



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

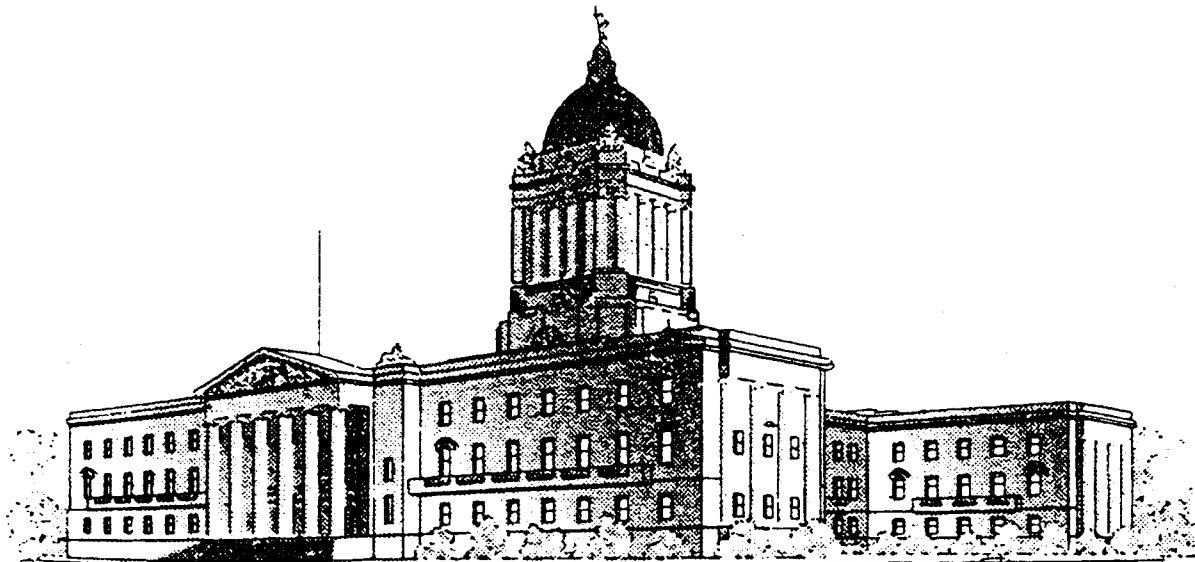
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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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. |
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| 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. |
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| FRIESEN, Jean, Hon. | Wolseley | N.D.P. |
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| GILLESHAMMER, Harold | Minnedosa | P.C. |
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| KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie | St. James | N.D.P. |
| LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon. | The Pas | N.D.P. |
| LAURENDEAU, Marcel | St. Norbert | P.C. |
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| MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon. | St. Johns | N.D.P. |
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| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | N.D.P. |
| MARTINDALE, Doug | Burrows | N.D.P. |
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| NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom | Interlake | N.D.P. |
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| 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. |
| SHELLENBERG, Harry | Rossmere | N.D.P. |
| SCHULER, Ron | Springfield | P.C. |
| SELINGER, Greg, Hon. | St. Boniface | N.D.P. |
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| STEFANSON, Heather | Tuxedo | 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

Monday, June 25, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Kenaston Underpass

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of R. Vandenbergue, Rob Knudsen, Rich McMillan and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? *[Agreed]*

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul has the highest concentration of high voltage power lines in a residential area in Manitoba; and

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul is the only jurisdiction in Manitoba that has both a 500kV and a 230kV line directly behind residences; and

THAT numerous studies have linked cancer, in particular childhood leukemia, to the proximity of power lines.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and

500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? *[Agreed]*

* (13:35)

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest un-separated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? *[Agreed]*

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest un-separated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

PTH 9 Upgrade

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? *[Agreed]*

Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

These are the reasons for this petition:

1. The Provincial Trunk Highway No. 9 and the Selkirk Corridor are widely used thoroughfares in the constituency of Gimli and the province of Manitoba.
2. These thoroughfares have consistently recorded traffic counts in excess of 10 000 vehicles (both automobiles and trucks) daily, according to statistics provided by the University of Manitoba/Manitoba Highways and Transportation.
3. These thoroughfares are in dire need of improvement and upgrade.
4. Adequate safety considerations and conditions must be maintained on these thoroughfares at all times and in all places.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

We request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) to consider upgrading Provincial Trunk Highway No. 9 and the Selkirk Corridor thoroughfares immediately.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Fourth Report

Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on:

Monday, June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Matters Under Consideration:

June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. meeting:

Bill 7—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba

Bill 8—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux

Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et modifications corrélatives

Bill 41—An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M. v. H./Loi visant l'observation de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.

June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. meeting:

Bill 8—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux

Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et modifications corrélatives

Bill 41—An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M. v. H./Loi visant l'observation de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.

Membership Resignations/Elections:

At the Monday, June 18, 2001, meeting, your committee elected:

Ms. KORZENIOWSKI as Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting on June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.:

Mr. Praznik for Mr. Laurendeau;

Mr. Tweed for Mr. Faurschou;

Mr. Pitura for Mrs. Mitchelson;

Mrs. Stefanson for Mrs. Smith (Fort Garry);

Ms. Korzeniowski for Mr. Nevakshonoff;

Hon. Ms. Mihychuk for Ms. Allan;

Hon. Ms. Barrett for Mr. Santos;

Hon. Mr. Caldwell for Mr. Aglugub;

Hon. Mr. Selinger for Hon. Mr. Smith (Brandon West);

Hon. Mr. Mackintosh for Hon. Mr. Sale.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting on June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.:

Mr. Santos for Hon. Mr. Selinger;

Mr. Laurendeau for Mr. Praznik;

Mr. Reimer for Mr. Tweed.

Substitutions received during meeting on June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m., by leave:

Mr. Loewen for Mr. Pitura.

Motions:

At the Monday, June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. meeting, your committee passed the following motion, on a count-out vote, Yeas 5, Nays 4:

That the Committee on Law Amendments call through the list of presenters and hear any who are in attendance. Those who are not in attendance will be called at a subsequent hearing.

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard representation on bills at the following meetings:

Monday, June 18, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.

The following individuals and/or organizations made presentations on Bill 7—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba:

Paul Moist, C.U.P.E.

Albert Cerilli, President, Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees

Michelle Forest, Private Citizen

The following individuals and/or organizations made presentations on Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et modifications corrélatives:

Fred Curry, Private Citizen

The following individuals and/or organizations made presentations on Bill 41—An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M. v. H./Loi visant l'observation de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.:

Lorri Millan and Nadin Gilroy, Private Citizens

Karen Boily and Carole Boily, Private Citizens

Gilles Marchildon, Private Citizen

Kristine Barr, Private Citizen

Debbie Patterson, Private Citizen

Elliot Levin, Private Citizen

Roy Purvis, Private Citizen

Noreen Stevens, Private Citizen

Donna Huen, Rainbow Resource Centre

Jordan Kunda, Private Citizen

Keith Louise Fulton, Private Citizen

Maxine Hasselriis, Private Citizen

Timothy Preston, Private Citizen

Lloyd Fisher, Private Citizen

Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, Private Citizen
Pete Walker, Manitoba Federation of Labour
Robin Brownlie, Private Citizen
Maureen Pendergast and Sharon Pchajek,
Private Citizens
Brother Thomas Novak, Private Citizen
Kerry Cazzorla, Private Citizen
Kim Simard, Canada Family Action Coalition
Mike Tutthil, Private Citizen
Kerri Olinkin, Private Citizen
Susan VanDreser, Private Citizen
Krista Piche, Private Citizen
Norma Drosdowech, Private Citizen
Irene McKenzie, Private Citizen
Valerie Wadephul, Private Citizen
Tim Jeffrey, Private Citizen
Jenny Gerbasi, Private Citizen
John Mann, Private Citizen
Karin Erhardt, Private Citizen
Brad Tyler-West, Private Citizen
Robert Crittenden, Private Citizen
Sally Naumko, Private Citizen
Kate Tate, Private Citizen
Asher Webb, Private Citizen
Michael Law, The Gay and Lesbian Issues Sub-
Section of the Manitoba Bar Association
Krishna Lalbiharie, Canadian Federation of
Students
Penny Piper, Manitoba Association of Women
and Law
Anne Gregory, Private Citizen
Margaret McKenty, Private Citizen
John Krowina, Private Citizen
David Schesnuk, Private Citizen
Marianne Crittenden, Private Citizen
Lorraine Waldner, Private Citizen
Fae Simon and Rosaline Dearing, Winnipeg
Child and Family Services
Karen Delaney, Private Citizen
Mark Golden, Private Citizen
Rory Grewar, Private Citizen
Henry Makow, Private Citizen
Adele Perry, Private Citizen
David Joyce, Private Citizen
Joann Gorham, Private Citizen
Elsy Gagne, Private Citizen

Written Submissions:

The following individuals and/or organizations offered written submissions to the committee on Bill 41—An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M. v. H./Loi visant

l'observation de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.

