant; I did not put an adjective to it, sir. So we have that built in uniquely in the Province of Manitoba for every piece of legislation no matter what department it comes from.

I believe uniquely in the Department of Labour, as I have mentioned on several occasions to the Member, we have a Labour Management Review Committee which looks at labour legislation and provides some advice and recommendations to the Minister prior to the tabling of legislation. The new Labour Management Review Committee structure, which I spoke of at great length the first day of Estimates, is made up of five representatives from labour and five representatives from the business community. Those representatives, particularly I will speak from the business community side represent through their associations and organizations the vast majority of the employers in the province of Manitoba, so they have access through the Labour Management Review Committee, as do the workers of Manitoba through their representatives on the Labour Management Review Committee to virtually every piece of labour legislation that goes forward.

* (16:40)

I would like to suggest again, because the Member is new to the House, that he might want to get some historical perspective on consultation. While his party was in government—and I would just reference two items. One was the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System, and the second was the implementation of gaming facilities on

McPhillips Street and Regent Avenue, both of which activities have had enormous impacts on the people of Manitoba, the Government of Manitoba and the public purse of Manitoba and were undertaken without public consultation.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, I have to say I am really surprised at how much this minister loves to live in the past. Maybe she should talk a little less about history. I am sure she has this great love of history, and I am sure she goes home and reads history of the western civilization and history books of all kinds of stuff. We are talking about here and now, Minister. We are talking about today.

I will ask the Minister the question once again. The Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) held public consultation meetings in 13 communities across the province with respect to graduated driver's licences. Would the Minister consider such broad consultation on any substantial and significant changes she might propose to a particular piece of legislation under her responsibility?

I think the question is right up front. It is easy. It is understandable. As she is going through the changes to her department that she has spoken about publicly, if there is something very significant and substantial, would she consider the same kind of a process as the Member for Transcona went through with respect to graduated driver's licences? Please, no history lesson.

Ms. Barrett: Please, no history lesson, the Member says. I am going to paraphrase I believe George Santayana who said those who do not know about or remember history are doomed to repeat it. So I will take great exception to the Member's statements that we need not live in the past; we need not deal with history. I think it is very important that we recognize what has happened in the past, particularly in the context of governments, especially governments that have a long history, as the former government did, of over 10 years.

It is very important that the Member recognize, and that all Manitobans recognize the critical nature of knowing the context within which we are currently operating as a new

government. That context can only be fully appreciated through an understanding and a recognition of what has gone on in the past.

I do not live in the past. I reference the past. I respect the past, and I try to use the past to learn from the past, from mistakes that have been made. We know as a government when we were in office we made mistakes. I think we have learned from those mistakes. I certainly know that the former government made mistakes, and we are attempting to learn from those mistakes.

So I make no apologies for referencing the past, and I will continue to do so. I think that the Member would be well served if he took some information and some insight from his elders. I use that word in the Aboriginal context and would specifically reference the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) who has an enormous amount of experience and history in this Legislature and could provide him perhaps with some context so that he would be able to have a better, richer understanding of what is going on in the Department of Labour and in government these days than he can legitimately know because he is a new member. It seems to me that it is very foolish to not want to learn from the past and to not want to talk to people who know about the past and can give you assistance in that regard.

In the specifics of his question, I feel very comfortable, as other governments, the past government being one, in the Labour Management Review Committee process that we have set up. As I have stated to the Member on many occasions, I have met with virtually every group that is represented in the management ranks that will be affected by any changes to labour legislation that is undertaken. I have met with various labour groups.

I have met with workers' groups who are not necessarily represented in either the labour side or the management side in the LMRC, but I feel very confident, as have past governments of both political stripes, in the process that we have put in place through the Labour Management Review Committee, through consultations that have taken place prior to legislation being sent to the Labour Management Review Committee and

in the public consultation process that will be undertaken once the legislation has passed second reading.

Mr. Schuler: I appreciate that the Minister does not particularly want to answer a lot of the questions posed to her, and certainly this is one of them. For the Minister to tell me to go to one of my members so that I can learn a little bit about the Department of Labour is rich, considering she did not even know what was on her Web site yesterday. Thank you, Minister, advice goes back as well; maybe you could learn something about your department too.

Again, it is a very straightforward line of questioning. Does the Minister agree that on important issues like a graduated driver's licence, public-wide consultation throughout the province is a good decision by any government?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I think the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) did a remarkable job, and his committee did a remarkable job in attending throughout the province and holding public hearings and coming up with a report and a series of recommendations that were very well thought out, very well put together and that will inform government's actions in this regard.

I think that there is a qualitative difference between the issue of graduated driver's licences and the issue of labour legislation. The Member may disagree with me, but when we are talking about an issue like graduated driver's licences or major changes, sea changes, if you will, which is an old historical nautical statement. I apologize for using historical references. I will try and remain *au courant*. But, when you are looking at huge changes in policy direction, like really moving, going in a very different direction, very large changes—I will go in a nautical analogy—it is like changing the direction of the Queen Mary, or a large liner, from going towards the east to going towards the west or from going from the right to going to the left. A very large change like that should require the widest possible consultations.

Again I reference the fact that the former government chose not to do that when they made an enormous decision to sell the Crown corporation that a former Conservative premier

put in place in I believe it was 1912, and that is the sale of the Telephones.

* (16:50)

So when you have a change of that nature and of that magnitude, yes, consultation is a very good idea. I again commend the Member for recognizing the work of the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and the group that has worked so long and hard on this.

Labour legislation, as we are envisaging it, is, in a nautical sense, course correction, a mid-ocean course correction. Now, again, this is my perspective. The Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) may believe that is not accurate, but this is what is framing and informing my decisions and my government's decisions as to the consultative process that we are undertaking with labour legislation. We are trying to rebalance the imbalance that we saw and many people in this province saw over 11 years of the former government. We are doing that through the utilization of the legislative consultative processes that have been put in place and followed for decades by governments of both the right and the left.

I feel very confident that, given the consultative process that has been undertaken by myself and by other members of the caucus and the Government and is being undertaken by the Labour Management Review Committee, the end result will be legislation that is informed and balanced and will be accepted by the vast majority of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to ask the Minister if she would get off her boat cruise and back to the reality of this committee. I would ask the Minister—you know, she sits here and spends a considerable amount of time dumping on historical governments and then will not come clean whether or not she thinks that a wide public consultation throughout the province, using the same kind of a system that, in fact, her colleague did in respect to graduated driver's licences—in fact, they went to 13 communities—if she feels that that is a good decision by her government.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I must take a bit of exception to the tone and the content of the Member's comments before he puts his question yet again. I have been trying to put in context the role of the current government and the fact that we have to look at the past government's experiences, successes and failures in order to help frame our own actions. I did answer the Member's question. I said that in the context of a potential major policy change, such as a move to graduated driver's licences, if that happened, the consultative process that was undertaken by the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and members of caucus was a good one. I said, as well, in the context of the scope of the labour legislation changes being looked at, in my opinion, an opinion which may very well not be shared by the Member for Springfield or his party, but in my opinion, in my government's opinion, the consultative process that has worked very well for decades of labour legislation adjustments is being followed and will provide a good basis for legislation to come forward.

I think I answered the question now twice, so I would suggest that the Member might want to listen to the responses that are given before he makes the statements that his questions are not being addressed.

Mr. Schuler: Has the Department of Labour ever conducted consultations to the same degree as was done for the graduated licences, going to the public in various communities, for instance, in this case, 13 communities? Again, has the Department ever conducted such consultations in that magnitude?

Ms. Barrett: The answer to the question, as I heard it, was no. This current minister has not undertaken consultations to the extent that the graduated driver's licensing consultations were undertaken, and I have explained to the Member twice now, and I am not going to repeat it, why we have not done that, why we do not feel the need, why we think the current system is working very adequately in this manner.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, the Minister was not paying attention when I asked the question. The question allowed her to delve into her favourite hobby, and that is history. It was a historical question to make her happier at this committee

meeting here, and the question was: Has the Department ever conducted consultations of this magnitude? I was not asking if it was in the last 30 weeks of her being minister. So this is her moment to shine, this is her opportunity to delve into that history, crack open those musty history books and pull out all kinds of historical information that she can impart upon me and this committee at this time.

Ms. Barrett: At least for the last 10 years and I believe even prior to that, the consultative process for the former government, who made some very major changes in labour legislation, I might add, and this current government have followed exactly the same consultative process as I have outlined. Both the former government and this government so far have seen fit to rely on that consultative process.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, are there any changes within her department that she is planning? She has mentioned that she is planning to do quite a few changes. Are there any changes that she would consider to have this kind of a consultation process as was done with the graduated licences?

Ms. Barrett: For the current legislative session, no. I have explained to the Member that the Labour Management Review Committee is currently looking at certain items that have been sent over to them by me for advice and recommendations. As I have stated to the member before, I am looking at all pieces of legislation. It may turn out in the fullness of time that I will say and government will say this proposed change or this particular piece of legislation requires more of a more broadly based consultative process. For this current legislative session, we are following the method that has been followed by governments in Manitoba almost since time immemorial.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, so would the Minister then concur that the way that the Department was being run in the past 10 to 11 years, in fact, she has no difficulty with when it comes to public consultation, that it was being done properly and that she is quite happy to continue with the system, she sees no difficulties with it, she is happy with it and is pleased with the state that it was handed to her?

Ms. Barrett: What I stated was, in answer to the question just prior to this one, that for at least the last 10 or 11 years the Legislative Management Review Committee, the other consultative processes that various governments undertake have been the extent of the utilization of the consultative process. I said that for this legislative session that is the process we are following. I said also that as I review all of the labour legislation under my department, it may very well turn out that we will want to look at a broader consultative process than is currently underway. I do not know how much more clearly I can state the two parts of this answer. I will try it one more time.

For the current legislative session, we feel very comfortable in the consultative process that has been undertaken and that is currently being undertaken for legislation for this legislative session, the same process that has been undertaken in the last 11 years and that in future there may be a requirement to broaden that consultative process. I have no problem whatsoever if that situation arises in broadening out the consultative process.

* (17:00)

Mr. Schuler: If, hypothetically, such a process were undertaken by the Department of Labour, how much would such a consultation cost?

Ms. Barrett: Again, for the second time this afternoon I have been rendered speechless. I am going to give the Member just a tiny little lesson in consultative processes and basic budgeting. The basic budgeting for such a process would depend on the scope of the consultation process. I will leave it at that. I cannot believe the Member does not understand the basic connection between scope of a consultation process and cost of a consultation process. How can I be asked to answer that when I have not decided (1) whether there will be such a thing, and (2) what the scope of it would be?

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: How many statutes is she responsible for?

Ms. Barrett: I would suggest that the Member take some initiative and go back to page 8 of the Estimates book where the statutory respon-

sibilities of the Minister of Labour are itemized, and I will refer him to that page. He can count them for himself.

Mr. Schuler: The review of the legislation currently under way, does it involve all of these acts?

Ms. Barrett: I have only answered that question probably 15 times. I would refer the Member to Hansard of the last three times that we have met for the answer to that question.

Mr. Schuler: I would suggest, Madam Chair, that the Minister is getting a little bit touchy. Simple question: The review of the legislation currently under way, does it involve all of the acts that she so kindly pointed out to me?

Ms. Barrett: For the 15th or 16th or 25th time, yes.

Mr. Schuler: I thank the Minister for her answer. I would like to ask: What about the regulations that may flow from these acts?

Ms. Barrett: I have spoken about regulations extensively as well, but I would like to give the Member a little history lesson, a little bit of information—not necessarily history lesson—about the legislative process. Virtually all pieces of legislation deal with principles, deal with enabling legislation, as we talked of yesterday in The Labour Act. They usually do not stand by themselves.

Certainly the legislation under my department basically does not stand by itself. Perhaps The Remembrance Day Act does and The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Act does, but virtually all pieces of legislation are implemented. They are kind of like principles. The details are in the regulations. There are a whole number of reasons for that, which I will not go into.

So, of course, by definition, when you are looking at changing legislation, if you are doing your job, you are going to have to change the regulations that are affected by the changes in legislation. So, of course, we would look at regulations that fall under the legislation, when and if we make changes to the legislation.

Mr. Schuler: So all regulations are also under review in the Department of Labour.

Ms. Barrett: Will be under review, as I deal with each of the pieces of legislation that are in my department. Those regulations will then be under review. Currently, I am not actively looking at all of the pieces of legislation under my review, but those pieces of legislation that I am reviewing right now will have a regulatory component to them. As I, in the fullness of time, review all the other pieces of legislation, I will, of course, review the regulations that flow from those legislations.

Mr. Schuler: How many regulations would that be?

Ms. Barrett: Approximately 44.

Mr. Schuler: Who is involved in this review process?

Ms. Barrett: The review process of legislation is a fluid process. As I have stated, some pieces of legislation have already been reviewed in the sense that they are now at Labour Management Review Committee, so we have reviewed them to the extent that we have asked for recommendations from LMRC. Other pieces of legislation like The Labour Act, which the Member spent a great deal of time on yesterday, the review of that piece of legislation has not been undertaken.

When we review a piece of legislation, I will talk with the Deputy and I will talk with the staff of the division that that piece of legislation refers to.

Mr. Schuler: So, other than the Deputy Minister, the only other individuals involved are then the staff of that particular area within your department, or is there a committee that will be put together to review this? Is this going to be a departmental committee or is it just always the Deputy Minister and then the employees within that various group who will be doing the review of the Acts and the regulations?

Ms. Barrett: It depends on the piece of legislation. But as well, as I have stated before, I am in regular contact with a number of groups

and individuals who have provided me over time—actually, let me give you an example. A piece of legislation that we have not yet begun reviewing is The Construction Industry Wages Act. We have not begun the formal process of reviewing it, but I have had meetings since October 5 with groups that are concerned about The Construction Industry Wages Act, and they have given me information and recommendations. So when we begin the more formal process of the review of The Construction Industry Wages Act, I will take those recommendations and suggestions and put them in with the others that we talk about as staff and as, in some cases, advisory councils.

The Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health will advise on workplace safety and health legislation. The Pension Commission will advise on the pension legislation. But I have extra external to government avenues. As I have stated, the consultation process that I have had, the meetings I have held with various groups since October, virtually all have had some form of general or specific recommendation on one or more pieces of legislation. So we will be taking all of that into advisement as we do the review. Some pieces of legislation are more complicated than others so the review process will be lengthier and more broadly based, some pieces of legislation are quite technical in nature and therefore the review process will be more narrowly focussed.

So, as I stated before, it is a process that is very fluid and that will be as extensive as possible and has actually been underway, in a way, in many of these pieces of legislation because the groups that I have met with have made representation on those pieces of legislation. I will continue, I am sure, to receive recommendation on various policies, legislation and regulations as we carry on.

* (17:10)

Mr. Schuler: Is your legislative assistant involved in the review process?

Ms. Barrett: In some cases, yes, in some instances not as directly involved. As I stated, the review process is very broadly defined and

will be defined differently for each piece of legislation.

I would not expect the review of The Amusements Act (2) or The Gas and Oil Burner Act to be a very broadly based consultative process because it is very technical. However, The Pay Equity Act, The Workers Compensation Act, The Workplace Safety and Health Act, The Construction Industry Wages Act and several of those other pieces of legislation are much more broadly based and have a much broader impact. Therefore the consultative process would be broader there.

Mr. Schuler: Are there going to be any other Order-in-Council employees that will be working with this group, working on the review process?

Ms. Barrett: Well, again, I am not clear on what the Member means by working on it. I have explained that the process for consultation and review of the labour legislation is varied depending on the nature of the piece of legislation. The legislative assistant, the special assistant, to an extent the executive assistant, anybody who actually works in the Department can be involved in a review, because I am open to getting suggestions from virtually any member of the Department or any member of the public. Then the review itself will be either more broadly or more narrowly focussed, depending on the nature of the legislation.

But there is not a specific process that I envisage to be undertaken that you could identify in a flow chart. It is dependent, as I have stated eight or nine times today and multiple times before, on the piece of legislation.

Mr. Schuler: Are there any Order-in-Council employees advising, assisting the process who are outside of the Department of Labour?

Ms. Barrett: I know how uncomfortable it makes the Member, and this is kind of unfortunate, but a historical perspective of the nature of the Manitoba Government process in organization might be helpful. Virtually every government not only has people within each department who provide advice of a certain nature, but there is also a central policy group

that will provide general policy advice or a consultation on making sure that we are all working together and may have a different side, different perspective on a piece of legislation. Again, this would be more in the broader context of the larger pieces of legislation and would be far less likely to happen in some of the more narrowly defined pieces of legislation.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, the Minister referred to something about my discomfort with history. Actually I would like to point out to the Minister I do not have a discomfort with history. My discomfort comes from, it seems to be that the Minister likes to dwell and live in the past. I do not think it has anything to do with whether or not I like history.

I would like to ask the Minister are any other members of your caucus, like for instance the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), involved in the review process?

Ms. Barrett: All members of caucus, which includes members of Cabinet, have a say, unlike the former government, where I understand legislation was given to caucus sometimes moments before it was tabled in the House and there was very little input on the part of caucus members and sometimes even Cabinet members. At any rate, our government feels very strongly that all members of caucus should have an input and a say and provide assistance from their perspectives into all pieces of legislation.

So, yes, every member of caucus has the ability, the responsibility and the right to participate in discussions as they unfold on legislation. I would suggest, again, that when we are talking about The Electricians' Licence Act or The Amusements Act or The Steam and Pressure Plants Act, that unless a caucus member has a particular level of expertise in one of these areas, that the level of consultation will be less thorough than in some of the larger, more omnibus pieces of legislation. We feel very strongly that all members of caucus, which by the way, reflect the diversity of Manitoba to an extent that no other caucus, government or opposition has ever reflected in the history of Manitoba. They have important things to say, and we pay close attention to any input that caucus may provide.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell us which members of her caucus, so far, have been involved in the review process?

Ms. Barrett: To one extent or another, all of them.

Mr. Schuler: And they would have been involved in the review of which acts?

Ms. Barrett: To date they would have been involved in the review, to a greater or lesser extent, of the pieces of legislation that are now before the Labour Management Review Committee.

Mr. Schuler: The Labour Management Review Committee is involved in this review, obviously.

Madam Chairperson: Is this a question?

Mr. Schuler: Yes.

Ms. Barrett: Again, at the risk of appearing testy to the Member, I would like to refer him to answers on several occasions that I have given to him today, yesterday, the day before, and the day before that. The Labour Management Review Committee reviews all pieces of labour legislation prior to their being introduced into the House.

Mr. Schuler: What kind of resources is this process—I mean a global process of reviewing all the legislation—entailing?

Ms. Barrett: The current process, which to this date—as we have discussed extensively—excludes a major consultative process such as the Member was referring to with the driver's licence. The current process uses the resources of the Department of Labour and the advice from the advisory councils, as I have mentioned, and advice that I gather from my meetings with various groups and individuals. So there are no extra resources attached to this review process. This review process is part of, or should be, a departmental look at legislation, just as a matter of course, and as part of individuals' duties as staff, or as advisors, or as caucus members.

Mr. Schuler: How long does the Minister expect this process to take?

Ms. Barrett: This process will be an ongoing process that will continue to occur as long as we are in government, because as the Member for Minto (Ms. Mihychuk) says, at least 10 years at the minimum. Seriously, this is an ongoing process, and we will be reviewing legislation all the way through our mandate.

Mr. Schuler: Is the Minister directly involved in this process at any point? Has she been?

Ms. Barrett: I think I will not be facetious in my answer, much as I am tempted to be. I guess I will state, I would like to ask the Member what the heck he thinks a Minister does, if it is not being involved in the review of legislation, in the direction of the Department. Of course, I am involved in the review process. If I am not, I am not doing my job.

Maybe the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) actually has talked to some of his colleagues, and maybe he is reflecting past practices, but it certainly is not the practice of this government to have a Minister who is not involved in the consultative process about legislation, which has a major impact on the people of the province of Manitoba.

* (17:20)

Mr. Schuler: The current amendment to The Labour Relations Act, could the Minister tell us what type of a process it went through?

Ms. Barrett: I have outlined the process that is being undertaken, that is being followed by this current government to date. It was that process that was followed in this regard.

Mr. Schuler: Is this an initiative of your department or the Government as a whole?

Ms. Barrett: In this case the specifics of the legislation, not the specifics but the legislation that was to be looked at was a recommendation of the Department and then it went, in principle, for discussion by Cabinet and caucus.

Mr. Schuler: How many acts that you are responsible for, Minister, have you personally read?

Ms. Barrett: I have not read every part of The Labour Relations Act, but I have read a good portion of The Labour Relations Act, The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act, The Department of Labour Act, elements of The Pension Benefits Act, The Remembrance Day Act, The Retail Business Holiday Closing Act, elements of The Workers Compensation Act, elements of The Construction Industry Wages Act, elements of The Employment Standards Code, The Fire Departments Arbitration Act, elements of The Fires Prevention Act, elements in The Workplace Safety and Health Act, and The Workers Compensation Act, elements of.

Mr. Schuler: She has looked through them, or you have had a chance to read through them, you have done a brief executive flipping through them?

Ms. Barrett: I would say all of the above.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Schuler: I have some other questions that I would like to ask the Minister, and I would refer her to page 23 of her budget document, under item number (a) Labour/Management Services. Could the Minister tell this committee what that is in relation to?

Ms. Barrett: The information on pages 22 and 23 of the Estimates book, this is sort of an index, or a table of contents, and the details for each of these items (a) through (m), they are found in the pages following, so if the Member has questions on subappropriation 11.2(a), we can do that. We are currently, technically, on subappropriation 11.1(b).

Mr. Schuler: I would like to refer the Minister, then, to page 25. Under the Labour/Management Services Division, can she tell this committee what are the responsibilities that fall under this particular section?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I would suggest that if the Member goes back to page 9, which is the organizational chart, he will find, as we discussed on the first day of Estimates, under Labour/Management Services Division six boxes. Those are the categories of duties, of

activities that are undertaken. Then if he would refer to page 24 under Activity Identification and Expected Results, that combination will provide a fair overview of the activities of this division. If he has some specific questions I would be happy to answer them on any of these specific items.

Mr. Schuler: Under the Labour/Management Services Division, actually the Minister mentioned there are a whole grouping of, I do not know if they are committees or within her department. They are groupings. I will start with the first one, Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services. How many individuals work for that division of the department?

Ms. Barrett: That information is found on pages 28 and 29, subappropriation 11.2.(c) Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services. There are six staff in that category.

Mr. Schuler: Under Labour/Management Services Division, how many individuals work for that particular segment if you go back to the organizational chart?

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Barrett: Yes, if you add the 23 staff or full-time equivalents under Labour/Management Services Division, subappropriation 11.2.(a), with the six full-time equivalent staff under Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services, subappropriation 11.2.(c), you will find an answer of 29 staff-years, full-time equivalents.

Mr. Schuler: Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services, are there any committees that come under that, any boards?

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Schuler: Under Financial Services, the next one down. How many individuals work for that particular area?

Ms. Barrett: Six FTEs.

Mr. Schuler: I will just go right to the top. Under Labour/Management Services Division,

which committees or boards fall under that particular section?

Ms. Barrett: As the Member will know—well, the Member may not know, but on the organization chart on page 9 he will find that there are no committees that are connected directly to any of the divisions of the department. We went extensively through the organization chart and the committees. Virtually all are advisory to the Minister with the exception of the Labour Board. They are up at the top there.

So no committees report directly or are attached directly to any of the divisional categories. The Labour/Management Services Division does provide assistance and staffing to the Labour Management Review Committee and to the Minimum Wage Board.

Mr. Schuler: So the four staff of the Labour Management Review Committee come from Labour/Management Services Division?

Ms. Barrett: There are no full-time staff assigned to the Labour Management Review Committee, as in the case with all the other committees for which the Department provides assistance. We provide assistance through civil servants who have as part of their job descriptions to provide service to these various committees.

* (17:30)

Mr. Schuler: Under Labour/Management Services Division, are any of the statutory responsibilities of the Minister of Labour found under this particular heading?

Ms. Barrett: There are no statutory responsibilities, as listed on page 8, that are directly under the Labour/Management Services Division, but the conciliation and mediation component of that division does provide support services on an as needed basis for The Fire Departments Arbitration Act, The Labour Relations Act and The Pay Equity Act.

Mr. Schuler: To go back down to Human Resource Services, how many FTEs, full time, are found under Human Resource Services?

Ms. Barrett: On the organization chart, there is one staff year assigned to the Human Resource Services, and that position is currently vacant.

Mr. Schuler: How many FTEs are in the Information Technology Services?

Ms. Barrett: Four.

Mr. Schuler: How many FTEs are found in Legislation and Policy Coordination?

Ms. Barrett: There are three in that one, and I am anticipating the next question. There are five FTEs in the Research component.

Mr. Schuler: Going to page 25, and looking at Professional/Technical: Can the Minister tell us why, for instance, the Estimates of Expenditures for 1999-2000 were, I will just use the first three numbers, 327 as compared to 360 in her particular budget?

Ms. Barrett: The numbers are still the same of FTEs and the individuals, I understand, are still the same, but there was some reclassification that took place in the Information Technology area prior to the last election. The reclassification elements are reflected in this year's Estimates.

Mr. Schuler: I do not want the Minister getting too upset with me, but in the IT area, that's actually a technology area, would that have been the four individuals in the Information Technology Services or are there other IT people throughout that particular section?

Ms. Barrett: No, the Member is correct. These are the four people identified under the Information Technology Services box under Labour/Management Services.

Mr. Schuler: Under Administrative Support, we still seem to have the same FTEs, yet we have a decline in the expenditures—about twenty thousand.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the number is not very substantial, and that sort of indicates what the reality is—in those cases, where the FTEs stay the same and the number goes down by a bit or up by a bit, that usually reflects either what I stated about the reclassifications in the Administrative

Support, that people have left, have moved on, and people have been hired in those positions. They are hired more at an entry level. So the same number of positions, but you have new employees rather than the same number of people.

Mr. Schuler: Under Severance/Vacation Pay on Retirement there seems to be quite a drastic jump from basically \$3,700 up to \$15,000. Why would there be such an extensive jump in that particular section?

Ms. Barrett: There are several people in the division who are close to retirement age. So this is anticipation of that eventuality. It may not happen. We may not use that money, but in case people who are eligible to retire, decide to retire, that is there as—and I believe most departments have that just in anticipation of the potentiality, so you are not hit with a surprise.

Mr. Schuler: The next item says Less: Recoverable from the Office of the Fire Commissioner SOA. What might that be?

Ms. Barrett: As the explanation note at the bottom of the page says, Labour/Management will recover \$81,000 from the Office of the Fire Commissioner for services provided by the division to the SOA.

Mr. Schuler: Why would it come down by \$4,000, for instance, from last year?

Ms. Barrett: The budget from last year was estimated at 85. In reality, in actuality the actual recovery was \$81,000 last year, so the estimate for this year is based on the actual from last year.

Mr. Schuler: So how does that work? Is this just basically a capital transfer from one department to another or from one jurisdiction to another?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the Labour/Management Services Division will provide services to the Office of the Fire Commissioner, and then they would charge for that service. Because the Office of the Fire Commissioner is an SOA, that is how it has to operate cause that is part of being an SOA. They are a separate entity actually. So, basically, the Labour/Management

Services Division provide services to the OFC and the OFC then pays for those services that are rendered.

Mr. Schuler: If the Minister's department has budgeted \$15,000 extra for what the Department feels might be vacation pay on retirement, would the line item Administrative Support not come down even further? If you are perceiving more retirements, then the entry level pay would also come down.

* (17:40)

Ms. Barrett: Basically what you have to do is you have to, in a sense, overbudget. You have to put more money in than you are probably going to use because my understanding of the Admin Support is that this salary item is based on the current occupants of those positions with their rate of pay. But throughout the division, we are anticipating the potentiality of some retirement because of the numbers of people who are eligible to retire. They may or may not retire. If they do retire, we want to have some provision made in the budget, some recognition that that is a possibility.

If we budgeted properly, you will end up at the end of the year probably pretty close on to the Admin Support staff line unless—you cannot tell whether people are going to leave or not. You do not know where they are necessarily going to retire from or they may leave to take another job or whatever. You may not use that \$15,000 in retirement—nobody may retire. So they are two sides of the same thing.