Ken Mandziuk, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties
Harry Mesman, Member of the Canadian Labour Congress Solidarity and Pride Working Group
Sally Naumko, Private Citizen
Donald Teel, Private Citizen
John McKenzie, Private Citizen
Sarah Inness, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 8—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et modifications corrélatives

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 41—An Act to Comply with the Supreme Court of Canada Decision in M. v. H./Loi visant l'observation de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Mr. Martindale: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs
First Report**

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Municipal Affairs.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs presents the following as its

First Report. Meetings: your committee met on Tuesday, June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m.—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on Thursday, June 21, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Matters Under Consideration:

Bill 16—The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des pratiques agricoles

Bill 20—The Farm Products Marketing and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi sur la commercialisation des produits agricoles et modifications corrélatives

Membership Resignations/Elections:

Your committee elected Mr. Nevakshonoff as the Chairperson.

Your committee elected Mr. Dewar as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:

Mr. Maguire for Mrs. Dacquay

Mr. Pitura for Mr. Loewen

Mr. Cummings for Mr. Reimer

Mr. Struthers for Ms. Allan

Mr. Nevakshonoff for Hon. Mr. Mackintosh

Hon. Ms. Wowchuk for Mr. Martindale

Mr. Schellenberg for Ms. Cerilli

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard two presentations on Bill 16—The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des pratiques agricoles, from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Ted Muir, Manitoba Pork Council

Don Dewar, Keystone Agricultural Producers

Your committee heard six presentations on Bill 20—The Farm Products Marketing and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi sur la commercialisation des produits agricoles et modifications corrélatives, from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Larry McIntosh, Peak of the Market

Bill Uruski, Vice-Chairperson, Manitoba Turkey Producers

Waldie Klassen, Chairman, Manitoba Chicken Producers

Bill Swan, Manitoba Milk Producers

Ted Muir, Manitoba Pork Council

Tom Dooley, Aikins, MacAuley, Thorvaldson

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 16—The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des pratiques agricoles

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill 20—The Farm Products Marketing and Consequential Amendments Act/Loi sur la commercialisation des produits agricoles et modifications corrélatives

Your committee agreed to report this bill, with the following amendments:

THAT the definition "producer" in section 1 be amended by adding the following after clause (b):

and includes a person who takes possession of a farm product from a producer under any form of security for a debt;

THAT clause 6(1)(b) be replaced with the following:

(b) requiring persons who produce or market a regulated product to provide the board or commission with any information or record relating to the production or marketing of the

regulated product that the board or commission considers necessary;

THAT clause 6(1)(l) be amended by striking out "surplus removal" and substituting "product purchase".

THAT section 11 be amended by adding "or out of any other money payable to it" at the end.

THAT clause 14(a) be amended by striking out "establishment, operation and control" and substituting "establishment and operation".

Mr. Nevakshonoff: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:40)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us Karliin Aariak from CBC North, Iqaluit, Nunavut. Also in the Speaker's Gallery we have with us today Mr. Peter Schiller. Mr. Schiller is the brother-in-law of the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) and is visiting from West Vancouver.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us, from Munroe Junior High, 16 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Eileen Haines. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Also in the public gallery we have, from Hamiota Elementary School, 18 Grade 6 students under the direction of Miss Linda Irwin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Antigang Strategy Government Commitment

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, in the last eight months we have seen unprecedented levels of violence in the city of

Winnipeg, including three people shot at confusion corner in November, a Winnipeg teen struck by a 12-gauge shotgun in his own home while looking out the window, a 15-year-old shot behind the ear while sitting in his car and, this weekend, two more shootings in the city of Winnipeg.

I would ask the Minister of Justice: What assurances can you give Winnipeggers who fear for their safety after this outbreak of gangland warfare in their community?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and the members opposite for raising that important matter, a matter of very serious concern to all Manitobans and not just people in the city of Winnipeg.

The issue of violence in Manitoba, of course, is not a new one. The highest rate of violent crime ever recorded in Canada was suffered when members opposite were in government. It happens at different times and different places, but we do have serious issues to deal with in this province.

I can assure Manitobans that we take this issue very seriously, and what is needed clearly is a different way of doing things. It is important that barriers be broken down between the different agencies that are there to help ensure public safety. More particularly, it is important that there be an aggressive investigation, that there be a vigorous enforcement and prosecution of those who are charged with Criminal Code offences.

So what we are doing and what we have done since coming to office is providing a model in Canada with a different way of doing things, including the establishment of a gang unit in the Prosecutions branch.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, while this minister says he has a different way of dealing with things, the number of gang memberships has nearly doubled in this province. He is the minister of press conferences and photo ops. Gang membership is at an all-time high. What is this minister going to do about it?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, of course the information, as is so often the case from the Opposition, is incorrect, but the member was asking what are we doing differently. For the

first time in Manitoba history, we have now established a Criminal Organization Unit.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:45)

Mr. Mackintosh: For the first time, what we are doing differently is we have now established in the province of Manitoba something unique in Canada. We have broken down barriers within the Justice Department. We now have a gang unit, for example, a Criminal Organization Unit within the Justice Department.

In particular, in the area of prosecutions, we have a gang unit comprised of prosecutors who are particularly skilled at dealing with gangs, understand the way that they are structured. They understand the language of gangs. The intention of this is to make sure that when a matter comes before the Justice Department for prosecution, there is a vigorous, a targeted and thorough investigation for justice and for the safety of Manitobans.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, this minister is telling the public not to worry, that he is trying new methods and new techniques. Gang membership has almost doubled, bullets are flying in Elmwood, on St. Mary's Road, in fact, only a few hundred metres here from the Legislature, in Osborne Village.

What is the minister going to do about this? When is he going to get serious about crime?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the word "gangs" finally cross the lips of members opposite because they refused to acknowledge the rise of gangs in this province and deal with the problem and nip it in the bud.

For the first time, we have been providing leadership at the national level even though we have not suffered the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I expect the members opposite would not understand this, but

providing some leadership to urge the federal government to change the Criminal Code so that there are specific targeted provisions dealing with gangs in Canada is very important. Manitoba, along with Québec, even though it did not have the level of intensity of violence in that province, provided national leadership to get a change in the Criminal Code.

We now have in this province an unprecedented number of prosecutors, including the specialized gang unit. We now have the RCMP at full complement for the first time in recent history. We have now a record number of full-time judges in this province. We also are funding the gang unit in the Winnipeg Police Services. We also have a gang unit in the RCMP. We are making a difference.

Antigang Strategy Government Commitment

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to dealing with crime, the Doer government gets an "A" for rhetoric and "F" for action. Despite repeated news releases and photo ops, the Justice Minister has failed to resolve Manitoba's gang problem.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans like Raven ThunderSky, whose family may have to move out of Winnipeg's West End because of gang violence, wants to know why this Justice Minister has broken his promise to stop the growth of gangs.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, from the day this Government was elected, we began work on an area that had been neglected by the former government. We have done more in 18 or 19 months than the Opposition had time for in 11 years.

Antigang Strategy Government Commitment

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) explain to Raven ThunderSky and her family why his staff refused to help her in her attempts to prevent her family from becoming the target of further gang activity?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Acting Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am advised that Winnipeg Child and Family Services, that is the agency, is advocating on behalf of Raven ThunderSky to access alternate housing for her family.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, if this Government is sincere about wanting to stamp out gang activity, why is the Minister of Family Services not helping families that are targets of gang violence?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a really misguided question. The Minister of Family Services is extremely committed to do everything within his powers to alleviate family violence. I am just shocked that the member opposite could ask that kind of question.

Antigang Strategy Government Commitment

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): My question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, 11 shots were fired in the city of Winnipeg this weekend. One of the witnesses said that bullets cut into the walls of the building, there were windows broken and there was a hole in the chair in the front of the computer in the office where someone could have been killed. I want to ask this Minister of Justice when he is going to put all of his energy into this matter and declare a war on gangs in our province, to solve this issue and make our province safe.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, of course what is telling with the question is that the Opposition wants to forget all of the crime rates and the experience when they were in office. What is necessary in order to deal with gangs at the provincial level is to ensure that when charges come forward from the police there is vigorous prosecution of those charges. That we have facilitated, by the establishment for the first time in this province under this Government, a gang unit, which has the specialized capacity to focus on those charges and make sure that there is indeed a vigorous prosecution. Thank you.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, while this Attorney General is issuing his press releases and talking

about prosecution, people are being shot at. I want to know what this Attorney General will say to the next innocent victim, an innocent individual who will be struck down by one of these shootings. What will he say to that person and his family?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, aside from questions in my line about where the Opposition was for all the years the threat of gang activity grew in this province, from virtually nothing in the mid-1990s to today, we are taking actions. We are putting in place a different way of dealing with things, and I ask: Where was the Opposition when we were calling on Ottawa, demanding Ottawa change the Criminal Code to deal specifically with gang offences?

* (13:50)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I have to remind this Attorney General that he has been Attorney General for two years now, and he is responsible. I will ask him again: Will he not declare war on gangs in this city and this province and put all the necessary resources on the street to spot the shootings that are taking place?

Mr. Mackintosh: The advent of Hell's Angels activity in particular in this province is of great concern to this Government, to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. What has to take place is a most vigorous prosecution, a very intensive investigation process by police. Indeed, there must be a war against these gang elements in our society. We cannot afford to have the criminal element, criminal organizations, run rampant in this province. That is why we have put in place a Criminal Organization Unit, and that is why we have historic levels of policing in this province. That is why we have record levels of prosecution in this province. That is why we provided—

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. This minister is provoking debate just by saying he will vigorously prosecute. We have seen an example of

vigorously prosecuting. People are allowed to carry guns and then walk.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members that a point of order is a very serious matter, and I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I listened very carefully to the question from the Member for Lac du Bonnet, which was a broad-ranging question, high in rhetoric but broad ranging. The Attorney General was attempting to provide a comprehensive answer as to the steps that have been taken by this Government to deal with the gang-related incidents. I suggest if members are asking broad, related, particularly full-of-rhetoric type of questions, they ought to permit the reply to deal with the question as put, and that is what the Attorney General was doing.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order, with new information.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the Acting Government House Leader has talked about my question. My question was to ask this Attorney General when he was going to declare war on the street on gangs, and all we got back was an answer about vigorous prosecution. We have seen his vigorous prosecution where a citizen can discharge a gun in our province in a public place and walk. That is his vigorous prosecution.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I regret that the Opposition wants to reflect on a particular judge or judges and you know, Mr. Speaker, the police are doing excellent work under the circumstances in this province. I will conclude by saying this. The members opposite had the opportunity to nip the problem in the bud. They failed.

Point of Order

Mr. Laurendeau: On a new point of order, this minister is attempting to say that we have reflected upon the judges within any case, Mr. Speaker. It is not the judges who pled down this case.

*(13:55)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I suggest quite strongly that the member does not have a point of order. In fact I listened to his response and his comments and they went directly to the point that was raised by the Attorney General. He was attempting to do in his point of order what they could not do in their question and that is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest quite strongly the member does not have a point of order. In fact I listened to his response and his comments. They went directly to the point that was raised by the Attorney General. He was attempting to do, in his point of order, what they could not do in their question, and that is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Attorney General, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I was just making the point that the members opposite had plenty of opportunity to nip this problem in the bud, and they failed to do so. We are taking action.

Arena/Entertainment Complex VLT Revenues

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, last week the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen), desperate to defend the Premier, challenged me to table evidence that her leader told Manitobans that VLT revenue would be capped at \$1.5 million for the downtown arena project. I am pleased to table for the Deputy

Premier an excerpt from the CBC interview dated May 2, 2001, in which her leader states, and in fact I would suggest the Premier interrupted the interviewer to put this point across, he said: The VLT money is up to \$1.5 million a year. I will repeat that: The VLT money is up to \$1.5 million a year.

My question for the Deputy Premier: Can she advise this House why the Doer government flip-flopped on the maximum amount of VLT revenue for the arena project?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): In a number of the verbal briefings at the time the arena agreement, or the entertainment proposal, was being released, we said at that time consistently the details would be fully released in the term sheet which was released publicly some time ago, including in this Legislature to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray). We were commenting on the proposed agreement in place relative to the Assiniboia Downs. I should point out even after the term sheet has been released it seems to create a little confusion for members opposite. I note in Hansard last week the members opposite, who are opposed to the new arena, said it was a minimum amount of money after reading the term sheet.

Mr. Tweed: Then my question is for the Premier: Do you deny making that comment, the comment that the VLT money is up to \$1.5 million a year?

Mr. Doer: After the term sheet is released, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) who, by the way, alleged the public investment in the entertainment complex in 1995 would be \$30 million and we found out after the election it was \$90 million, the same Member for Fort Whyte says \$1.5 million is in fact a minimum that is going to be received by the VLT revenues. Even after the term sheet has been released, members opposite are confused.

Mr. Tweed: I would suggest to you this statement is about the Premier's credibility, not about anybody else's. I ask him again to put it on the record or to correct the record. Did he not state that the VLT would be capped at \$1.5 million for the arena project? Did he say it or did he not say it?

* (14:00)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, members opposite have been going after the new arena because they are bitter, bitter that they could not pull off the deal.

Mr. Speaker, we said all along that the full details that were being discussed verbally would be released in a term sheet. Those details were released in the term sheet and fully released in the term sheet. We talked about the 50 VLTs at the new proposed entertainment complex versus the 150 at the Assiniboia Downs. There is no minimum. We talked about the difference in the formula, at \$1.5 million with the cap and the formula changing.

Mr. Speaker, we know that they said that the Crocus Fund would be backed by \$50 million in investment from the provincial government. They were wrong on that issue. We know that they made other allegations about how much public investment is going to go into the new entertainment complex. If they do not have the guts to be opposed to the new arena, stop the nit-picking.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, on a new question.

Mr. Tweed: On a new question, Mr. Speaker. It is not just we who are questioning the Premier's motives and what he is saying. The *Winnipeg Sun* article titled "Government pulls fast one on arena" reads, and I quote: What is even more galling about the lie is that Premier Gary Doer's people, including Deputy Premier Jean Friesen, tried to tell us that neither Doer nor anyone else in government ever said there was a VLT cap. Do they really think we are that dumb?

I will table that clipping, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tweed: My question to the Premier—yes, and I will give you one more chance to correct the record. If you said it, admit that you said it and that you made a mistake. I will ask the Premier: Did you make those comments?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Prior to recognizing the honourable First Minister, I would like to remind all honourable members when making reference to other honourable members, to use a constituency or ministers by their title. I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. Doer: I said, Mr. Speaker, at the time a number of questions were being asked, that all the details would be fully disclosed and in writing when the term sheet was released publicly. The only ones who are spinning are members opposite that do not know what position they are going to take on the new arena. We are in favour of it. What position do you have?

Mr. Tweed: This agreement, Mr. Speaker, is not about what the Doer government is proposing. It is about honesty and integrity and presenting to the people of Manitoba the facts.

I call on the Premier today. I ask him: Will he submit the business plan to the Provincial Auditor for an unbiased opinion so people can actually see the true amount of public funds being invested in this project?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have made public, both at City Hall and in this Legislative Chamber, the full terms of reference, the term sheet that contradicted many of the allegations made by members opposite. The conspiracy theory that was developed by members opposite of the \$50 million that this Government was guaranteeing as part of a Crocus Fund investment, that part of the conspiracy theory has been obviously put to rest with the release of the term sheet.

The term sheet completely deals with the original investment, an issue that did not get a lot of disclosure. It is something that I made public to the media at the time. What I was quite concerned about was the tax considerations, particularly in the City of Winnipeg. I disclosed that to a number of media members because it had not been made fully public, and I was quite concerned that there would be some concern about that. I feel the term sheets that we released and the messages we had on this have been very consistent.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the formula and the issue comparing the Assiniboia Downs and the new entertainment complex, the formula for Assiniboia Downs and the formula for the new arena could create confusion. It even creates confusion in the eyes of the member opposite from Fort Whyte that had said this was

a minimum guarantee. In fact, the proponents bear the risk if \$1.5 million is not realized, a fact that was opposite to what was said in Hansard last Thursday at Question Period.

Mr. Tweed: Is it not amazing how a clip taped from the television will tell you one story and the Premier will stand in this House and tell you another? If the Premier is unwilling to apologize to the people of Manitoba, I would ask the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) to stand and offer her apology to this side of the House, who last week accused us that we were acting on no evidence. Will the Deputy Premier apologize?

Mr. Doer: I would ask all members and all media interested in this issue to refer to the specifics in the term sheet that was released, because obviously there is a lot of confusion.

Last week in this House the member made all kinds of allegations—I hope none of them because of his bitterness over what happened in 1995. He said that, quote: This was a minimum guarantee of \$1.5 million. He said that in the House in a question that was raised, and I quote: That I would remind her in the reading that it is clarified that \$1.5 million is in fact a minimum that is going to be received in VLT revenues.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of confusion. I would suggest to everyone to read the term sheet. The real question is: Are the members opposite in favour of redeveloping downtown Winnipeg? Are they in favour of going forward? We think the 50-VLT allocation for the city of Winnipeg in downtown, relative to the 150 VLTs that were not unallocated for Headingley is a good balance for downtown redevelopment, and we are proud of this announcement. We are proud to go forward.

Eaton's Building Heritage Status

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, under The Heritage Resources Act, has the mandate, irrespective of any municipal decision, to declare a building in Manitoba a heritage building. Indeed previous ministers have used this authority to designate buildings like the Fort Garry Hotel and indeed the

Manitoba Legislature buildings. For this purpose, the minister has the Manitoba Heritage Council to provide him with advice as to the potential of any building for heritage status.

My question to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism is this: Last week he indicated he was very anxious to receive a report from the council on the Eaton's building and then to follow due process in assessing the report. Once the minister receives the report, what process will the minister follow in making an assessment of whether the Eaton's building should or should not be a heritage building in Manitoba?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned, this Government and the members on this side are very supportive of downtown redevelopment. Take a look at the \$31 million that we are putting into Red River community college on Princess Avenue. We are very proud of that, the Big 4 building. We are looking ahead and we are looking forward to Winnipeg becoming the jewel it once was. We are looking ahead. We are not looking back, and we are really looking forward to doing all that work to make Winnipeg truly a great city.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the minister, whose answer was so scanty it was as if he had come in a bikini today instead of a suit. I would ask the minister if he will not give us the details of the process he is going to follow once he receives the report on the Eaton's building.