Mr. Schuler: Then could I ask the Minister, the Administrative Support, the \$274,300, is that an actual number or is that a projection of what might occur?

Ms. Barrett: That is an estimate based on the assumption that the people who are currently in those positions stay in those positions without reclassification or without leaving for the entire fiscal year. So it is an estimate, but the assumption upon which it is based is a status quo.

Mr. Schuler: Any increases that might take place within the next year would be calculated into these numbers?

Ms. Barrett: Merit increases are calculated in, based on the assumption that every staffperson stays the same.

Mr. Schuler: Within the Department, sort of what is the status of contracts with the Minister's employees? Are the contracts all current? Are they coming due? Is there negotiation taking place within the Department?

Ms. Barrett: The Manitoba Government Employees Union is currently in contract negotiations for the entire civil service. There is a master table, it is called, where the master contract is being negotiated. There is a second table. We discussed this earlier this afternoon, where negotiations are underway with Corrections officers, but negotiations are underway for all of the civil service as we speak, I think.

Mr. Schuler: So has the current contract expired?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the current contract expired April 1 of this year.

Mr. Schuler: How long was that contract for?

Ms. Barrett: It was a three-year contract.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, is any potential increase built into this \$274,000 or into any of the wages?

Ms. Barrett: Not in this department, no.

Mr. Schuler: The Minister stated that currently there are negotiations taking place. What is the status of the negotiations?

Ms. Barrett: They are ongoing.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister see any conclusion taking place soon?

Ms. Barrett: In the fullness of time.

An Honourable Member: You are speechless now.

Mr. Schuler: Not speechless. I am always aware, Madam Minister, that there is a microphone and it is live. Knowing that there is a live mike always around, Madam Minister, I think sometimes it is better to just reconsider one's words carefully. So, speechless, I do not know if that is it, but cautious.

On the whole budgeting process that you went through, Madam Minister, is it a percentage that you overbudget? When it comes to salaries, it was a term you used earlier on, is it percentage, or is it just done on a departmental basis? Clearly you have to allow some room within a budget to move within. That is sort of a given practice, but is it done on a percentage basis? Is it done on an individual basis? Is it done on a group basis?

Ms. Barrett: There is no "fudge factor" built into these numbers. No, I take that back. That \$15,000 in severance is potentially a "fudge factor" because you do not know ahead of time what the draw is going to be on it, but the others are based on current staffing, the staff that are identified, or the FTEs that are identified at the levels that they are currently being paid. That is how the staffing process works here in the Estimates.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister tell us, under Other Expenditures, what is Transportation budgeted for?

Ms. Barrett: It is planes, trains and automobiles, in a word. I am trying to get away from the historical analogies. This is only slightly historical. It is things like, if a staff member goes to Brandon, Souris, Dauphin, St. James or Transcona on government business, their mileage would be repaid to them, and that would come out of that line item.

Mr. Schuler: Under the item of Communication, could the Minister tell this committee what would fall under Communication?

Ms. Barrett: As in all the other, basically the other divisions, these Other Expenditures are

almost always the same thing. This is telephones and other forms of communication. On page 77, there is a glossary that identifies what they mean in this context, so Communication is listed there. So basically, most of the stuff under Other Expenditures in these various divisions are covered under the glossary. They pretty much mean the same thing in each of the divisions. There are standard classifications across government so that you can budget more effectively, efficiently.

* (17:50)

Mr. Schuler: Is the Minister planning any particular advertising program over the next year to come out of this budget?

Ms. Barrett: No, there is no advertising being planned out of this division.

Mr. Schuler: If the Minister does go to page 77, it is one of the items they have listed. That was the reason why I had asked. Minor Capital—is there something in particular that the department is planning under that item \$14,400?

Ms. Barrett: No, I would expect that it is computer update, any potential furniture changes, servers. It will not be lands and buildings, I can guarantee it.

Mr. Schuler: Under Other Operating, I think one notices that there is an increase there. Why the increase in Other Operating?

Ms. Barrett: That \$5,000 increase is budgeted for the Desktop Management, other computer related things of which I am very familiar. Take my word for it.

Mr. Schuler: Perhaps some of that would be going towards improving the Department's Web site?

Recoveries from the Office of the Fire Commissioner, I see there is going to be no recovery this particular year. It is not budgeted. Is there a reason why?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, we do not expect any activity in this area. That is why we have not budgeted for it.

Mr. Schuler: Under Expected Results, page 24, Madam Minister, how do you quantify that? How do you ensure that the expected results are met?

Ms. Barrett: Actually, the expected results are the indicators of how effective we are in implementing our business plan in this area, how effective we are in implementing the activity identification segments. So there is a connection between the activity identification and the expected results. Expected Results is the quantification of the measurement of how well you are doing. If we hit our targets, what we expect to have as a result, then we know we have done what we needed to do.

Mr. Schuler: One of the Expected Results, on page 24, is: "Develop analytical information on departmental issues." How often is that done?

Ms. Barrett: This is the area, as we have talked about earlier, where we deal with policy issues and looking at changes or upgrades or shifting of elements in the Department. An issue will be identified in the Department, any part of the Department, and this area is where the analysis,—whatever that might be—would depend on what the issue is. We need to know the impact of a potential change. We need to know what will be required to put in place an addition, a change, or an added service, or a deletion of service. This is the area that other divisions can come to and the Minister can come to asking for information on background, and that kind of thing, on potential issues.

Mr. Schuler: Is that kind of information made public?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, some of it is made public. It is the kind of information we were talking about yesterday that is available in the annual report, the statistical information. There is also other background information that is developed for the Minister directly to help me in making my decisions or recommendations on potential changes or policy directives. Those would not be made public as a matter of course, but much of the analytical information is made public through avenues such as the annual report.

Mr. Schuler: On page 24, it says: "Respond to over 450 information requests from the Department, government agencies, unions, management, academics and the general public, regarding labour and workplace matters." What kind of information would be sent out?

Ms. Barrett: Kind of general information on, for example, if a union is negotiating a collective agreement or if managements are negotiating a collective agreement, they could come here and ask what the average settlement in their industrial sector was. That information would be the kind of information that this research component would provide.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to thank the Minister for that answer. Are these tabulated by the Department on a monthly basis, or is it done on a bimonthly basis?

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food. Would the Minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 27 of the Estimates book, resolution 3.4 Agricultural Development and Marketing (a) Marketing and Farm Business Management \$1,785,700.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): In the area of Marketing and Farm Business Management, you have covered, I know, some areas. If you will permit me to broaden this out a little bit so that I can ask several questions at once. First is the relationship in terms of farm business management to crop insurance now that you have changed the crop insurance so that it would cover unseeded acres. Do you have further plans to change crop insurance so it would facilitate farm management and marketing?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I wonder if the Member can clarify. Is the Member asking whether we are bringing other departments and management issues under the Crop Insurance Corporation?

Mr. Gerrard: Although this allocation is specifically in terms of marketing and farm business management, one of the essential elements for farmers planning is in fact the operation of the Crop Insurance program. You have made a fundamental change to that with the inclusion of unseeded acres.

The question that I would have in terms of farmers managing their businesses and planning for the future, whether in fact the Crop Insurance program under your mandate will undergo further evolution. The reason that I ask that is that many farmers have raised to me the problem that for the crops that they growing or for the type of soil that they are in for the yields that they are getting, the Crop Insurance program is not optimum for the management of their business operations.

Ms. Wowchuk: Under the Marketing and Farm Business Management section there are many programs that are in place and continuing to be developed. In each of those programs, as they are being developed, they are developed on the assumption that crop insurance is part of the business management plan. The Member talks about new crops. Certainly as new crops come on to the agricultural field, adjustments are made to the crop insurance. For example, this year we introduced new crops for coverage. Hemp has been introduced and canamaize you can now get coverage for. You can also get coverage for hemp, which is a new crop.

So the Corporation and the Board continue to look at what the producer is looking at as a product. When beans became a very large crop, then that as well got coverage. There is the vegetable industry that is growing in Manitoba. It is a crop that we have discussed with the federal government, but all they are willing to look at now is the trial project with Ontario on their horticultural crops. Until that trial is complete they are not prepared to look at those crops, but the vegetable crops are certainly

growing in Manitoba, and we have to look at this. To the Member's question, we continue to look at what the emerging crops are and collect the data that is required. On the marketing side, when new programs are developed and resources are provided to farmers, the assumptions are made based on crop insurance as well.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the other areas in addition to new crops where there are questions in terms of farm business management and crop insurance relates to the increasing use of let us call it high-intensity agriculture, with increased amounts of chemicals and fertilizers. Under these conditions where you are trying to get a particularly high yield and you are above the regional average and above what you may have been producing in previous years, the Crop Insurance program does not always seem to be a particularly good fit in helping farmers to manage their farms and to produce the highest possible returns. Maybe you can comment.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is right. The crop insurance works on averages in areas, but there is also the individual indexing that takes place, where extra high levels of production are taken into consideration. The Member is right. You cannot always pay out at the high point. There could be at the top or the bottom those that do not fit into the average. There are all those. But the individual does have some flexibility and the ability to build up their own individual average so that their level of coverage can increase as they take the steps to increase their own level of production. The Member is right that there are some high producers who will not get all of their coverage, simply because there is not 100% coverage.

Mr. Gerrard: The Minister has talked about special crops. If we go beyond crop insurance to general programs for marketing and farm business management, one of the areas which is emerging as a particularly important and rapidly growing area for Manitoba, as in other agricultural jurisdictions, is the area of what are called nutraceuticals or functional foods. I would ask what proportion of the effort in this line item or in other line items of the Budget is directed in the area of nutraceuticals and what the Minister's plans are for developing the nutraceutical industry in Manitoba?

* (14:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: If the Member is asking specifically how many people are devoted to it, there are people all over in the Department that are involved with the expanding nutraceutical industry, because we certainly recognize it as a growing industry. It is difficult to break out persons that do the work, but I can tell you that there is one person that is in the Soils and Crops branch and that we have had experimental plots for the past five or six years for new and alternate crops that include nutraceutical crops. There is support for research and there are projects under the ARDI program that are funded in the area of nutraceuticals. We work closely with the University of Manitoba. I am sure the Member is aware that the University is working very hard and lobbying to become the next centre of excellence in nutraceuticals. We certainly hope that application will be viewed favourably by the federal government so that we could have that facility come to Winnipeg.

Through the Department we have put in place funds for the National Centre for Agri-Food Research in Medicine at the St. Boniface Hospital, so the Department has put funding towards that, and we certainly hope that that will be successful.

This year the province hosted the first provincial nutraceutical conference with over 200 people attending, and there was funding that went through MAVI, and also there have been projects that have been worked on through the Food Development Centre. That is one of the reasons why I am quite pleased to have the Food Development Centre now come under Agriculture and Food, so that work that is being done through various areas of the Department and work that is done at the Food Development Centre can be pulled closer together.

Specifically it would be very difficult to say what portion of work is done by which individuals, but I certainly recognize this as a growing area and one that we have to take some leadership in, and that is why we are supportive of the various projects and look to see more work done in this area.

Mr. Gerrard: The Minister referred to a project at the University of Manitoba to become, I suppose, a national centre for nutraceuticals. It is my understanding that for that to be successful it would probably need quite substantial both private sector and provincial funding. I would ask the Minister whether in fact she is ready to put on the table some provincial funding to try and secure the national centre for nutraceuticals at the University of Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: It would be premature for us to put money on the table before it is determined where the federal government is going to locate this site, but I want to tell the Member that I have met with the university, the Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines has met with the representatives from the President of the University, with the Dean of Agriculture to discuss this project. There is support from the private sector for it although I do not know what level that support is either. There are also funds should the federal government choose Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba for this site, we would all certainly be very pleased. There are funds available in ITM to address it should that decision be made. So, I would encourage the Member, if he can help us in any way, to get that site to Manitoba. It is a very important issue. We need, and there is the opportunity for Manitoba, to become a leader in excellence in this particular field, and we are supportive of the project.

Mr. Gerrard: Just assure the Minister that I have been a strong supporter of the nutraceutical industry growth for some time and will do whatever I can, although I think that the Minister might be well advised to be really on top of the circumstance and make sure that a commitment from the provincial government of some sort may not be critical in that success. One of the things that all of us become aware of, and perhaps at no time more than in the last year or so with the problems in southwestern Manitoba, is that along the west side of Manitoba, and I speak not only here of Brandon and Melita and Minnedosa and areas south of Riding Mountain National Park, but I speak, particularly knowing that the Member for Dauphin-Roblin is present and listening with great interest about the Dauphin-Roblin area and, of course, the Swan River and perhaps even

The Pas area, or even Leaf Rapids with their agriculture down the mine.

* (15:00)

The issue here would be that western Manitoba, with their higher transportation cost, has a need to have opportunities for higher value crops, for potential to diversify into nutraceuticals and other areas. As we are all aware, the climate and soil conditions are not as easy to grow beans and so on as it is in the extreme south of Manitoba, along the Red River Valley. So the issue is: What is the Minister doing, specifically in Dauphin, and in other parts of western Manitoba, to highlight and to develop the nutraceutical industry and the availability of these new product crops and agricultural produce for this area of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member raises the issue of increased transportation costs and the increased costs for the southwest part of the province, the Dauphin and Swan River area. I guess I would tell the Member that one of the areas that is the most affected is the area that I represent, where we now have the highest transportation costs. We will have increased transportation costs if we proceed with further rail line abandonment, which is quite an issue in the area right now. The issue of high transportation costs and the need to look for new crops and to diversify is certainly a very valid issue.

I would say to the Member that we have four regional operations in the province. Each one deals with a broad range of issues and looks at introducing new crops. When you look at the southwest part of the province, where there has been a lot of pressure, and even in other areas, but I will refer to the southwest. The greatest diversification has been moving into more livestock. We are seeing a lot of that. We are also seeing people looking at nutraceuticals. I cannot remember the name of the family, but around Clear Lake, in that region, I think it is in the Sandy Lake area, there is a fairly large garlic operation that is growing. In people's minds, a large garlic operation, you might think that it is not like a grain operation. A garlic operation, if you have an acre of it you have a lot of work cut out for you. That is the thing with nutra-

ceuticals. They are a way to supplement a farm income, but most times they are very labour intensive. It can be only done in small plots to be effective.