* (14:10)

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to make comments on a bikini or thongs or anything else, but what I would like to comment on is certainly there is a process being followed.

The process of the advisory council passing on a recommendation and dealing with the issue with regard to Eaton's becoming a heritage site is a very important one. I look forward, as I mentioned last week on Thursday, to receiving this report from the Heritage Council, and at that particular time I will have an opportunity to read it and look at it to see what their recommendations are. I am not going to try to guess what they are or try to address a hypothetical question as to where one is going to go or how one is going to deal with the question.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the minister: I would ask what process, what time lines, what criteria he will use in assessing the report's recommendations and in acting upon them.

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question. Certainly my department and members in my department have a lot of experience with regard to these sites. I will be consulting and talking to them about the recommendation, whatever it may be. That is a process that I understand has been followed, and I certainly have been advised of that. I look forward to receiving it.

Until that particular time, Mr. Speaker, I just want to again restate that this Government, the Doer government, this NDP government, are working closely in partnership with the business community of Winnipeg to make Winnipeg a great city. I often ask the members opposite: Where do they stand with regard to redevelopment in Winnipeg? We want to see Winnipeg grow. We do not want to look back. We want to see it grow.

Education System Grade 3-Diagnostic Assessment

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Carrie Glays, whose daughter, a Grade 3 student at École St.-Germain, lost her extra resource in mathematics at the school because this NDP government's, this minister's diagnostic assessment showed that the student was at grade level. However, private testing at a private learning centre showed her to be well below grade level, and the resources at the school were subsequently restored.

Can this Minister of Education explain to Carrie Glays why she was forced to consult a private learning centre to have her child properly assessed?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Well, Mr. Speaker, nobody forces anybody to consult anybody.

Mrs. Smith: On a new question, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government forced a provincial assessment and robbed Grade 3 students of three to four weeks of instructional time. The

Manitoba Teachers' Society quoted in the Manitoba Teachers' Society paper of April 2001, saying the provincial assessment did not provide teachers with standard material, which begs the question how standard is the assessment. So much for the NDP Grade 3 guarantee.

Can this minister advise this House how many other students have had their resources taken away so that his Government could save a few bucks by denying students help in the classroom?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about resources taken away, and I welcome that comment because it allows me, again, to put on the record the investment this Government has made in our public education system.

In the last 20 months in capital, this Government has invested \$125 million. That investment this year is \$76 million, the largest in Manitoba's history; last year, an investment of \$51 million, the second-largest investment in Manitoba's history. These last two years have seen the largest investment in the 120-odd year, 130-year history of this province.

In terms of support to the operations of our public school system, again, historic levels; in the last 20 months, \$47.5 million.

Mrs. Smith: On a new question, Mr. Speaker, this minister takes the opportunity to stand up and talk about the money that was put into education. However, these students who are not assessed properly are having to go to private institutions to find out about the grade level the students are at.

Is this Minister of Education willing to reimburse parents like Carrie Glays who are forced to go and pay fees to pay for proper assessment in the private sector?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I know that members opposite are eloquent proponents of private hospitals. I know that in terms of private for-profit schools they also seem to be determined to undermine the public school system. In '93-94, members opposite reduced funding by 2 percent to the public school system. In '94-95, they reduced funding by 2 percent.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. The question was clearly about reimbursing Carrie Glays for the fees she had to pay to have her daughter properly assessed because this minister failed in his job.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should deal with the matter raised.

I would ask the honourable Minister of Education and Training and Youth to please answer the question.

* * *

Mr. Caldwell: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Smith: In February of this year, a parent wrote to the Minister of Education to express concern about mandatory student fees being levied at his child's high school. This parent was informed by his child's school—[*interjection*]

An Honourable Member: New question.

Mrs. Smith: New question.

An Honourable Member: You did not say a new question.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I understand the member opposite has been having some difficulty in putting together supplementary questions, so she has been asking for new questions. But not this time, Mr. Speaker. I believe this is a supplementary question, and there is no preamble.

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

Mr. Laurendeau: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, the member was starting a new question. That was clearly stated.

Mr. Speaker: On this point of order, the honourable Government House Leader has a point of order. I recognized the honourable member on a supplementary question.

If honourable members are rising on a new question, please state it first, that it is a new question; otherwise, I am recognizing the honourable members on a supplementary question, and *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

The honourable Member for Fort Garry, to continue on her supplementary question.

An Honourable Member: On a new question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I had recognized the honourable member on a supplementary question, and it was interrupted by a point of order. So I would kindly ask the honourable member to please put her supplementary question and then, if she wishes, to rise again on a new question.

The honourable Member for Fort Garry, to continue with her supplementary question. The supplementary question was interrupted on a point of order.

* (14:20)

Point of Order

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, if the Government is afraid to have this question put to them, we understand then, but this is totally a new question.

We have already realized that the past questions were not going to be answered, that this minister was going to hide behind the truth, so we are just prepared to move on and ask the next new question.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, there is no point of order.

I am just asking for the assistance of all honourable members because I had recognized the honourable member on a supplementary question, and that supplementary question was interrupted. I was interrupted on a point of order, so to continue on with the process, I would kindly ask the honourable member to ask her supplementary question and then come back with a new question.

The honourable Member for Fort Garry, to please ask the question on her supplementary question.

* * *

Mrs. Smith: Is the Minister of Education willing to reimburse parents like Carrie Glays for the fees they have to pay to have their daughters and sons properly assessed?

Mr. Caldwell: Members opposite had a Grade 3 testing regime that was a standardized test that took place at the end of a school year with no opportunity for students to improve their literacy or numeracy skills throughout the school year.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment in opposition to remove that end-of-year standards test for eight-year-olds and replace it with an early-year diagnostic, so that the school year can be used to help the student improve his or her literacy skills.

Mr. Speaker, that is sound pedagogical practice. That is the commitment of this Government. We will continue to do it. I am always heartened, in fact, when parents take a greater interest in their child.

Mrs. Smith: On a new question.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Garry, on a new question.

Mrs. Smith: According to the teachers of Manitoba in *Politics vs. Pedagogy: Who loses in the Grade 3 Assessment Game*, clearly the students lose and parents like Mrs. Carrie Glays lose in the Grade 3 assessment game. This particular article said the provincial assessment did not provide teachers with standard materials,

which begs the question how standard is the assessment.

My question to the Minister of Education: When this is clearly clarified for the minister in the teachers' paper, will the minister take responsibility for students being assessed when they have to go to private learning centres to get assessed properly, and will he take that responsibility?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I do not take responsibility for private, for-profit centres. This Government takes responsibility. If members opposite were as concerned about the citizens of Manitoba as they were about the corporations of Manitoba, we would be far further ahead in this debate and many others.

Point of Order

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. That is all this minister seems to want to do this afternoon is provoke debate. The questions have been fairly simple. We are attempting to get straightforward answers from this minister. We know that he has failed our students. We just ask them to answer truthfully.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister on the same point of order?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes, on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the Speaker will rule consistent with the rules.

I would also like to pay special tribute to you on the selection of your nephew in the NHL Draft, Jordin Tootoo. You are to be congratulated, Sir, and all of us in Manitoba are very proud of Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure my family would welcome that message, but on the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should not provoke debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, Training and Youth, you have concluded your answer?

Mr. Caldwell: It is concluded.

Mrs. Smith: My supplementary to that question, Mr. Speaker: Clearly, if the minister does not want to answer any questions, can the minister please acknowledge that when students are sent back to schools and the resources are put back in place for that student because clearly they were misdiagnosed with the Grade 3 assessment, will that minister take responsibility and pay for those fees for those parents and children?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, this Government believes strongly in investing in the public school system, which we have highlighted here many, many times, the record of investment versus the record of cuts, the two successive governments. This Government believes profoundly in working with education stakeholders, with parents, teachers, trustees, communities, students to build capacity and build a better public education system.

I have been in about 150 schools over the last 20 months. My department senior management officials have been in schools consulting as never before in the province of Manitoba to create policy built to strengthen the public education system. We will continue on that course.

Education System Student Fees

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, on a new question. In February of this year a parent wrote to the Minister of Education to express concerns about mandatory student fees being levied at his child's high school. This parent was informed by his child's school that failure to pay the fees would result in the student being unable to participate in student elections, school teams and other activities. I would like to table that letter.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education: Why has he failed to eliminate user fees, as his Government promised they would on August 31, 1999?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, types and amounts of student fees vary considerably across

the province, as members opposite know. These are essentially divisional policies or in fact schools have discretion within divisional policies. The fees that are levied at local schools are for such things as lockers, locker fees, yearbooks, damage deposits. This is something that is commonplace not only in Manitoba but throughout the world. I am not about to meddle in the affairs of school divisions and schools, despite what the member opposite may wish from me. We have confidence in our trustees.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

St. Mary Magdalene Church

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): This year has been an active one for St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church in Riel constituency. In January the church installed an elevator to help many of the senior parishioners to get to the lower level where the social hall is located. I was pleased to attend the official opening, to use the elevator and new washroom and to view the repair to the church's foundations. All this was made possible by the church's fundraising and this Government's Community Places grant.

This church hosts seniors groups, scout troops and food depots. In the fall it will be even busier as it hosts its 75th anniversary celebration. On September 29, there will be a seniors' tea in the afternoon and a catered dinner in the evening. A thanksgiving service will be held on September 30 followed by a light lunch, anniversary cake and children's activities.

The 10-person organizing committee is contacting anyone associated with the church in the past. Bill Trow, a long-time parishioner, close to 90 years old, whose parents were part of the group that founded the church, will be there along with the other 230 parishioners. As well, Reverend Donald Phillips, the Bishop of Rupert's Land, will attend.

St. Mary Magdalene Church is one of several in our community that reaches out to help where it can. It was the first church in St. Vital to provide a food depot once a month in partnership with Winnipeg Harvest.

Congratulations to the church and its volunteers for their service to the community. Best wishes for its 75th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:30)

Flooding—Southeast Manitoba

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to tour much of southeast Manitoba, many of the communities, talked to many farmers and municipal leaders in southeast Manitoba over the last week. The disaster that has happened in southeast Manitoba is one that has not been experienced there before.

We have many, many pastures that are under water. Cows cannot be put out to pasture. We have much of the hayland out in southeast Manitoba that is under water, cannot be harvested. We have in the municipality of Stuartburn, the council and the reeve told me this morning that there are probably less than 20 percent of the acres in the R.M. of Stuartburn seeded. The R.M. of Franklin has roughly about 30 percent of its acreage not seeded, as well as La Broquerie, Hanover and Piney.

I think it behooves this Legislature to pay some attention to the plight of the farm community, not by their own hand, not by the actions of other governments, from other nations, not by any trade wars, but by natural disaster that has occurred this past spring. Some of these areas have experienced some 24 to 27 inches of rain this spring alone. That is on top of the 17 inches of rain that they had last fall, which froze many of the swamps and caused many of the rivers to overflow even last fall, caused huge ice jams on the river and impeded the proper and natural flow of water from the spring thaw on.

These municipalities are asking whether this Government is going to have any consideration or whether any of the ministers are going to take the time to come to the southeast part of this province to personally take a look at what has happened and to visit with farmers and farm leaders and municipal leaders in that whole southeast area. The federal Minister of Agriculture was in the area. We are asking whether

this Province of Manitoba will in fact also lend its ministries to the plight of the farmers.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Red River Exhibition

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr Speaker, Thursday evening I had the pleasure of representing the Government at the 50th anniversary of the Red River Exhibition. This is a great location; it is in Assiniboia, in west Winnipeg. It is spacious, very attractive, and I would invite all Manitobans to attend, to see the displays of talented artists' many accomplishments and to have fun.

The Ex is symbolic of all Manitoba: great food, good family time, good entertainment and lots of fun. The Red River Ex began in 1952 as a means of raising funds for the Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg. It has grown every year, with almost 200 000 visitors visiting.

The economic impact of the 10 days of the Ex is estimated at \$11.7 million in direct and indirect economic benefits. There is an equivalent of 142 full-time positions, with \$3.7 million worth of wages and salaries. Taxes paid: there is about \$205,000 to the City of Winnipeg, \$974,000 to the Province and \$1.4 million to the federal government.

It also provides a lot of scholarships. This year there is one in tourism and there is also one in trades. I had the pleasure of awarding that last year and I am planning to do that again this weekend. I would like to recognize and commend the 750 volunteers who make the Ex possible every year. It is through their effort and dedication that 200 000 people are able to experience and enjoy the Ex year after year. This is truly a Manitoban experience, it is really great to be a part of it, and it is nice to see that it is happening in the best constituency in the province, Assiniboia. Thank you.

C. W. Wiebe Medical Centre

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, June 19, I had the privilege of attending the grand opening of the Dr. C. W. Wiebe

Medical Centre in Winkler. Dr. C. W. Wiebe devoted his life to improving the quality of life in the Winkler area through his tireless work and commitment. This clinic bears his name as a tribute to his lifelong dedication. Winkler can truly be proud of the fact that this state-of-the-art medical clinic worth \$1.3 million is entirely community-owned. On April 20, an immensely successful radiothon fundraiser was held, which raised a total of \$70,000 for the clinic. I would like to congratulate the community on their work and devotion to make this medical facility a reality. It is truly the spirit and devotion of our community that made this clinic possible. I would also like to wish every success to the doctors and staff at the clinic.

Also, on the same day, we paid tribute to an educator who had been in the community as administrator, teacher and superintendent for 39 years. Together with his wife Ruth, they celebrated an evening of giving him personal thanks for the work that he had done within the education system and also in the community. In 1993, he was hired back to the division where he was the superintendent and, previous to that, had been the principal and also a teacher. So, again, all the best and best wishes to the family as they continue their retirement. Thank you very much.

Jocelyn House

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): It is my pleasure to recognize a unique facility, Jocelyn House, in my constituency.

Jocelyn House is a hospice, providing palliative care for people in the final stages of their life. It is named in memory of Jocelyn Hutton, who died from cancer at the age of 17. Soon after her death, her family offered their quiet home overlooking the Seine River as a residence for dying patients who are in a sufficiently stable condition to be cared for outside a hospital and who cannot return to their own families. In co-operation with family, friends and other community resources, the hospice provides expert medical care, pain and symptom management and emotional and spiritual support in the warmth of a home-like environment. Although there are only four bedrooms, their services are so valued that there is an 80% occupancy rate.

Jocelyn House is Manitoba's only hospice and one of only a handful in Canada. When I attended their annual general meeting recently, I was pleased to be reacquainted with a very special person. Dr. Jan Mulder, whose expertise and support guided my family last year as we cared for my dying brother Perry in the final stages of his life, is the Jocelyn House physician. Ms. Giselle Lapointe is the hospice's very capable administrator. Palliative care is a challenging and deeply rewarding work. It takes a special kind of people. Jocelyn House is blessed with very special volunteers, as I learned at their volunteer recognition evening earlier. They sustain the facility in numerous ways, such as providing companionship to the dying, making their meals, tending the flower beds, fundraising and helping out in the office.

I would like to mention, in particular, the volunteers who received five-year recognition awards: Lilianne Barnabe, Connie Belanger, Liz Fillion, Winnie Kowalewich and Jerry Rurak. David Kroft was also recognized for his 11 years of service on the board of directors. I commend these exceptional volunteers for helping to demonstrate that the journey towards death, while always difficult, can be dignified and even a rich experience.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call debate on second readings of the bills in the following order: 33, 35, 37, 36, 46, 49 and 50.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 33—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (2)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading Bill 33, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (2), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Is there unanimous consent for the bill to stand in the name of the honourable Member for Carman?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I believe this is Bill 33. We, today, are prepared to pass this bill into committee. There are a few issues and questions that we will want to raise with the minister as part of that committee process. They deal with some of the technical aspects of the bill. But we are certainly, as I have indicated, prepared to pass it through to committee.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 33, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (2). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 35—The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 35, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Norbert?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak very briefly on this bill, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act.

I was contacted by one of my constituents, because her ex-spouse was not making maintenance payments as required, and she informed

me that she was unable to collect from her ex-partner, meaning that she could not go to court and get a garnishee order, because he was working on contract and therefore did not fall under the existing legislation. I verified this, and it turned out to be correct.

So I wrote to the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh) and suggested that, when we amended the act next, we close this loophole. As it turned out, it was a fairly large loophole. There are a large number of individuals who are not paying maintenance because they are using this previously what was a loophole to avoid their responsibilities. I was very pleased when the Attorney General did add a clause to close that loophole, and it is in this bill. My constituent was very pleased, as well. In fact, when the Attorney General had a news conference, she came down to the Legislature to thank him personally for making this change.

Now this is really not about my constituent, although she is a fine individual. It is really about children and parental obligations. Certainly, no one should be excused or have a loophole which allows them not to meet their obligations to their children. So I commend the Attorney General for making this change. It will benefit my constituent. I understand it will benefit a number of other individuals and their children, particularly their children, because what has happened and what is changing this amendment is that people who are incorporated as corporations, will now be eligible to make their payments, as they should in any case. There is actually a technical term for this. It is called piercing the corporate veil. Regardless of what it is called, it is certainly a very positive amendment which will benefit, I hope, many children who in the past were not receiving the maintenance that they were entitled to. So, with those few remarks, we are pleased to see this bill going to committee. Thank you.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to pass this bill through to committee. We, as a party, have always supported improvements in the enforcement of maintenance orders. We certainly concur that this bill does provide some benefit in that area.

We do have some technical questions we will be putting to the minister in committee with

respect to the operation of his provisions around piercing the corporate veil, because we certainly want to ensure that it is done in a proper manner. There are legitimate corporate interests that are there as opposed to where a corporation is being used to hide dollars that are owed in child support. So we have some questions around that that I am sure the minister will be able to clarify.

There is one other area, Mr. Speaker, that we will be raising with the minister in committee and perhaps bringing amendment. That is an area of difficulty that we have seen occur over the last number of years in the balance with respect to maintenance. There is no doubt that those who owe maintenance to their children must pay, but, conversely, they also have a right to receive information with respect to their child and whether the conditions of that maintenance are, in fact, being fulfilled.

Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to our attention by a number of Manitobans who are in a position of paying child support, who did not have contact with their children or their former spouse. In one particular instance, the former spouse and children had moved to the United States. In another, they had moved to another part of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the difficulty was not so much when the children were under the age of 18 and still attending high school, but after they had passed from that time, as to whether or not they were working, registered in post-secondary education or any of the factors that can affect whether or not maintenance and child support has to be paid. The problem for the payor is, under our current regime as we understand it, the payor would have to proceed to court for a variation of the order in order to be able to end child support if, in fact, the conditions for that support had expired, for example, the child was now working, he is over the age of 18, was working, was not attending post-secondary education.

Even in this one extreme case that was brought to my attention by a constituent, this individual, the eldest child had reached the age of 18 years, had completed or would have completed the normal school year. This individual was unable to get any information

about his children. They were in the United States. He paid maintenance. It was dealt through the Maintenance Enforcement Branch. This individual did not even know if his children were still alive. His only vehicle, and I can remember writing to a former Attorney General about this particular case, was to seek a court order or get a hearing.

Well, if the child is still alive, if the child is in a post-secondary education, if the obligation still exists, why would that individual spend very scarce dollars? This was not a high-income individual. Why would they have spent very scarce dollars to get a lawyer, to go to court, to ask questions for which there were obvious answers?

Mr. Speaker, we believe that since we have, I think, so streamlined maintenance enforcement and since the federal government has brought in the tariff which sets payments on the basis of income, there has been so little real discretion left in this issue. We think part of that balance is to ensure some mechanism or some right that the payor, in certain circumstances, will have some ability to get information from the recipient of the child support, in fact, that the children are still alive if there is no contact, that the children are still in school, that they are, in fact, meeting the conditions of the payment without that payor having to go to court in order to prove it, and, in many cases I am sure, really waste their money and everyone's time because there is an explanation.

* (14:50)

So we would hope that the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh) and members of the New Democratic Party would entertain an amendment or some vehicle to see this part of the formula also met, because I think what we should strive for as legislators is a system of child maintenance that I think is easy and efficient. We have seen that happen over the last number of years.

Again, the federal government now has a formula in which payments are determined on the basis of income. We now have a child maintenance enforcement agency which takes responsibility for collecting. We have now put on a variety of penalties beyond the regular debt

penalties such as suspension of driver's licence, et cetera, to ensure that there is payment. We have seen this bill coming forward that again fills some more loopholes, adds more strength to collection. Surely to goodness as part of that balance we should also put some provision in to ensure that the payor can speedily and easily determine that the conditions under which they are paying are being met, and, if they are not, that the appropriate adjustments in child support can be made quickly and speedily without necessarily the more expensive current vehicle of having to go to court, get a lawyer and have a hearing. We have eliminated so much of that from the system that that is a logical conclusion.

I did raise this matter with the Attorney General in Estimates. We will be taking this up with him in committee as well.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 35, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 37—The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 37, The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, we will be again passing this bill

through to committee. We do again have some questions we will be putting to the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh) at that time. The enforcement of maintenance orders between jurisdictions is important. I have commented with respect to Bill 35 with respect to the ability of the payor to have a right to access information about the children and their status in a speedy way, and, if the circumstances on which an order is based in fact have changed or are not being met, that there is a simple vehicle to have the alteration made.

One case that was brought to our attention by one of my colleagues is a case where an individual has a support order against them in the Yukon, lives in Manitoba, works in the North for part of the year and returns to Manitoba for another part in which they are unemployed, either get some work or Employment Insurance benefits. Within their yearly income they have a great variation from the months in which they are working compared to the months they are not.

The current system does not allow for the adjustments to take place on some kind of regular basis without again going to court for a hearing, and, in this case, very difficult because the hearing is in fact in the Yukon.

So we would suggest that this has to be given some consideration by the Minister of Justice. It is about ensuring that the regime is properly enforced in a speedy and easy method for all involved. That will be a point we will be making with the Attorney General at committee.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 37, The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 36—The Enhanced Debt Collection (Various Acts Amended) Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 36, The Enhanced Debt Collection (Various Acts Amended) Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, we will be agreeing to see this bill pass through to committee today; again, a few technical questions on the administration of this bill that we will be raising with the minister in committee.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 36, The Enhanced Debt Collection (Various Acts Amended) Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 46—The Provincial Court Amendment and Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 46, The Provincial Court Amendment and Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

Is it the will of the House to leave the bill standing in the name of the honourable Member for Morris?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, one of the features of this particular bill is obviously to ensure that our provincial court system, in terms of its appointments, is more broadly reflective of the cultural and heritage make-up of our province, which is one that is very diverse.

I do not know necessarily if the minister requires this bill to achieve that. One of the observations that I make is if you want to see a very diverse court, my experience is you have to have a very diverse law school, because it is from those young people going into law school becoming lawyers, they become the constituency, in essence, or they become the pool from which our judges apply and are selected.

Over the last several decades, we have seen, certainly, a growth in the number of women in law school. I think the number now is roughly 50-50. We have seen people from a variety of different communities, from First Nations communities, from immigrant communities, coming into law school. So, as those people work their way through the legal community and become eligible for appointment to the bench, we would expect that the processes in place will be doing that.

So whether this bill is required or not is, I think, debatable. Certainly the minister's intention is supportable. We certainly agree with that, that the judiciary should be reflective of the general community of this province, I think, to give it the kind of, for lack of a better term, appearance that shows it does represent the community.

There are several other administrative issues in how this bill will apply that we will be taking up with the minister in committee, so I will look forward to the opportunity to discuss it further at that time.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 46, The Provincial Court Amendment and Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 49—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2001

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 49, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2001, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Seine River?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): I believe this is the annual regular bill to make minor adjustments in statutes. We have had an opportunity to review this. There is nothing that we have seen to date that causes us major concern, but I say to the Attorney General that when we get into committee, some questions may arise that we will put to him at that time.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 49, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2001. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

**Bill 50—The Regional Health Authorities
Amendment (Accountability) Act**

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading, Bill 50, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment (Accountability) Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): I would like to put a few comments on the record regarding this bill.

I recognize, and we recognize on this side of the House, that this bill does bring forward some clarity and some clarifying of relationships, but I want to use this opportunity, at the same time, to remind the minister that over the most recent couple of years leading up to the pre-writ and post-election, this Government has, first of all, made the case that, if they only had access to the ability to do the planning and decision making, all problems would disappear in about six months, secondly, that that would probably only take about \$15 million or \$17 million.

* (15:00)

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

What I see with the minister introducing this legislation is that he has now embraced the regional health authority concept, No. 1, and, secondly, he has not made the decision that he intends to have elected boards, which I recall on many occasions in this House the now Premier (Mr. Doer), the now Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) both rising and being quite venomous about the fact that they felt there should be elected board members to lead the RHAs in this province.

That being said, I want to use this opportunity to flag a further concern that is developing, I think, and becoming increasingly apparent in rural Manitoba. That is that this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and this Government are using the RHAs more than likely for a fall guy, if you will, a fall organization that will end up taking the damage control for what seems to be some deliberate funding discrepancies that are beginning to

develop between rural and urban health care in this province. Certainly, the RHAs have had significant difficulty maintaining their service delivery on the Budget guidelines that they have been given.

Certainly, no one on this side of the House would deny that there were some tight fiscal situations that arose during the decade of the 1990s in the reform of health care in dealing with the budgetary problems that this province had as a result of flagrant overspending in the late '70s and early the '80s. We saw, in the 1990s, that health care in general, education, a number of the services that people truly need, desire and have a right to had to be capped if not curtailed because of budgetary restraint.

Now, quite frankly, there is no fat left in the system. These RHA managers are not going to be able to continue to cut back unless they start and comply at the same time with the edict, as I understand, that has come from this Government. I do not know if it came from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) through the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) or whether this came from the Premier (Mr. Doer), but there has been a direction, it seems, that has gone out that the RHAs are going to have to start living within their budgetary allocation.

As we proceed through the year, the managers in the RHAs are going to have to make some very serious and difficult decisions. If they make decisions on the best interests of the people that they are responsible for providing health care to, i.e., their customers or clients, if you will, that come through the door, they are probably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a position where it is highly likely that they will run a deficit. In fact, I would say that it is on the side of 80-20 that they will very likely run deficits, some regions more than others. If they do not, and if this minister insists that they must eat any potential deficits, then he is putting them in a situation where they are going to be faced with closing facilities. That is quite unacceptable in relationship to the service that we feel is appropriate, service that is necessary and, in fact, demanded in the rural areas of this province. So, while the minister is embracing the RHAs, recognizing them through the implementation of this bill, he is not providing the kind of

leadership that these RHAs need in terms of being able to manage their affairs and know on a long-term basis where they are going to go.