We have programs where we have some research being done at the Parkland Crop Diversification Centre. There is a centre at Melita and certainly the Carberry Crop Diversification Centre as well as other areas. The Parkland Crop Diversification Centre in Roblin has funding of \$75,000 from a program covering new ground. That money is used to look at new crops. They have been doing a number of projects to support high-value crops, including medicinal plants as well as hemp.

Certainly we have heard a lot of interest in hemp production, particularly in the Dauphin area and in many other areas. The Souris Valley Irrigation Centre in Melita focusses on trials involving potato trials. New crops that are being looked at in the various sites are Oriental vegetables, where there is a growing market, medicinal plants and also irrigation forage production. So there are various areas where research is being done on nutraceutical crops but also other crops, because I think that farmers are always looking for something new that they want to grow. I think that as a department it is incumbent upon us to take these test plots, to do some of the research that farmers can have some comparison to look at what they are doing. By doing the research that increases the opportunities for producers.

So there are a few sites where the work is being done across the province. Each regional office does their own. But I want to also say that the work that is done in one region is also shared in another. It may not always adapt completely what is going on in Carberry, it might not work in The Pas, but the research is being done.

Mr. Gerrard: I was aware of the transportation costs in Swan River, which was why I have included mention of it. I will try and remember at the Estimates next year to ask the Minister again what she has been doing in the interim in terms of promoting nutraceuticals and new opportunities for people in the Swan River region.

My last question on nutraceuticals, and I will try and keep this fairly short. Does the department at this point have any projections as you do, for example, in the potential expansion of the hog industry as to what the potential for expansion in the nutraceutical industry would be and what the potential value of the industry would be a year, two years, five years, ten years, twenty years down the line?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that the global industry is approaching about \$50 billion U.S. and is anticipated to grow to \$500 billion. What Canada's share in that is, we are not sure exactly what Canada's share is, but if you look at \$50 billion growing to \$500 billion, that is a potential for an awful lot of growth here. Now, it all depends if we get the centre of excellence here in Manitoba. That will spur on more growth. If that centre comes, then we are going to have to do more development and more encouraging of the production here. If we would be fortunate enough to get a processor of nutraceuticals here in Manitoba, that as well will help the growth to go on. The plots are there, the work is being done, we are testing various crops in Manitoba, many producers are testing them. It is all at a very early stage for Manitobans, but when you look at the potential for what is anticipated as the growth in this industry, I see it as being a tremendous opportunity.

* (15:10)

Mr. Gerrard: Clearly from the figures you quote, the potential is enormous and stresses indeed the efforts that in Manitoba we should go to in order to try and get that centre here and to do what we can to provide opportunities for farmers, not only in one part of the province, but in all parts of the province. I would think that it would be important. Again, I will try and ask you this next year, what your business plan is and what your projections are for Manitoba specifically. It would seem to me that when the opportunities are so big that there really should be a pretty specific business plan for where we are going in this province and how we are going to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity.

One other issue which I think deals with farm management, you have spoken already

about how the Portage la Prairie Food Development Centre is being moved under the Department. Clearly one of the limiting factors in the area of hog waste management is the development and the deployment of new technologies. One of the issues and I suppose one of the potential problems is that there are several departments who are concerned in this. Perhaps you could give me a little bit of a better understanding of how Agriculture; Industry, Trade and Mines; and Conservation are all working together to try and get an optimum result.

Mr. Chris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member raises an important issue and one that government takes very seriously and one that several departments work on together to address. Our role as the Department of Agriculture and Food is at the farm level, but we have the process of the technical review committee, we have Intergovernmental Affairs, Conservation, and Agriculture working on the technical review. Also Industry, Trade and Mines; and Health can be called in to that area. When development comes along, for example, when the Brandon plant was being proposed, all departments worked together on the issues that affected their department. Certainly when there is an issue the departments work together. Because we have the technical review committee, when an issue comes up, they automatically pull together and work on them. I guess, when you look at the regulatory measures that have been developed, like the livestock waste management, we work together with Conservation on that.

On development of the manure management strategy, again, the technical review committee on manure management is made up of staff from Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Conservation, Intergovernmental Affairs, Industry and Mines and, in fact, the PFRA is involved in that as well. On the Agriculture Guideline Development Committee, Health has representation on that committee.

So, in each case, when there are issues that are arising or as the industry evolves, and I know

the Member is aware that we just announced our Livestock Stewardship Initiative, our discussion paper that is being distributed, and the public meetings that we are going to be holding—again, the planning and the work to put those meetings together and our sustainable development initiative is three departments working very closely together. I think it is very important when one department has the responsibility of certain issues and another has the responsibility of other issues that overlap and have impact on one another, the various departments and staff work together.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, thank you for that clarification and with your concern about the farm level. Maybe I could ask specifically where a farmer has developed new technology, it seems, as I have heard on a number of occasions, to be experiencing some frustration and undue delays in dealing with support from Industry, Trade and Mines. Does your staff in Agriculture provide a support or an advocacy or a function that would help farmers in improving agriculture in Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member asks about the waste management and the support for people who are developing new technology. I want to tell the Member that when farmers come forward with new ideas on waste management or other ideas, definitely we are there to support them. That support usually starts at the regional level and people are directed to where they might be able to get some support. We want to see new technology develop. Usually they are people who are right at the grassroots who are handling either livestock or a new crop or, in this particular case, manure. They are the ones that are there everyday. They are the ones that come up with new ideas, and certainly we support those. I think the Member was referring to a specific project, probably Ag waste management.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Gerrard: I have heard similar comments from different farmers, rather than specifically referring to an individual project just wanted to find out the general process.

* (15:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, the Department does work together. We have people who are working on projects in contact with Industry, Trade and Mines, and are supportive of those projects and help them work through them. There are projects that get funding under ARDI or can get funding under MRAC. In those cases, we have department staff that are involved with that; but, when there is a project that has agricultural involvement, we have staff that is more than willing and does work with them to try to open the doors and work with the Industry, Trade Department to make sure that it works its way through. Now, I have to admit that every project is not going to get through. The projects are weighed on their merit and that staff have the expertise to work through that, but the goal of the Department is to work with farmers and people to ensure that, when there are new ideas out there, they get the information that they need.

With regard to manure, we also have the manure initiative that the Department is involved in, supports, and that is an area that the Manitoba Livestock Manure Management Initiative was established to take a leadership in research and development efforts with private industry. We are involved and want to see these projects worked through the system and, hopefully, get the support that they need.

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the Minister for her answers, and I am going to pass on to the Member for Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to discuss with the Minister today some of the issues of management and marketing in Manitoba in agriculture. The Honourable Member from River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has touched on a few that are very near and dear to my heart, particularly the ARDI committee, having been a member of that for the last couple of years, before I was elected. I see the Assistant Deputy smiling. I enjoyed working with him in regard to the projects, a few of them, more than one of them here today—in regard to the projects that we worked on, and I think it is a very, very worthwhile project and a wonderful opportunity that has come out of it. There is the centre of excellence, and the work done by the

St. Boniface Research facility, I think, is going to augur as well in the future as a major project in Manitoba Agriculture to make us known as a centre of excellence and, certainly, in the development of nutraceuticals.

I applaud all of the work that is being done at the present time through the University of Manitoba and by the Department to co-ordinate some of those projects and make sure that there is a little brighter future through diversification for some of the farmers in Manitoba that would continue to use that venue.

At this point I would like to ask the Minister about the commitment to the program, as we get into, because I think it is very relevant to the marketing side of our industry today in this province, and ask her if her government continues to be as fully committed to it as our predecessors.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, from the time I first came to the Legislature until now, I have always put on the record that I am very committed to research and development. I think it is a very important part of our industry and one that we have to continue to work on. My government is committed to research and development. There is \$9 million that is unallocated in ARDI, and we are in a transition period with the federal government as we negotiate new safety nets and new monies from the federal government to see what they are prepared to put into research. There is no new money from the federal government coming into the program. With the safety net funding the way it is, we are not sure what the federal government is going to do, but I want to state clearly on the record that our government is very much committed to research and development, and we want to see new projects move forward. Certainly with \$9 million available, we anticipate that we will see many new, good ideas receive funding for research in this province.

Mr. Maguire: I wonder, the Minister has mentioned, just while we are on the funding, Mr. Chairman, if I could get an idea, because it has been some while since I was able to attend the meeting, if she could give me an indication what the level of funding is. She mentioned the \$9 million that was out, that had not been allocated

yet. I wonder if she could give me an indication, is that the amount of funding by both levels of government, that is still outstanding, or still out that the ARDI committee still has to work with?

* (15:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the funds that are in the program now, we started out with funding of about \$22.4 million and of that approximately \$11.8 million has been allocated, so that leaves about \$9 million that is in the fund. There are meetings that are coming up, and I am sure that there will be additional funds that will be allocated. The funds that were put in last year were not matched by the federal government. The funds that are being put in this year are not being matched by the federal government. That is strictly provincial dollars that both the previous government and this government have put in without support from the federal government, so clearly we are in a transition stage on this program, and we look to further discussions with the federal government and hope that they will recognize the importance of research and recognize the important projects that are funded under this program, and that we will get some additional funds, but the funding that is going in now is strictly from the province.

Mr. Maguire: How many dollars has that been that have gone unmatched at this time?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, \$2,700,000 between last year and this year that went into the fund unmatched by the federal government.

Mr. Maguire: Just while I am on that, I guess there are a number of projects, I know I had the opportunity to read through a couple hundred of them. Can the Minister give me any indication of how many, as I have not been in touch with Mr. Gilson, the chairman, really since the election? Can you give me some indication, update, as to how many projects the ARDI initiative has undertaken to date or how many applications they have received?

Ms. Wowchuk: As of March 20, 2000, ARDI has received 341 applications since the program began operation in March of 1998, and the ARDI program council has allocated more than

\$11.8 million to 167 projects which are now underway.

Mr. Maguire: I thank you, Madam Minister, for that answer. Is there a breakdown of the 167 that are ongoing, of the \$11.8 million that has been allocated? Could we just get an update as to the various sectors that are being looked at within ARDI, whether they are livestock, management, grains, equipment in the other sectors that we were looking at the time in the committee? Could you just give me an update as to where the breakdown is of the various projects that have been accepted today?

Ms. Wowchuk: Of the \$11.7 million, about 18 percent goes to cereal projects, 6 percent to forage projects, 2 percent to hemp, 4 percent to horticulture, 14 percent to livestock, 4 percent to manure management, 6 percent to nutraceuticals, 24 percent to the National Centre on Agriculture, Research and Medicine, 13 percent for oil seeds, 4 percent on pulses, 0.1 percent on soil sustainability, and 5 percent to other. So there is a wide variety of projects that are covered, and I believe there are a number of excellent projects that are funded under this.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to introduce Mr. Barry Todd, Director of the Soils and Crops branch, who has joined us at the table.

Mr. Maguire: Welcome, Mr. Todd. This is a pet project of mine. I very much look forward to the results of the work that ARDI continues to do and the good work that the Department has put into this already. I guess, I looked at that fact, as we diversify in Manitoba and as we continue to be forced to do that probably much quicker than we would have, because of, as you know, Madam Minister, the result of our high proximity to freight than other areas of Canada. I will have a discussion with you sometime. I do believe that my freight is higher than yours in the Swan River Valley. It did not used to be that way, but the Crow does funny things.

The issues here are in regard to cereals, oilseeds, forages, and I think that we tend to look at agriculture in Manitoba as pretty much more becoming diversified, but it is close to half and half between grains and livestock. I wonder if you could give me an updated number as to

where we are in regard to percentage of agricultural income that comes from grains as opposed to that of livestock.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, for 1999, the crop cash receipts are estimated to be \$1.42 billion, and the livestock receipts are \$1.31 billion.

Mr. Maguire: So those are as of the calendar year 1999? Yes.

I think it shows the diversification, Madam Minister. Those numbers have increased considerably on the livestock side over the last few years and will continue to, in my estimation, as we have talked about before in the House in regard to some other issues that we talked about, debated. I guess I look here as well in regard to the percentages that you gave me under the ARDI program, and I look with interest at some of the issues that perhaps do not get as much attention as, say, the major ones of cereals, oilseeds. I am referring to the 0.1 percent on soil sustainability or the things like horticulture, the hemp and forages.

* (15:40)

One of the fastest growing programs that we have got, the way I see it at least, is in regard to forage expansion in the province of Manitoba. I wonder if she could outline to me any of the projects or what kind of ongoing support there is for developing business plans, developing export opportunities in the forage program in Manitoba, whether they are under, from my familiarity with it, the projects under forage were more on the production side. I do know, however, that your trade missions as well as your predecessors' have been looking vastly at some of the exports that happened in that area and the future of developing exports in the forage industry. I wonder if you could outline to me some of the programs that might be available in that area.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member is right, farmers are looking for alternatives. Many farmers are looking at changing from grain production to forage production, whether that be alfalfa or timothy or other grasses. There has been a tremendous effort put into developing markets for these products. I believe the Member

may have even been himself involved in some of the trade mission work to Japan and Korea. If he has not, there have been people from his area that have been involved in that. Certainly Mexico is an important market. I had the opportunity to travel with some people from his area to Mexico who saw the tremendous market in Mexico that there is. Of course, the U.S., which is right across the border from us, is a very important market that we should never neglect, because that market is a lot easier to access with only having to cross a border, not having to go great distances as we do to other markets. Mexico might not be that far away, but certainly the markets in Asia bring with them additional challenges. There have been many people who have been working on that, and the Department has worked with those producers as they look at developing better processing and handling methods. Certainly, these are things that have to be addressed. There have been compacting projects to work on. There has been support in this area of processing under covering new ground under ARDI, under MAVI. There is support from the Department.