I will leave others to speak to some of the precise details within this bill. It strikes me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, though that unless the minister starts being more forthright and provides more direction and leadership, whether it is through the form of a bill such as this, or whether he does it through other communications with the RHAs, that he is buying himself a little bit of time but he is buying in the longer period of time a real hotbed of problems in delivery of health care in rural Manitoba. Not only do we see that in the long term, we are seeing it continue to manifest itself in shortage of staff. We recognize there are staff shortages in most places in the province right now. There are staff shortages in most places across the country.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it flies in the face of the implication and the promises that were made by this Government, during the pre-writ and during the election period, that there was nothing wrong with health care that a little tinkering and a little NDP socialism would not fix. We are now seeing that is entirely wrong, that it will not lead to the type of solutions the public were expecting. I think we are about to enter into a period of some pretty difficult discussion and debate with this Government about how they intend to deliver health care in the short term and in the long term to the people of this province.

Manitoba has seen an escalation of expenditures in health care, and at the very same time we do not see an accommodation of the costs that are associated with running our rural RHAs. That can send some very disturbing signals, I suggest, not only to those who are running the RHAs but for those who may begin to take an interest in how the RHAs are managing their affairs because it will ultimately affect their ability to attain and receive appropriate health care.

The RHAs in rural Manitoba are being starved. They are being driven into a position where they are going to have to make some structural changes in how health care is delivered in this province. Unless this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this Government are going to use a

different format in how they distribute resources, we are going to be forced into a situation where there will be centralized service more and more, and where some of these facilities that are modest, some would say too small—I will use as an example a community in the heart of my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the town of Alonsa, a small town not too far from McCreary Hospital, but if that McCreary Hospital were not able to provide a full range of services then suddenly Ste. Rose and Neepawa and Portage become the area of service that is available to them. I would suggest they would be very unhappy about that, and the timeliness of any kind of emergency response would be very difficult.

So I wish to indicate to the minister that he, through his Government, is bringing some clarity in this bill on how he will deal with some of the faith-based boards and how they will interrelate and how disputes will be settled, but he has a far bigger dispute that is more than just on the horizon. It is definitely storm clouds gathering slightly to one side of his ministry right now. If this is the best he can do in terms of dealing with the issues that we see arising in the delivery of health care in rural Manitoba, then we are indeed in for a tough half dozen years in terms of renewing some of the structural damage that may be done by the type of changes that are being driven by the centralist management style that this minister has begun to demonstrate in the way he is handling the regional health authorities, particularly the rural regional health authorities and the funding basically, and how that is being distributed across the province.

* (15:10)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will turn the floor over to one of my colleagues who wishes to add some flesh on the bones around this bill. But certainly I wanted the opportunity to point out that I think we are seeing mounting evidence that this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has not seriously considered the problems that may be developing as a result of decisions that he is making in the funding of regional health authorities in this province.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): I am very pleased to be able to rise on this particular

bill, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment (Accountability) Act, because when I was first appointed Minister of Health it was my task to implement regional health authorities in this province. For the greater part of the time I spent in the two years I served in that ministry, that occupied the lion's share of time and effort as we pioneered in Manitoba our system, our view of regionalization.

Now, I remember at the time there were many in the province who attacked the system of regionalization, who said this was a terrible thing, et cetera. You know, what I find most intriguing about it today, and I was talking to one of our colleagues in the House who is a member of the New Democratic Party caucus, and he had pointed out to me a number of studies that he had been made aware of. I have subsequently seen that demonstrated that wherever regionalization in this country has taken place and been allowed to develop to its full potential we have seen reductions in waiting lists, we have seen better use of services, better use of our infrastructure and a more effective—*[interjection]*

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard) makes a comment about why the lists are still so long here. I am going to get into that. But wherever we have seen it applied fully we have seen a more efficient delivery mechanism for our health care services. You know, it only does make sense. To some of the newcomers to this place I would just remind them of the kind of numbers I faced. I remember when I was first appointed. I think I was sworn in on a Tuesday. The following Saturday I had to fly up to Dauphin to meet some 400 angry municipal leaders who had been assembled by the then-Mayor of Dauphin, Mr. Inky Mark, who is now a federal member of Parliament for that area. They were there to tell this new Minister of Health that regionalization was not on. That is a pretty daunting task for a new minister who has not even been on the job a week, who is still being briefed and working on the information that he is required to do his job.

But, when I was appointed, my Premier had said to me you have four or five tasks. The No. 1 task is to implement regionalization. So I knew that I had to go and I had to convince them of

the arguments behind regionalization. I remember as we were flying up in the plane, my staff, we were going over these numbers. What became so painfully obvious, and I have never forgotten these statistics, because I used them in that meeting to I think the great shock of many in that room.

At that time, for every five hospital beds, acute care beds in our rural hospitals—and by definition this included everything but I believe Winnipeg. So this would have included Brandon. This would have included Portage. This would have included Thompson, Steinbach, Boundary Trails, which are all very large and well-used hospitals. So in this mix from our smallest little rural hospitals to our largest, Brandon, regional centres, of every one of the so-called acute care beds, for every five of them we had two of those beds being used by people who are waiting for long-term care. We had something like, I believe it was, two of those beds or one of those beds empty at any given time and only two of them being used for people who actually needed an acute care bed.

You know what this was saying to us was that our facilities across the width and breadth of rural Manitoba were being terribly underutilized, that they were not meeting the needs of their communities and for a lot of very good reasons: medical technology had advanced; so much more of what we were doing in the delivery of health was now by specialists; new diagnostic equipment. So those facilities, when they had been constructed, many of them ironically in the 1950s, after the federal government provided significant grants to municipalities to build hospitals, those facilities were not providing much of the kind of acute care that they had once done. Quite frankly, they were in danger, many of them were in danger of closure, closure not because of a government policy, closure simply because they were becoming less and less relevant to the medical needs of their communities.

It became very obvious to me, as I studied this issue as a new minister, that we had to have a vehicle to reinvigorate our rural health care. We had to plan on a larger scale to be able to get the benefits of being able to buy new high-tech diagnostic equipment, attract specialists to

service an area, that a hospital serving 2000 or 3000 people was not going to be able to offer very much, but in a region of 30 000, 40 000, 50 000, 60 000, 100 000 people, it could do a lot more in terms of bringing up-to-date specialized medical care outside the city of Winnipeg to various parts of the province.

I also learned as the MLA for Lac du Bonnet. I remember a meeting I attended before I was Minister of Health with the administrators in my area of the Beausejour Hospital, the Pine Falls Hospital, the Lac du Bonnet Health Centre, the Pinawa Hospital and the Whitemouth hospital and health centre. They called me to a meeting when regionalization was being talked about. You know, I have to give them a lot of credit. All of their administrators had got together, and they started talking. They said to me, you know, we started to realize that we never shared information between us. Our bed utilization, what we were doing, we kept it to ourselves. So we have got together as an administration. We have started to share information. We are starting to realize that, if we work together as a group on a regional basis, we could be doing a lot more in total than we do individually. They were caught at a very interesting time in their careers because all of them were within a few years of retirement. So they could look around the table and say, you know, we do not have to fight for our job. If we can get on with some regionalization in this area, you know, as people retire, consolidating administration, consolidating boards, we think we could provide better care to our area. That is what they undertook.

I remember when Minister McCrae, my predecessor, was coming under the initial attacks on the concept of regionalization. They had not started to implement it yet. My group told me together, and they said, whatever happens, let us go forward with it. My area did, and it has been to our benefit. I am kind of proud that North Eastman was an area that took on the challenge of regionalization.

So I went to that meeting in Dauphin, and I met those 400 people. I remember using those statistics and talking to them about their health centres and saying what regionalization had to become in rural Manitoba. It was not about

closing hospitals; it was about making facilities relevant to the communities they were serving. If what those communities needed was long-term care bed, then we had to convert facilities for long-term care. If what they needed was enhanced nursing programs, public health program, then that is what we had to develop. We knew we could not provide a lot of the things people traditionally thought they would get in a rural hospital, time had passed that by, specialization, new equipment, new technology, but we could make those facilities relevant. What we could have in communities is health care that makes sense being delivered on a regional basis, making best use of those facilities instead of them finding themselves just slipping away until their own closure.

You know that group was very good because I came out of that meeting alive, politically intact, and with them saying: Well, we will see; we will give you a chance, and they did. Within a year, most of them had evolved their facilities into the regional health authorities in rural Manitoba, a year ahead of Winnipeg. That was the plan, to start rurally. It was a tough battle; it was a very tough battle. I was the minister who brought in the first act, the first set of amendments with the rules. We had to make some amendments. I can understand where this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) is coming from, that, yes, this is a work in progress. I had to make rules. I used to call it, someone said, the carrot and the stick. I had initially a lot of rural facilities that were not prepared to evolve, and we had to deal with incentives. We had to deal with issues, and, I remember, I was the minister who said to them: Listen, municipalities, you want to keep your small hospitals, as municipalities you want to appoint the board, well, you are responsible for the deficit. If you want to run the place, you have to accept financial responsibility. If we are going to put into the region, then we have responsibility.

* (15:20)

So you keep responsibility for your deficit, and we will not pay it off. You go back to your taxpayers if you want to run this. Well, I will tell you, some hospital boards were very upset about this. But their municipalities looked at it and said: Why do we want to be in health care? Why

do we want to tax our ratepayers? Mr. Praznik, you can have our hospital. And you know, within about a year of crafting and experience, a lot of meetings and a lot of discussions, 85 percent-plus of the facilities outside of the city of Winnipeg evolved into their regional health authority, right? I do not think they have ever looked back.