Of course there is also the crop development that goes on and test plots with a variety of crops. The Department, last year I believe, put out a timothy production manual because that is an emerging market as well. The Department has worked with groups in Teulon, in Russell, and in the southwest part of the province. One of the things that is being done is trying to get the highest quality possible and working with producers to ensure that crop gets off just at the right stage when it is at high quality because that is key in accessing those markets. I know that I have talked to some of the producers who have talked about having very high quality forage products but the colour might not be just right. For some of those markets that we are looking at, colour is very important. There is also new technology that we have to look at that was in other countries. I understand that in Italy they have developed some very good technology, and in fact some of the people from Russell have been looking at that equipment to see how it can be adapted to production here. That is one of the things that we have to do. We have to look at what other people have developed, what kind of advanced technology do they have that we can then bring together with our high-quality

product. Because we have the ability to grow the product here, we have to learn from other people how they are processing and handling and packaging that product so that it then meets the needs of the market.

So, to the Member's question, there is a lot of work that is being done, and we recognize this as a growing market and one that we have to monitor and continue to work on so that we can meet that market need.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Minister, can you indicate to me what percentage of the ARDI budget is going towards marketing then?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I look at the numbers that I put forward, for example, on forage where there is 6 percent of the money going in forage, it is very hard to determine whether any portion of that money is going into marketing, or even with the livestock or others or with the cereal crops, there is not that breakdown.

But I would tell the Member that ARDI money tends to be focused more on research and development and MRAC dollars tend to be spent more on marketing. So you would not want to see the projects overlapping and having funds from both sides going towards marketing. My understanding is that the projects under MRAC are the ones that are focussed more on marketing of a product.

* (15:50)

Mr. Maguire: I want to thank the Minister for that. Absolutely, we certainly do not need to see duplication. I remember discussing this issue with some of the cohorts at the table that you have today in regard to the kinds of program duplications on the funding side that we had to deal with as a committee. So I am pleased to see that we are still seeing 50 percent of private funds come into these projects. As opposed to I think a lot of the companies out there today, if they are into the marketing side of it, before they even come to ARDI, in a lot of cases they will have put some kind of a marketing program in place for their product, hopefully, in regard to that being their ultimate goal as to how they can move the product that they want produced or processed, or help to manufacture.

I guess, in regard to some of the programs you have talked about in the forage side, I guess I would look at part of that answer to marketing being in the development of equipment used to put a product in place, like compression that could be used for forages, and that sort of thing. I guess another one would be the hemp industry that seems flat at the moment but still has hopefully a good future in the world, if perhaps we are not the ones leading it at the present time.

I wonder if she could give me an update on just where we are at with the projects in regard to hemp in Manitoba and how we can look at further developing that industry in this province.

First of all, for clarification, Mr. Chairman, maybe I can pinpoint my question a little bit closer and not be so broad. Could she indicate to me just what projects are ongoing under ARDI on the hemp side? She indicated there is 2 percent of those funds there. I was familiar with a few. I am wondering if there are any more, or if they are still ongoing.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, we do not have the exact breakdown of the ARDI projects, but I can tell the Member that there are several hemp projects that are funded under ARDI. I might be able to get him more detail on that, if that is what he is looking for.

A couple of the projects have been suspended because they involved CGP. The Member is well aware of what has happened with CGP, and certainly that was a very unfortunate incident to have because there was so much hope and so much investment made into building up that industry in Manitoba. I still have a lot of hope that it is going to be a successful industry. It is kind of one of those things, when you are developing a new industry, you hit a few bumps in the road. I think the hemp growers of Manitoba have hit a pretty substantial bump right now, but they are doing their work, and I think they will be successful.

As I said, there are several projects, some on the production side, some on the processing side of hemp, but certainly the Department continues to do the agronomic studies on hemp and continues to work with the Manitoba hemp growers industry. The Manitoba Industrial Hemp

Association got \$25,000 under Covering New Ground to develop sustainable production systems for hemp, and there continues to be test plots that the Department is taking on to see the hemp industry grow in this province.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, we had a hemp conference in 2000. It was held in March with four partners involved in the event. Manitoba Agriculture and Food was involved, the Food Development Centre, the Industrial Hemp Association and Agriculture and Food Canada. I had an opportunity to attend that, and I have to say that I am quite amazed by the number of products that are produced from hemp. I am particularly impressed with the clothing, the fabric that is developed, beautiful, beautiful clothing, as well as nutraceutical products that were there, just a wide range of products.

The Member had asked for specific information, and I want to put on the record the projects that he was asking about. There is development of hemp production and processing capabilities were funded to the organization, Prairie Hemp Limited, and they received funds in the amount of \$67,600. Consolidated Growers and Processors Canada have had a project called "A Commercial Scaled Evaluation of Hemp to Determine Optimum Production," and of course that will be one of the projects that is on hold because of the company filing for bankruptcy.

Websar Laboratories Incorporated have a project called "Neutraceuticals in Manitoba Hemp"; another, Consolidated Growers and Processors Canada, "Natural Air Drying of Industrial Hemp." Of course, that one would be put on hold. Hemp Oil Canada has a project of development of hemp food products and processing. The final project is Leson Environmental Consulting, and their project is entitled "Evaluating Interference of the THC Levels in Hemp Food Products With Employee Drug Testing," all important issues related to the hemp industry.

I look at the one about air drying. I had the opportunity to see some of the crop coming up off in the Ashville area, and certainly the level of moisture that that crop has taken off that drying is a very important component. The other projects, I think, you know, when you look at the

neutraceutical and food development, the level of THC in the product are all very important projects and funded under ARDI.

Mr. Maguire: Well, thank you very much, Madam Minister. I guess that is one area to lighten it up a little bit. I do not know if I would say that the former minister was high on this particular product, venue, or not, but he certainly was a proponent of increasing the production of the product in the province of Manitoba. I go back to some words that the former chairman of the ARDI committee said when we were getting into some of these projects. I guess I would have to say that Mr. Gilson has had a vast experience in the agricultural industry in Manitoba, and having come from the Medora region, or his family, in his earlier years he said that sometimes we have to go through changes that we never thought we would experience.

* (16:00)

One of his was that—just to share a story—his son had come home from Vancouver as we started this project, and he had been talking about new products that might be available to him—and you listed a few of them in your comments—and his son walked in with a new sports jacket on and asked him if he could tell him what it was made out of. Of course, the answer was that it was hemp, and Mr. Gilson's comment was that you could really not tell it from any other kind of material that is out there today.

So, when you look at the kinds of potential that we see, we are trying to design strawboard, we are trying to look at flax processing, the straw out of flax, a number of other products that we have put to use in regard to the strawboard plant at Elie and growing pains that we are going through. But obviously the product is in demand and will continue to be utilized.

I would encourage the Minister to continue to fund the ARDI program as much as we can, and I will get into that in few minutes, but I also would wish to look at her being a proponent through any of the other programs that are available that we may get into throughout the course of these Estimates and look at other ways

of expanding not just that particular industry, being hemp, but a number of the other areas.

You may want to use ARDI as a sounding board because it is certainly—this is what I found—a very valuable way to gauge where people think the industry is going to go, which in many cases is where it will go because these are the leaders in the industry that are willing to put forth their dollars to make the investment in our economy today. They are willing to make the investment in our industry, and certainly they will be leaders in that whole area. I think that there is a real need to continue to be committed to some of these areas.

One of those I just want to refer to before I wrap up with ARDI and my comments on it, and some of my other colleagues may have some questions on it as well—but the whole area, I guess I will go back to where I was impassioned by the comments from the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) today as well, having been involved with this process and having watched the work being done to get agriculture and medicine together through the centre in St. Boniface, and I was clearly a proponent. In fact, I believe I seconded the resolution in the ARDI committee to go forward and ask for the support of St. Boniface for our agriculture industry and medicine to work together to bring in world-class scientists, to be a centre of excellence in the neutraceutical development process.

You know, a comparison could be drawn to the biotech industry that Saskatoon has worked on in some of those areas. We have many opportunities to grow these crops here in Manitoba, but we do not know whether the cures for things like Alzheimer's or some of the other diseases that may be looked at or conditions that we may look at for a particular germ or a particular particle of a crop that is presently grown in Manitoba might come from, not just necessarily a crop either, Madam Minister, it could be the result of products from our livestock industry, as well, that could lead us to find cures for some of these diseases.

I think I have a story here I guess from Monday's *Winnipeg Free Press* where we are among the healthiest people in the world, a study that was just done by the World Health

Organization. I guess I have always been a proponent and believed that we do have excellent food in this country and that we are supplying our consumers of this nation with an excellent product. Yes, we do have concerns about the environment, and we do have concerns about sustainability, and we do have concerns about making sure that our products are safe, and that whole discussion is ongoing through genetically modified discussions that are going on in our industry today and around a number of those.

But I think, as the study shows, that out of I believe it is 191 countries, Canada ranks 12th in its own findings in a world health manner, that the whole area of the development of nutraceuticals is going to continue to be very important as we look for niche markets in some of the smaller crops that will help provide sustainability for some of our farming community out there today and not just for the farmers but for the development of the processing in the smaller communities and the larger ones that we have in this province.

So, in particular, I wonder if I could just get an update from the Minister in regard to where the whole project at St. Boniface is at, at this particular time, and what dollars have been allocated and spent in that process.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member raises a very important issue with the St. Boniface project, but I just want to refer back a little bit to when he talked about hemp and this being a new crop here, and some of the new products that are coming from it. But I have to tell him a story I tell people oftentimes that this really is not a new crop for Manitoba. I remember when my grandparents used to grow it in their garden for birdseed, and I am not sure what variety that was that was being grown at that time. I know that the seed that came from Ukraine.

* (16:10)

There is an interesting farm. It is called the Negrych farm between Dauphin and Grandview, and it is now a historical site. On that farm there is this unique piece of equipment that we were not quite sure what it was for. Actually there is a

press to press out hemp oil there and also some equipment used to make rope on that particular farm, which is a Centennial Farm, has been there for a hundred years. So this is equipment that came over from the Ukraine a century ago. I am sure it had to be the right kind of hemp because it was used for human consumption. I am told that the oil is not what we have to worry about, but maybe I am wrong on that one.

Something that I find very interesting, that in fact a crop that was grown and part of the pioneer's life and then taken away when people were not allowed to grow it. I have to say that it seems to me that some of those crops that I remember growing for birdseed were grown during that time when they were not supposed to be grown, but that was just birdseed. I do not think anybody really harvested it. It was out there for the birds to eat. I guess that is another option for the hemp seed that is being produced right now is again birdseed but something that can be a very valuable market when you look at the number of people that keep birds as pets, not so much here in Manitoba but the further south you go, the more and more you see birds kept as pets. So there is opportunity there.

But I digress and want to get back to the St. Boniface issue. The Member asked about the funding and what dollars have been allocated. The formal agreement that is needed to be signed between ARDI and this particular project is in the final stages and very close to being completed. The important part that is being worked on is the linkages between the University of Manitoba and St. Boniface Hospital because you have to have that linkage. While those final details are being worked on, the construction has begun. Tenders have been let go and the labs are being constructed, and as soon as the agreement has been finalized and the labs are completed, the recruitment will begin to bring the scientists into this facility.

When you look at this, this is just a tremendous opportunity to link agriculture with medicine. It is very important that we have that linkage between the University and St. Boniface Hospital where there will be the clinical application, and we will be able to work right through from the production through to the clinical application of the products that are developed.

Certainly earlier I mentioned the neutraceutical conference that was held at St. Boniface Hospital, and this was an opportunity for people in agriculture to get into discussion with people who work in the medical field. That is an interesting linkage, where we can have agriculture people and medical researchers working together. This linkage can create opportunities for farmers and sometimes very small farmers because the kinds of crops that are required here, in most cases, will be grown on a very small scale because they are quite labour intensive and have to be, in some cases, quite controlled, and most of the neutraceutical products that are grown are usually grown on a small scale. Specifically, everything is moving along. There are no holdups in the program. There are a few details that have to be worked out, but we anticipate that that will happen in due course, but fairly soon I hope.

Mr. Maguire: I thank the Minister for that answer. It certainly was our purpose to very directly link agriculture and medicine together in developing the project. I think it will auger well for our industry. I guess your earlier comments bring a whole new meaning to the word "birdseed" in the area of—maybe we can look for even stranger things out of what we ship to New York in the future. The comments of kinds of products that are used in stores today in the hemp industry, there is a whole industry there with such a diversified area that it is one that I think, as we take advantage of the opportunities in the hog industry in Manitoba, we have to acknowledge that if we do not take advantage of those hogs in Manitoba, and I assume that the Minister agrees that we have an advantage there now in North America, that someone else will take advantage of the opportunity we have in the hemp industry as well. I think that our climate and our growing conditions here are suited to it. I wonder if the Minister could concur that she believes that if we do not proceed with some of the opportunities there in hemp that we could lose that industry to other regions.

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the opportunities in the hemp industry are I believe tremendous, not only for the producers but for the processors.

There is the opportunity to develop many products, and I would certainly like to see some development of the fibre as well as the seed. As I have indicated, I have seen a wide variety of products and certainly the setback that we had this year with the difficulties of CGP going bankrupt is a setback, and there is the risk of losing this industry, but that is recognizing that this is a new crop. That is why the Department has worked over the years to develop the crop and worked with the industry to test those first crops and bring the seed into Manitoba.

But certainly we have to ensure that we do everything we can to keep that industry here because there are other provinces, I am sure, other businesses that are looking at developing it. I know that the Manitoba Hemp Growers Association is looking to attract new people here but, although we have lost CGP, there are two successful processors that are still operating in Manitoba. There is Prairie Hemp and Hemp Oil Canada who are operating here in Manitoba, so although we have lost one, there is still work being done. I think the fact there are projects that are being funded through ARDI, that means that there is more development but as with any new crop, we have to continue to work on it and try to ensure that the benefits of this production stay here in Manitoba.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I agree there are a good many products that could be gained from hemp and, of course, with the more processing we can get in this province, the more jobs we will have with it as well beyond the farm gate. I guess I would look at, we have talked about the oils that we could get from the product, we have talked about the seed we could get out of it as well, then of course the fibre is one of the major components of it, and I concur that we need to end up with a lot more processing on the fibre side of the industry.

There has also been a good deal of discussion in regard to hemp used for medicinal purposes in Manitoba or throughout the world. I do not even have the experience of my grandparents growing hemp for birdseed, as the Minister does, let alone ever having taken it for any purposes. So I wonder if the Minister can just make some comments in regard to the whole process of the use of hemp for medicinal

purposes and what kinds of opportunities, if any, she may see there?

* (16:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member mentioned the variety of products that can be produced from hemp. I want to just inform the Member that the Food Development Centre plays a very active role with one of the companies that I mentioned. There are a variety of products that are being developed there: oil, and the cakes from the meal, hemp nuts, which are being sold commercially right now. They are working on a process to separate the meal into components. That is a high-protein product, and they are looking at ways to separate that so there is work being done. The Food Development Centre, which is now under this department, is playing a very important role in that.

The Member asked about the use of hemp or marijuana for medicinal purposes. The federal government wants to investigate the use of this product for pain reduction. It has also been used. People have been able to get the product for offsetting nausea that follows chemotherapy so the federal government is looking. They have put out a call asking for people who might be able to provide a high-quality product for the research projects that the federal government wants to do.

There have been a couple of groups in Manitoba who have made application to produce this. One of the unique ones is at Leaf Rapids, where there is a proposal to grow this product in the mine that has closed down. Certainly this is a unique situation and would provide a controlled environment where a product could be grown. It certainly would be a lot easier to control access to the product than it would be if it were grown out in an open field.

I know when the first hemp crops were being grown in the Dauphin area, there were an awful lot of cars stopping and inspecting to see what crop was really growing there. So if this project would be successful in Leaf Rapids, it would be very interesting. It would be a benefit to the community if they had the opportunity to make use of a mine that is no longer in production.

The research has to be done on this, and I have to say that I am pleased that the federal government is taking the step to do the research. Perhaps the site at St. Boniface will play a role in the testing of this product and get the proper research done that we need in order to determine whether or not it will be a successful product in treating pain, in helping with the treatment for people who are suffering from cancer, very difficult situations to have people in. I am pleased that the research is being done to test it for medical purposes.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chair, all the patience in the world. I would like to thank the Minister for her discussion on that and her answer. Certainly, I hope it is more successful than what we were doing in mining roses in some of the mines in the North, at some point. There are still some I think. As far as I know, there is still some production going on in that area in Flin Flon and a few of the others so it continues to be a product, but that is certainly a unique way to produce it. I agree, they have likely got it in about as controlled a climate as you are going to get it in that kind of an atmosphere.

To go back to where we are at in regard to the funding with ARDI, Madam Minister, is something that concerns me. I know that you have outlined to me the amounts of funds that are outstanding, that have not been used yet in regard to the projects that are coming forward. So I wonder if I could get an indication on how many outstanding applications there are that have not been dealt with at this time.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, there are some 25 to 30 applications that are now waiting to be reviewed at the upcoming meeting, and there are between eight and ten applications that have been reviewed and require further follow up.

Mr. Maguire: Can the Minister indicate to me how often ARDI is still meeting?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, there are usually four intake meetings a year and then follow-up meetings after that. On the average, the committee would meet about eight times a year. It has not changed.

Mr. Maguire: I will pass to my friend here from Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Chair, just on a matter of committee business, my colleague the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) had some questions on irrigation and asked the Minister to have staff available here, which he understands to be the case. He is in another committee now asking a number of questions. He just wanted to convey to the Minister that the staff she may have arranged to be here for him today, she may wish to let that staff go home and arrange for tomorrow or another occasion for that staff to be here. For the convenience of staff, just indicating that if that staff is here, as a courtesy to them and to the Minister, the Member asked me to just convey his regrets that he is in another committee at this moment dealing with some other issues important to him and his constituents, and that, if that staff could be available on another occasion, he would be most appreciative.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been moving all over the place, and at some point we will probably be able to answer those questions. But I would like to ask the members if we are willing to pass section 4 today and then move on to the other sections, and then we can get the Member the information that he needs. So if it is possible to do part of section 4 and pass it, then I recognise that the Member would have some specific questions on the irrigation section and we could accommodate him. If we could pass part of the—vote for what we are on right now, that would help us to determine which staff we have to bring in next.

* (16:30)

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I guess the situation that we are faced with today, Madam Minister, is I know I have a number of colleagues that would want to continue to perhaps ask some questions in this area, and they feel that it would be more appropriate to do that at next week's sitting at this point. In the next session of Agriculture as well, if we could do that.

Ms. Wowchuk: So the Member is indicating then that they are not prepared to pass section 4, vote for it today. I guess we have the staff here for this department here, so if there are questions that the Member has to ask in that area, that would be good. Clearly, the Member is saying then, they are not prepared to pass any of the vote for today.

Mr. Maguire: I know, Madam Minister, there are a number of questions that the critic would like to ask in this area, and I am not sure what those are. I have not conferred with him on that. It may not take a long time to do that beginning of next week. If we could continue to have that staff available next week, in the early part of the week at least, the very next sitting of Agriculture it would be appropriate, it would certainly be what we would request.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Aglugub): Is it just for (e) that they are holding, or all of 4?

Mr. Maguire: I believe it is all of section 4 at this point, Mr. Chair. I assumed that we were still on 4(a).

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Aglugub): We are still on 4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (a) Marketing and Farm Business Management.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you very much. We were looking at finishing up a few questions in regard to the research, development and marketing or the ARDI program, the diversification initiative.

I wonder if I could get the Minister to repeat just how many times the committee has met, and add to that, as well, how many deadlines they still have for receiving applications this year.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, there are about four intake dates in a year. Three of those have been advertised for this year. The Member asks how often they sit. There is usually some follow-up work after an intake meeting, and this results in about eight sittings a year.

Mr. Maguire: In looking at the supplements to this particular program, I note with interest that the agriculture research budget has been cut back—agriculture research and development in

total—with a good deal of it in this budget, virtually all of it, coming from the Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative.

I wonder if I could get an explanation from the Minister in regard to why those funds have been cut back. I know she has given us an understanding to lead us to believe that she and her government have a very sound commitment to agriculture in regard to the research and development that is needed in the province. I wonder if she could tell us why they have cut back on that particular budget item.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: There is \$9 million in the program that has been unallocated. We have been working for two years now with no funding from the federal government. There were funds put in by his government last year and funds put by our government this year into the fund without any support from the federal government. We hope to get the federal government to recognize the importance of research and hope that we can negotiate with them to get them to continue to share in this program, but we are in a transition period between the time when the federal government is prepared to put funds in and when they are not prepared to.

But, provincially, we have put dollars in. Because there is \$9 million of unallocated funds, we feel that is enough to keep all of the projects going. In fact, that is probably enough money to keep projects going for three years. So it is our hope that, by the time those funds are depleted, we will have negotiated a further agreement with the federal government. There is money there for all the projects that the Board would find as viable projects to be funded and continue research in this province.

Mr. Maguire: The Minister has just indicated that funding would be there, she thought, for three years into the future before we could see an agreement. I would like her to clarify that comment, if she could.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member may have misunderstood or I may have put my comments

wrongly. I said that we are in transition. We are hoping that we will get the federal government to recognize the importance of research, and we will be able to get them to come back into funding this.

But what I did say is, with \$9 million, we should be able to fund projects for two or three years. In the meantime, I would hope that we would have another agreement. I am not prepared to sit back and say, oh, well, we have \$9 million there; we are going to wait. Those negotiations have to take place with the federal government. In the meantime, there is an additional \$1 million that we have allocated to the fund this year, and we have to get the federal government to recognize the importance of this research fund.

* (16:40)

Mr. Maguire: Perhaps the Minister could indicate to me how many years of agreement between the two levels of government there are to fund ARDI into the future.

Ms. Wowchuk: The current agreement extends to March of 2003.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Madam Minister. Could you indicate to me what staff complement and what kind of staff backup, whether that has changed since I was on the committee? What staff complement is still being used with ARDI?

Ms. Wowchuk: There have not been any changes.

Mr. Maguire: Could the Minister just indicate to me then the names of the staff who are supporting the project at this time?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are two people that work as program advisors. Two members of the Department sit on council but are not voting members. There is one secretary that works within the Department but also provides services to ARDI. Manitoba Ag Society has the administration contract. They have hired two employees that work full time for ARDI. In the Soils and Crops branch, we have one person that co-ordinates projects. The only two full-time people would be the two people that the Ag

Society has hired to do the work for ADRI. The others are on an as-need basis when there is work to be done.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Madam Minister. It would appear to me, my recollection of having been there that we were just in the process of hiring the two folks or some support staff. I was not aware that it was one or two through the Ag Society. There is a big load in going through all of the requests and reports. I concur that that is probably a necessary addition in that area to help the Manitoba Department staff here get through the load that is required under that program.

The only other staffing question I have in regards to ARDI, and you briefly referred to it, that recruitment will begin in regard to the St. Boniface project. Can you indicate to me what recruitment has been tendered for? I think the tenders you may have referred to there were for the labs and some of the other work, but have there been tenders let for scientists and that sort of thing in regard to the St. Boniface project?

Ms. Wowchuk: Since this is a joint application, a joint project between St. Boniface and the University of Manitoba, it is necessary that the agreement that we just spoke about earlier is completed. I hope that that can be completed in the near future. Once that is completed, advertising will begin. Certainly this advertising and search will be done on an international level. We would be looking for scientists around the world who would be interested in working at this facility. It would begin with a search committee that would be put in place within the next couple of months, the next few months, once the agreement is finalized. The intention is to hire three principal investigators who will then in turn head up various investigating groups and then, of course, staff will have to be hired and other people who will work under these investigators will also have to be hired. It is anticipated that this will be phased in. It is not going to happen all at once. You would be hiring your people who would be the leaders and from there they would have a role in hiring the scientists that would be coming into work under them. Of course, along with that there would be additional staff, but the important part is that this is a joint venture between the university and Brandon and that we work to the completion of

the agreement. As I indicated earlier, as soon as that is signed we can begin with the recruitment and, even though the agreement has not been finalized, work is happening and construction is going on.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Minister, you referred in your comments there to three principal investigators and investigator groups. Can you indicate to me what "investigator groups" means?

* (16:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I perhaps used the wrong terminology. What the first round of advertising would be for is for the three head scientists and then those three head scientists would be involved in the next round of hiring. They would be the leads on the various groups of research. They would have a role to play in developing the projects that they are going to be working on. Again the agreement between the University of Manitoba and Brandon has to be finalized. I am sorry, the University of Manitoba and St. Boniface has to be finalized. If I can correct the record, I just said the wrong university, between the University of Manitoba and Brandon has to be—look, I must be getting tired here. It is St. Boniface and the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Maguire: Well, I know, Madam Minister, that we did use to have a greater detailed department of agriculture at the University in Brandon, at the old college, and I look forward to the day when perhaps we can expand it back there, in some way, shape or form. *[interjection]* No, Drew, I am not talking to you. *[interjection]*

I believe my light is still on here, Mr. Chair, so, yes, I thank the Minister for her answer that perhaps there will be a project that we can use Brandon for down the road. I know we appreciate with Brandon, I believe the university had a rather large sum allocated there for geological findings and archaeological digs and they do some great work there. I commend them for that, and I know the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), in the House here today, will have to concur with me in regard to being able to expand that area. So I look forward to being able to do that in the future, and I think as

diversification continues throughout our province it might be something else that we could look at in regard to the excellent programs that are ongoing, particularly with the college, ACC there at the present time.

Just to digress on the funding to finalize that, Madam Minister, I acknowledge that the federal government is not playing ball, if you will, in regard to a number of issues that you and I have talked about lately and that one being, of course, support for the farmers in southwest Manitoba in regard to the flooding. But on this one, in particular with ARDI, you have indicated that there would be no new funding coming forward at this time from the federal government until new agreements were reached.

Can you indicate to me what you are referring to in that manner with "new agreements?" I assume that means new safety net agreements. Of course, with ARDI having been funded from federal safety net dollars, it certainly concerns me and should be a concern of all Manitobans and certainly is of the farmers and farm groups in Manitoba that perhaps there would be further cutbacks in this whole area.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Can the Minister indicate to us the kinds of discussions she has had then in regard to continued ARDI funding with the federal government?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member raises an issue that is one that I have certainly spent a lot of time on in the last little while. Certainly, there have been very intense negotiations with the federal government and with other provinces with regard to safety nets.

The Member is aware that there has been a tremendous lobby by the group of eight to change the formula on how safety nets are funded and because of the pressures of the other governments, the federal government has agreed with the group of eight that we should move from funding safety net programs and the formula that we have now based on risk, to a formula based on cash receipts. As a result of that, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are the big losers.

It was very unfortunate that the federal government and the federal Minister of Agriculture were swayed by the pressures of all of those other governments without taking into consideration and recognizing the high risks that Manitoba and Saskatchewan have. But as a result of the group of eight putting a tremendous pressure forward and the federal government refusing to recognize the high risk that we have here in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, there has been a change in the formula. We have moved away from funding the safety net programs based on risk and have moved towards cash receipts. The result is that Manitoba, in fact, would have gone down by \$10 million and that was part of the tough negotiations.

If the Member will remember, the Minister of Agriculture and myself left a meeting in Ottawa simply because there was a move to reduce Manitoba's funding by \$10 million as a result. One of the things we were able to do is convince those other governments and the federal government that that was completely unacceptable to reduce our funding by \$10 million at the same time as other provinces were having their funding increased. We were able to get that level of funding maintained. I still think that is unfair because the other provinces all got an increase in funding. Our level of funding is maintained. That means that other provinces are going to be able to increase their level of support, develop new programs and have money for research. But if all we are able to do with the funding that we have from the federal government is maintain our programs, then we have no money left for research. There is no rollover money that is going to be available to put into this ARDI program.

It is an absolute disgrace to see what happened with other provinces and the lack of understanding and shift away from the real intent of safety nets, and that is to protect farmers against risk. And we have moved away from that. This process started a few years ago. There was a discussion on this and the beginnings of the agreement to move on this at last year's Agriculture ministers' meetings. When we came into it, it was a very difficult situation.

* (17:00)

We are short-changed in this process, and the Member asks about funding for research from the federal government. On the formula we are on right now that is going to be very difficult to get, and we hope that maybe there can be some other kinds of agreements that will be negotiated with the federal government to get dollars into Manitoba. Under the safety net package that we have, that the other provinces all pushed for, there is not going to be any rollover money if we maintain the programs that we have. One of the things that we were able to get out of this was an agreement that there would be an evaluation of this change at the end of this agreement. I think that that is going to be a very important phase, and I have to tell the Member that is certainly not what the other provinces were asking for. The other provinces are quite happy with the extra money that we have.

But we have an agreement that there will be a review, there will be an evaluation to see what the impact is on the Province and in particular what the impact is going to be on producers. I would want to see, when we are doing this review, a comparison of the kinds of programs we can offer in Manitoba in comparison to what other provinces are able to offer. So this is not a good situation that we have had develop here and there are serious disadvantages for Manitoba and for Manitoba producers under the arrangement that we have come to but you can only negotiate so long and when the federal government says, yes, this is what we are doing, then you do not have much option.

We were able to negotiate, instead of losing \$10 million to be maintained at the level that we had before. But Manitoba is at a disadvantage, as is Saskatchewan. Other provinces will have more money, will have richer programs. Manitobans will have less. What we were really trying to get the federal government to recognize and one of the things we were trying to do was say delay this whole process. We are in a transition phase in agriculture here. We have had the Crow taken away. Farmers are trying to diversify. They are going into new crops. This is not the time that we have to have our safety net programs reduced.

We are in a transition period. Our farmers are facing higher risks. Do not do that right now.

Had they held off on this program, this change to forecast receipts for three of four years and our cash receipts start to go up, then the formula might have been a little fairer. But, whether it is fairer or not, the fact of the matter is, we are moving away from the principles of safety net programs and that is too protect farmers against risk. Certainly, part two of the program, where the disaster assistance funding is included and the other program is—what is the program that everybody hates?—AIDA, the AIDA program and the development of a new disaster assistance program. It certainly will not be called AIDA because every farmer hates the name of that program. People refer to it as the son of AIDA.

What has happened here is money has been shifted to the other provinces from Part 2 of the program and the amount of money that we have in the disaster assistance packages has been reduced so that is a real problem as well. But it is very difficult to indicate what kind of money there is going to be from the federal government for ARDI with the level of funding that we have right now. It is a huge disappointment that we, in Manitoba, will not be able to offer the same kinds of things as other programs.

When you look at the programs that other provinces have, Ontario has much richer safety net programs than we have right now. Ontario has still maintained their revenue insurance. I often question why it is that Ontario was able to maintain their revenue insurance and why Manitoba negotiated theirs away. Ontario has better NISA payouts. So I wonder why it is. The question that I am quite often asked is why is it that Ontario was able to maintain their revenue insurance and Manitoba gave theirs away or negotiated theirs away.

But, you know, you have to remember the federal government has reduced their supports in Manitoba by \$300 million, through the Crow and other programs, from 1994 to 1998. This loss, just in Manitoba, is greater than the losses suffered from Ontario and all the other eastern provinces. Provinces like Ontario will say, oh, well, we lost in the Crow as well. Manitoba's loss was greater than all the eastern provinces put together.

Now we have again Manitoba falling behind the other provinces in what we can offer in

safety nets. I think that the whole idea of moving away from providing funding for safety net programs based on cash receipts completely is foolish in comparison to the formula that we had before.

The other issue that we raised, while we were in these safety net discussions, is the fact that Ontario and Quebec have three-quarters of the benefits from supply management. What we said in those negotiations was, look, supply management is a safety net. Those people who have supply management do not have the risks that everyone else has. So Quebec and Ontario have the benefits of supply management, which I support. I think the supply management system is a very good system, but the benefits of those are concentrated in eastern Canada. Now we have a shift over of federal dollars, again shifting over to those provinces that have less risk, those provinces that have the stability in their farm community of having a large portion of the supply management. To me, the whole agreement is quite unacceptable, but we got pushed into it. We have, as I say, been able to maintain our funding.

We will have an evaluation of the process, and I hope that, when we get to the evaluation, the people who evaluate it will recognize that agriculture in western Canada is different than agriculture in eastern Canada. Agriculture in western Canada faces higher risks, and it is the farmers in western Canada who have suffered the most because of changes in federal policy with the elimination of the Crow and other supports to agriculture that have been eliminated by the federal government.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate the Minister's concern in this whole area. I have a couple of other comments in regard to it, however. You have alluded to the evaluation at the end of this agreement. Can you indicate to us what agreement that is and how many years that will be?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, it is a three-year agreement, and it is the framework agreement for agriculture safety nets.

Mr. Maguire: Three years beginning when, Madam Minister?

* (17:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: April 1, 2000.

Mr. Maguire: So the National Safety Nets Committee meeting then that is meeting and the subsequent ministers' conferences that you have had, as well, are discussing the long-term safety net program for a three-year agreement, to be looking at the kind of agreement we will have for the next three years.

Ms. Wowchuk: The agreement that we came to is the framework agreement, and within that agreement the various provinces work out the details of the kind of safety nets we are going to have.

But I want to share with the Member, as well, that the gang of eight wanted a two-year agreement. We were able to get a three-year agreement, so that ensures that Manitoba will have that protection of that \$10 million for an extra year, and also that we have three years of funding for the disaster assistance component of the safety net package. The details of those programs are being worked out.

Mr. Maguire: That was partly my next question, Madam Minister, is the details of the program. A lot of farmers out there today, of course, are very aware that these discussions are ongoing.

Can you give me an update, or give this House an update, our Legislature of Manitoba here an update as to where those are at, what kinds of programs are being looked at? It is perhaps not the line of questioning I would like to follow today, but it is pertinent to the discussion we are having. I would just like to see if you could give me an update as to where we are at.

I would also acknowledge that I do not blame the Minister for forgetting the acronym to be used for the kind of safety net that we have, because AIDA is not something that many farmers out there today want prolonged, if I could be so bold as to say that. It has been a disaster itself, in many cases, and particularly the farmers in southwest Manitoba have recognized that, while there will be some dollars coming

into their hands through that program, it has really worked against them with some of the other agreements that the Government of Manitoba and the federal government have worked on in the other safety net discussions, in regard to the supplements for last year's disaster in that particular region at least anyway. I guess I would leave that question with her.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the final details on the framework agreement are being worked on and will be ready for signing at the annual Agriculture ministers' conference which will be held in Fredericton in July. The reassessment of NISA is going on, and the Department is looking at potential changes to that program. We hope that that will be completed by December. The disaster assistance portion of the program, which is the AIDA-type program with enhancements and other improvements that are being looked at is targeted to be ready by September.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you very much, Madam Minister. I guess the one thing that springs to mind is in relation to your discussions with your federal counterparts. Some of your earlier comments lead me to go back to a committee I was on in 1990 or '91 in regard to trying to look at Crow change and the inevitability of processing and development that we needed here where it should be looked at paying out on a different mechanism and nobody ever was in favour, I do not believe, in western Canada. Of the process we ended up with where it was taken away completely, and I would want to ask the Minister if there has ever been any discussion to safety net talks around that table regarding the impact that the reduction in safety net mechanisms have had on individual provinces. As far as I know, there has not been, but I wonder if she could comment on that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Member was asking whether there had been an evaluation of the impact of the reduction in spending by the federal government on western provinces. I do not believe that there has been any official study, but I know that the Member can look at his own farm books, and I can look at our farm books and look at the increased cost of freight that we are paying. The true impact can be felt there, and every farmer is feeling that impact.

Now when they first made the change, the prices of grain were a little higher and people were not feeling the full impact of it. But as the price of grain has declined—which it has in the last couple of years; last year people were feeling the real impact—and now when railway companies announce that they are going to be increasing the price of transporting grain, that is another insult to Manitoba farmers and western farmers, added to the insult that was given when we lost the Crow benefit.

The Crow buyout of \$1.6 billion in western Canada resulted in a huge loss, and when you look at the payout of \$600 million to sell out, it was \$600 million to get rid of \$1.6 billion. No other industry would accept that. But we had farmers lobbying for that change, because they wanted the Crow eliminated because it was going to help us so much with our diversification in western Canada. Now we are seeing the real impact of this loss.

* (17:20)

The Member himself was in Ottawa with us when we went to Ottawa to lobby the federal government, asking them to recognize the impact that western Canada was feeling because of the reduced grain prices, but in particular because of the loss of support from the federal government. We have certainly stated the case. I think that although Ottawa did not want to admit that there was a serious negative impact from the loss of the Crow—and they want people to believe that they have done their part—I think having Ottawa recognize and agree to fund the CMAP program was an important step.

Ottawa was finally recognizing their mistake, that the elimination of the Crow was having a huge negative impact on western Canada. Just getting that recognition—although we did not get the amount of money that we went for, we went to Ottawa looking for \$300 million, and as I said the Member was with us. But to get \$100 million, \$60 million from the federal government, was an indication the federal government is recognizing that their change in policy to reduce their support to agriculture was very worthwhile to have Ottawa have that recognition.

But to have this amount of money drained out of western Canada, having \$600 million annually drained out of the country, does not require very much of an evaluation. We see the evaluation. Each farmer looks at their expenses, and there is need for the federal government to recognize that they have made a mistake. It adds salt to the wound, so to speak, to have them then move forward and shift the funds from the safety net and not allow us to offer our farmers the kind of protection that they need. In fact, those provinces who have not suffered the loss of the Crow have the ability to enrich their safety net programs.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Minister, I can assure you that the impacts of the changes are very, very clear to all farmers in western Canada, particularly those of us between your home and mine in a line down the west side of the province of Manitoba where we are the—whether we will dispute whether it is two cents more in your hometown or mine—I think we are the high-freight zone in North America. That has become very prevalent and always has been known if the Crow benefit was removed.

I had the opportunity to chair, to digress a moment, three of the six subcommittees of a western Crow review panel, if you will, in the early '90s, in 1990, a national committee that was put together to develop impacts all across Canada in regard to how the Crow impacted on us. I just wanted to assure the Minister that, in dealing with some of the eastern interests, it has not always been a level playing field that they even begin to want to play on, just in relation to the hog industry in Québec. You have referred to supply management. I would like to make a comment on that in a minute. One of the sessions that we chaired was the income impacts of making these changes and the shifts in production across Canada, whether it was in cow-calf, whether it was in feed or whether it was heifers, whether it was in pork, whether it was in grains and a number of the other areas.

One of the members from the UPA, Union des producteurs agricoles, of Québec at that time indicated to me at a breakfast that it was very, very clear that changes in the Crow would not impact hog production in Canada whatsoever in relation to their industry. They had their market

in the east coast of the U.S., and we had our nice little market here in western Canada and the U.S. Mid-West and the State of California, which have as many people as all of Canada. We could change the Crow and it would not impact their industry. I found this very interesting. There was one other individual at the table with me at breakfast by the name of Chris Mills, who was with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, at that particular time, from Alberta.

I found, with great consternation, that I was actually hearing this from a producer in the province of Québec. So, when we went into session, not a half an hour later, we were discussing this very issue, and I indicated to them that they had just indicated to me that the shifts in the Crow would not change the production of hogs in Québec or their market at all. He just stomped all over me in indicating that that could not be true. If there were one more hog grown in western Canada that it would have to come from eastern Canada, so I saw a complete 180-degree shift in 30 minutes.

Most of the time, in subsequent meetings I had with him, it did not even take him that long. So I know what you are dealing with around that table in regard to national discussions, and it is a situation where one has to be very tough fisted, I guess, in regard to it. I have heard the Minister's comments before in regard to where we are at.

Certainly the 1.6 buyout was not enough in western Canada, and you are right about the values of grain commodities, at least at that particular time. Certainly the Crow was about \$751 million at one point. It was being decreased over a number of years to \$600 million, \$550 million, working towards being eliminated. I think that Minister Goodale, the federal minister at that time, used that as a bit of a hammer on everyone in the country to say that we are going to continue to do that if there is not some agreement made in this whole area.

We came up very short in that whole process I think in western Canada by letting the Crow go. So my comment earlier is perhaps we could remind the federal government in all those jurisdictions that we discuss, whether it is in industry, trade, or whether it is in agriculture, or

whether it is in transport, down the road that the West has suffered the most and continues to suffer the most.

I know they will throw back at you, look at the increased diversification and the value-added that is occurring and those kinds of things. I would remind the Minister, as I have done with many counterparts there, that a number of these issues would have taken place in a natural progression had we continued on in the late '60s and done something with the Crow benefit much earlier in history than we did. We, in western Canada—change is always a matter of biting the bullet—came up on the short end of the stick in relation to the kinds of dollars that were put out in this program. It has been very well documented that there could have been \$6 billion, \$7 billion, close to \$8 billion at one time would have been the 10 to 15 year buyout of the Crow benefit. I think we must always continue to remind our federal counterparts that those dollars were not even anywhere close to being met by the 1.6 in the capital payment that was put out, which even if it was 1.6 might have been just over the two billion in straight dollars to our industry, if it had been in taxable dollars of the same magnitude.

The Minister, in her discussions on safety nets, could continue to remind her counterparts in that and use that as a greater bargaining tool than perhaps we have in the past. I understand, because there were federal dollars in the CMAP already paid out to Manitoba and the \$400 million to Manitoba and Saskatchewan in that whole area, that she may have had a much greater difficulty negotiating at the last ministers' meeting, in dealing with these safety nets. We look forward to greater discussions and explanation as to what these safety nets are, which was my question earlier, the kinds of discussions that we would be having in the long-term area.

* (17:30)

She referred to the CMAP, which Ottawa did, and she is saying they did it in recognition to the transportation adjustment that we had. I would like to put out, hypothesize if you will, with the Minister that is a reason for that payment being made that way, because it was

trade acceptable, if you will, in regards to transportation being used in this manner. Rather than being recognized as a transportation program, that it was more likely done from the pressure of the low commodity prices across the Prairies, and that we in Manitoba and Saskatchewan did suffer the most, obviously because of the Crow disappearance, the way it was handled, instead of being paid out.

I think the Minister has acknowledged that, if the Crow had been paid out in its full entirety, the \$7 billion that we could have got in western Canada, would the Minister concur that would have gone a long way further than what we got out of it, what we got out of CMAP, and would have actually been a much better benefit to us, if we could have convinced our federal counterparts in '95 to have paid it out in that manner—or not to have paid it out in a particular manner, because I did not mention the manner, Mr. Chairman, but to have paid it out in a \$7-billion package over a certain number of years?

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly, I would agree with the Member. The Crow buyout should have been \$6 billion or \$7 billion, and western Canadians, western farmers got short-changed in the deal. That much money would have certainly made a difference in western Canada. We were short-changed.

But the Member says that the reason for the payout was the low commodity prices. We went to Ottawa talking about low commodity prices, high input costs, loss of the Crow. Those were the issues that we talked about. Changes by the federal government and loss of federal support was what was hurting our producers. It was not only low grain prices. He himself answers his own question when he talks about the loss of transportation. If we would have had the amount of money which rightfully belonged to western farmers, and in a proper payout of the Crow, it would have made a difference.

I think it is very significant for the federal government in their announcement of the program to have this program designated as a transportation support, because the federal government is recognizing that the changes that they made to transportation are having a significant impact on our producers. The federal

government has backed out on their support for western Canadian farmers, and they expect western Canadian farmers or Canadian farmers to compete on an international market without their support, while other countries continue to support their farmers at a high level.

Just across the border, very close to where the Member farms, the federal government is supporting their farmers to the tune of 36 cents on the dollar. In Europe, farmers are being supported to a tune of about, I believe, 54 cents on the dollar by their national government. Here, in Canada, our national government is supporting our farmers to 9 cents on the dollar. Those are the arguments that are being made.

The federal government in Canada said that they were reducing their supports to meet their requirements to world trade, but I believe the federal government wanted to find a way to save money and they decided to save that money on the backs of western Canadian farmers. We went to Ottawa to try to explain that, to get support, but ultimately the big support that was eliminated was the transportation cost, and I am pleased that, for whatever reason, they decided to put it in as a transportation cost support. It is recognition by the federal government that a mistake was made in 1995 when the change was made to the Crow and farmers were not properly compensated.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, that compensation of course was 1995, and I would concur with the Minister on that. I think there was a movement across the country and recognition by all Canadians, including farmers, that debts had to come under control, that the federal government was not in a very viable position at that time financially. But I would have to say that there has been \$7 billion to \$8 billion here taken out of the western Canadian economy that the Minister has concurred with me on, I believe, that farmers in western Canada helped pay down the federal debt by that amount of money.

I would draw a similarity to the years of Mr. Trudeau when there was a \$42-billion national energy program drained out of Alberta and western Canada as well in that industry, and that western Canada has, very much in fact, made its

contribution towards enhancing the lives of all Canadians.

This one was done particularly on the backs of farmers and rural citizens in regards to the loss of the Crow. The Minister has concurred that it would have been better to have paid it out in some manner with that full amount of indexed dollars over a 10- to 15-year period. Coming out in that manner would have given the farmers a capitalization to have made the changes that they were required to make from diversification.

The federal payment was not paid out, in regard to some distance-related activity. It is my understanding at least, if the Minister could concur, that at the time the federal Crow buyout was paid out it was divvied up between the three provinces, in regard to the costs of the freight in their respective provinces. Can you concur with that for me, Madam Minister?

Ms. Wowchuk: What I do have to say is that I do not know the reason for changing the supports. I believe the federal government wanted to get out of their supports of agriculture. The Member said that the finances of the country were unacceptable; there was too high a deficit.

The elimination of the Crow should not have even come into consideration in balancing the books of this country. The Crow was put in place for a specific reason, and that was it was an ongoing agreement that should have been in place in perpetuity. It was the fact that the federal government and lobby groups were pushing for the elimination of the Crow because they thought that there was going to be more diversification, and those lobby groups opened the door for the federal government to make the changes and take this support away, which I think was wrong. If that was the reason for the federal government to take this away, to balance the books of the national treasury, I think that is unacceptable.

The way western Canadians have been treated and the way the agricultural industry of western Canada has been treated by the federal government is unacceptable. No other industry or part of the country would lobby to have this kind of support taken away. Some western

Canadians were lobbying to have the Crow eliminated, and we paid the price for it.

Mr. Maguire: I would concur, Mr. Chairman, with the Minister that to have reduced the debt on the backs of western Canadian farmers is not acceptable. We have concurred earlier in our comments that with the phasing out of the Crow benefit, if the \$7 billion had been paid out in western Canada, we would have all been better off in western Canada. There is no doubt in anybody's mind about that. That is what should have been done.

* (17:40)

Then farmers would have had those dollars to have clearly put it in their pockets on a transportation distance-related basis, where Manitoba would have got the largest portion of that payout on a per farm basis to have made the adjustments to the diversification that would have given us more jobs and value added in our home sectors, that perhaps the old Crow benefit was just being used to export the jobs and the raw material out of the province. So I would concur with the Minister that should not have been done in the manner that it was done, and she has concurred earlier that the \$7 billion would have obviously been a better way of making that payment in western Canada.

However, it was not done that way. It was taken away on August 1, 1995, virtually completely, without much input from the industry, for whatever reason. I will agree with her on that. It does not matter what reason now; it has been done. I guess I am only saying that she referred earlier to the \$100-million program, \$60 million of it coming from the federal government on the CMAP program, and that Ottawa does not seem to have recognized their mistakes because instead of paying that out in even a distance-related ratio, if it had been done for transportation reasons, that her area and mine along the western side of the province would have received a greater portion of that whole process.

I guess my point is that if it had truly been done for transportation means by the federal government, it would not have been paid out evenly to every farmer across the province of

Manitoba, as she agreed to do. I am wondering if she can just give us some rationale for why it was done that way, and of course also why some of those funds were not used to target the disaster area of southwest Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I guess the main point of this is the objective was to get money into farmers' hands. Had we gone the route of transportation, it would have taken longer. There is \$73 million in farmers' hands, out of that \$100 million, and I think the situation that farmers were in and still continue to be in, it was important that that money flow.

I agree, there could have been better ways, more money for our part of the province. The goal is to get money into farmers' hands, and \$73 million has been processed. I think that is the important issue we were trying to address.

Mr. Maguire: I would concur. I am certainly not saying that farmers all over the province did not require funds because of low commodity prices, because they did and that part is a benefit. I guess, just for a few moments, I would like to go back to a comment that the Minister made that Ontario, she said, has three quarters of the benefits of supply management. In regard to the safety net discussions, can she indicate to me whether or not supply management is included as part of the income in the new safety net formula in the cash receipts?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, Mr. Chairman, they are not included, but I think we brought them into the discussion because they do have an impact on the livelihoods of the farming community, and the impact in the cash receipts, they are not part of the calculation.

Mr. Maguire: She had indicated earlier that she was pushed into this kind of agreement. I understand the hard negotiations she had to go through with her federal counterparts or other provincial counterparts before the federal minister, but can she elaborate just a little more by what she means on being pushed into the framework agreement and how she was pushed into that frame?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, this process to move from risk to farm cash receipts to allocate

the safety net money began two and a half years ago at Ag ministers meetings. The group of eight wanted to move towards funding based on cash receipts. The federal Minister of Agriculture sided with them. We stated our case, we got some changes. We certainly were not happy with the change, but what were we to do? Were we supposed to walk away and have no safety net programs for our producers or agree to a program that was unsatisfactory and get some protection in for producers and get an insurance that we could maintain for three years and a guarantee of an evaluation at the end of this round of safety nets? Certainly it was not where we wanted to go, but I have to indicate that this process started earlier on.

I will read to the Member part of a communiqué that came out of the Prince Albert meeting which the previous ministers of Agriculture attended, and it says: ministers discussed the current farm income situation resulting in low prices and adverse weather that is affecting many parts of agriculture industry across the country. The ministers reviewed preliminary assessments of the various programs under the current farm safety net system and discussed at length the need for a long-term disaster assistance program. They set a firm timetable for the next steps in November. Ministers will analyze the future direction of the national safety net system. These will be discussed fully with industry. Ministers will decide at the time on the mechanism for funding allocations among provinces and the implementation of a national five-year program will be determined in February of 2000. That is when the process began. The record of decisions at that meeting, new directions for safety nets, point 4 is to establish an improved mechanism for allocating federal funds to programs and provinces. All options will be looked at, including an option based on farm cash receipts which would be gradually implemented, taking into account to maintain levels of funding for Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

It was at that meeting in July of 1999 that the ministers agreed. That was before our time in office that the ministers of Agriculture agreed and set the wheels in motion to begin the process of moving towards allocation based on cash receipts. When I got to the table that was moving

along quite extensively, lots of pressure from eight provinces and support by the federal government to those eight provinces. Quite frankly I think we came out of it a little bit lucky to be maintained at the level that we were and to get a three-year agreement to ensure that we have our safety net, disaster assistance portion in place and to get an evaluation.

* (17:50)

Mr. Maguire: I concur, as I have said earlier, about the difficulty that the Minister has with our federal counterparts in other provinces. Perhaps she is more than I am aware of that from being in the House in July of '99 when Minister Enns, the former minister, also I think was getting chastised for being one of the last to sign on to the agreement. There were darned good reasons for not signing on to that agreement at the time.

I think that the staff here are to be commended for the work they did in that whole area along with the Minister, for taking the hard stand they did and trying to protect Manitoba's interests in that area. I understand very well what you are up against and that it is not easy. Having said that, I guess I would just like to make a couple of comments in regard to the disaster in the area that I come from, that is, southwest Manitoba, western Manitoba, the excess of rainfall that took place a year ago. I know the Minister knows very well the difficulty we have had in trying to do anything in regard to a 90-10 proposal. Can she give me any indication of an update as to where we would be with those discussions at this time?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member knows that we have been negotiating on this for some time. We have asked the federal government to recognize the input costs as costs that should be covered under disaster assistance. We have asked the federal government to implement the Manitoba agreement that was in place in the Red River Valley, which was a 50-50-share program. We have certainly heard a lot of signals from the federal government that they were interested.

The federal government sent out one of their members. I believe Mr. Harvard did a tour of meetings in the area. Just before we went to

Ottawa, Mr. Axworthy sent his staff out to the southwest part of the province. That staff person gave some indications that the federal government was interested. Mr. Axworthy put out press releases here. He met with the Premier and then went out in the hallway and said, oh, there is going to be some money coming for the southwest part of the province.

The Premier met with Mr. Axworthy. Following that meeting, my colleague the Minister of Highways and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) and I were asked to come to Ottawa to further negotiate. When a senior Cabinet minister such as Mr. Axworthy says that it is worthwhile having discussions, you anticipate that there is going to be some money there. But when we got to Ottawa, we were told no, no, no, no. They told us that they had taken the matter to the federal Cabinet three times, and each time they received the same answer that there is no money. That is quite unfortunate. That is quite unfortunate that the federal government would have different standards for one disaster in the Red River Valley where they came very quickly with money and a different situation in the southwest part of the province where they have said no.

Mr. Chairman, although this will not address the issue of the southwest part of the province, I am pleased that we, since taking office, have been able to take the steps of making the changes to crop insurance to have in place the excess moisture insurance, because I believe that if that program had been in place, as was offered to the previous government, had they agreed to that excess moisture insurance program that Saskatchewan had, it would have really helped the producers of the southwest part of the province. We would not have had need for the ad hoc payment of \$50 an acre, and then there would have been extra money there that could have been used.

We have that excess moisture insurance, and hopefully we never have to run into a similar situation that we saw in the southwest part of the province. It is really difficult to say what else can be done when the federal government refuses to be a partner. We have to recognize, Mr. Chairman, as has always been the case, disasters are the responsibility of the federal

government. Provincial governments partner with them, and we have said to the federal government: You tell us what you are willing to do and we are willing to participate. We went to Ottawa telling the federal government that we were willing to participate in the programs. The federal government has told us no, they are not interested, and they do not see this as an area that they can look at.

I believe that within the DFAA there is the ability to extend the rules to have coverage for the costs that the farmers have lost, and just as the federal government was able to bend the rules in the ice storm and in the floods of eastern Canada and able to compensate for loss of orchards and the maple trees, they should have been able to do that in this situation, as well. I think that we have to really look at the rules that are in place and ensure that the next time there is a situation like this that it is addressed.

That is small comfort to the people of the southwest part of the province who had very serious losses. I have to say that there are not very many industries where you can put the expenses of the industry in and then lose a whole year of income and be able to survive. It is a very difficult situation that producers are in. I guess my hope now is that we have had a good spring. We have crops going, and I know that there are people who are looking for a bit of moisture right now to get those crops going. Certainly, a few days of warm weather would help, as well. Again, I say that, but I realize that that is not very much comfort.

I think what we have to recognize is that also people talk about what have we done as a government. We have made some changes, but what we have to remember is that as a province, the province of Manitoba—it does not matter which government is in—has put money in, and the federal government has to recognize that as a province we have put money into the southwest. We should be getting some credit for the money that we have put in there, and that we should be able to leverage money from the federal government on that. The province has put money in under the previous government, but it is taxpayers' money. The federal government should be also putting money in from the taxpayers of Canada.

When we were talking about this issue amongst the western Ag ministers of Canada, I said to them, you know, I hope that none of you ever have a disaster or have a group of people facing the kind of challenges that our farmers in western Canada are, but I can tell you that if there is a disaster in another part of the country, Manitobans will be there to support those—we will support the national government in their efforts to support these people.

So, Mr. Chairperson, a very difficult situation for the people of the southwestern part of the province. The Member asks where the negotiations are. The federal government has

told us no, they are not interested. At some point if they are changing their mind, that would be helpful. But at this time, they are saying no.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 8, 2000

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Osvita Foundation Derkach	2338
Committee of Supply Santos	2327	Bakers Narrows Day Jennissen	2338
Oral Question Period		Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee J. Smith	2339
Radiation Therapists Mitchelson; Chomiak Mitchelson; Chomiak 2328	2327	Valleyview School S. Smith	2339
Cancer Treatment Mitchelson; Chomiak	2328	Orders of the Day	
First Nations Casinos Reimer; Lemieux Derkach; Lemieux Gilleshammer; McGifford; Selinger	2329 2330 2336	Committee of Supply	
First Nations Addictions Foundation Jim Penner; Chomiak	2331	Justice	2340
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Jim Penner; Chomiak	2332	Labour	2371
Gambling Loewen; Robinson	2332	Agriculture and Food	2403
E. Coli Bacteria Gerrard; Chomiak	2334		
Farm Machinery Board Struthers; Wowchuk	2335		
Speaker's Ruling			
Hickes	2336		
Members' Statements			
Income Taxes Struthers	2337		