The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) remembers some of those meetings. He remembers some of the reluctance of that board. It was driven by persons, or peoples, some of it by their own interests, some of it by their perception of the world, and it was very hard for people to give that up. But, you know, let us not forget that 99 percent of the funding of all those facilities was coming from this Legislature. You know, this was not a local matter; this was provincial dollars. I remember meeting with the Brandon board and it took quite a few meetings, but at the end of the day the right decision was made, and I think Brandon has done very, very well with their administration there on being able to advance projects.

I would not hesitate to say that within a reasonable time you are probably going to see one if not two other health authorities maybe amalgamate into a larger one just to be able to get the numbers, the size of numbers to attract the specialists and build Brandon and South Westman in really a regional area, and I include Marquette in that, and that would be a good thing. But it never would have happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without the creation of a vehicle to do it, and that is the regional health authorities.

Now, I have to tell you, there was, I would still say, one mistake. There are lots of mistakes you make in health care, because it is such a big, dynamic creature. But one of the mistakes we have sown in our regionalization in Manitoba and I inherit part of it, I danced part of it, and this minister is doing the same thing. So we are all a little bit guilty, and it would take a very brave soul to stand up and say otherwise, and that is what we did in the city of Winnipeg. Because the success we are seeing outside the city of Winnipeg has been that those regional health authorities—there are a few exceptions.

Parklands still has a number of independent facilities that operate out and there are some issues with Swan River, you know, in terms of the geography. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Winnipeg we left intact seven major hospital boards. That was, I say very candidly, I am sure my former leader and premier would agree, from a great deal of pressure from many of those boards to survive and exist and have a role in health care.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do have a role to play, there is no doubt, and they have played an admirable one, but the difficulty is always how do you create a structure where you can make decisions on a regional basis and implement them and live with them. We in Manitoba and the Government of which I was part, my predecessor signed a faith-based agreement and I signed a further one, and this minister, I know, talks to those communities and has been very much in the same position. But here is the practical matter that we face in health care in the city of Winnipeg. Let us just look at the context as to why we had hospitals that operated as unique units. It is a very logical reason, because our flow of information, our ability to communicate and administer a facility, was restricted by paper. Our hospitals and current delivery systems were restricted by paper. We now live in a different age. Information technology gives us the ability to deliver and to operate and to manage much larger units than we can run just under one bricks-and-mortar building.

Secondly, we know that the technology of health care, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), I think, understands it. I am pretty sure the Premier (Mr. Doer), his eyes have not yet opened to it, and I think most of his colleagues are not fully aware of just how great the demand is growing for health care services, part of it by technology, incredible advances in technology. Today is a better time to be sick with cancer or heart disease than any other time in human history. Your survival chances are the best because of huge advances in medical technology.

We also know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a huge growth in demand as our

population ages. That is not going to abate. So we are going to have these huge demands on our system. So how can we make our resources work the best? Well, we now have information technology available to us that can allow us to run a region, to be able to move data and information, not only for management, but for health care, better than any time before.

You know, one mistake this Government is making is they are not yet going to bite the bullet and invest in information technology for health care. It is very hard to do, because it is not front line patient caregivers and it is not bricks-and-mortar capital that the voter gets to see, but it is about the future of delivery systems. They tie together with regionalization. I am going to bring that back. But I want to comment about building that structure and that system.

I remember meeting with a doctor from Concordia Hospital. He sat in my office and we had a talk about CAT scans. You know, when I took over as minister, if you lived in St. James—this was the example he gave—your doctor practised at Concordia and had an office downtown, you go downtown to see your doctor, he would order the CAT scan, right. You would say, well, can I have it at the Grace? Oh, you cannot have it at the Grace. I do not practise there. You have to go to Concordia or St. Boniface, where I practise. So now you went on to their waiting list, and yet it was all paid for by the same taxpayer, every penny.

Now, how do you look at that client, lives in St. James, sees his doctor downtown, the doctor practises at Concordia and St. Boniface, he has to go to the other side of the city to get a CAT scan and go on that other list.

An Honourable Member: Try going to the other side of the province.

Mr. Praznik: Well, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) says try to go to the other side of the province. Absolutely.

So we live in a relatively small jurisdiction of 1.1 million people. That is what we had before regionalization. We are not far from having it all perfected yet. But what lunacy, what lunacy to the client, who is our taxpayer,

the patient, right, that we tell him where he gets his CT scan depends on where his doctor practises and what waiting lists. That is crazy. So anyone who said we should not be regionalizing and we should not be bringing in information technology and we should not be making this thing work better stands I think with those who would see the collapse, the total collapse of our health care system.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one example says to me why can we not—if we were designing health care, why would we not use information technology to have a central booking place that your doctor called and he said you can have your CT scan next Tuesday at the Grace or the week after at Concordia or three days longer at St. Boniface, you pick the place, you get booked in the office, done, you go there, and the results come back through electronic transfer right to your physician wherever they are in the province.

When I took over as Minister of Health, I was informed that certain tests done in Flin Flon had to be redone in Winnipeg because the equipment was not calibrated to each other. These are the crazy things that say our system was failing. Technology was there, is there today, to bring this whole system together to work in some uniform manner. You know, those who argued against regionalization, or who opposed it, or went in so very reluctantly, or wanted to keep their independence—another very practical matter, governments, administrators will have to move programs. Technology changes the delivery of programs. So a new piece of equipment is developed. You can only afford one. You only need one for our population. You have three centres doing the service now, where you can keep doing it with the old equipment or you can buy the new equipment and you bring everything to one centre, right?

* (15:30)

So, if you are going to do that, what do you do with the people who are providing the service? Well, what we quickly discovered or I quickly discovered as minister is that because we had all of these separate organizations delivering health care, each had its own employer, and the

Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) will know this very well, each had its own collective agreements, so you could not move staff. So you had to lay people off and post new jobs and get into bumping provisions under collective agreements that were never designed, and I do not blame anyone. No one anticipated it. It was not designed to easily move people with programs to give better patient care.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean, what a mess. Now, we brought in the tool in Winnipeg. Rurally, we are seeing all of those things sorted themselves out with success. There are problems, but with success, and in Winnipeg we brought it in and yet we maintained a number of those boards. So, in essence, you have to ask this. Did we create another layer of administration? Well, if the true benefits that can be achieved through regionalization, that can be achieved through technology, that can be achieved through the powers of numbers in attracting specialists and developing specialized programs, if we are going to achieve those things, then the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has to be able to make it happen with as little hindrance as possible.

Now, if the existing hospital boards work within that and make it happen, great. Then they are part of the solution. But, if they resist and if they fight every change to pursue their own institutional interests, then they will be part of the problem. That is a choice each of those boards—and I was part of a government that allowed them to continue to exist and play a role, so that is their challenge.

You know, I just want to raise a couple of issues. One of my colleagues the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) dug this up, and this speaks loudly about the kind of problems you have. When I was Minister of Health, Dr. Brian Postl, and he is very familiar to members opposite. I had a great deal of confidence in him. He was charged with reviewing all of the programs within Winnipeg, and he said to me: Mr. Minister, is my charge to come up with a politically correct review or a review that is based on the best patient care?

That is a tough question to put to a Minister of Health, but it is a very real one because you

have colleagues, they all have their concerns; they have their issues. Are you going to make your decisions on what is politically correct for the government of the day or on what is best for patient care, and, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us will be judged ultimately by history on the choice we make.

Well, my choice was simple. Maybe I am foolish; maybe I am a little brash. Some of my colleagues accuse me of that at times, but I said give me your report based on what is best for patients, and you know what that report said for cardiac surgery? It said for a province our size and given what is happening in cardiac surgery, we should have one program on one site. I remember those days. We had seven cardiac surgeons. When they are doing cardiac surgery, they have to have backup. There are all kinds of issues about building a team.

So it became very evident. What did we learn out of the baby death inquiry at the Health Sciences Centre about having a large enough team that stays with the technology, develop and grow? I mean, we are not a province of 4 million or 5 million people that can have two or three program centres, have that competition with one another. We are only 1.1 million people.

So I gave Doctor Postl the charge of best patient care, and he came back, and he said, one heart surgery program, one site.

Well, we know where Mr. Doer, the Premier, stands because, during the election campaign, the Premier of Manitoba and the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), pledged that they would return heart surgery to St. Boniface. It was not about patient care. It was not about Brian Postl and his credibility. It was about politics.

We want to win St. Boniface. We will give them whatever it takes to do it, and the patient be damned. That is what they did. You know, it is funny. They get into power. They promote Brian Postl, and, all of a sudden, ah, you know, it is a good idea to have, well, one program but at two sites. It runs totally in the face of everything that is happening everywhere. It runs totally in the face of the baby death inquiry. There is politics before patients.

I am not saying we are lily white on this side of the House either, but that is the real dilemma that Health ministers have. I do not even know if the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) had a choice. I think he was told, and that is what you do.

Now, it happens once: Does it happen twice? Is the Pan Am Clinic about best patient care, or is it about politics? You know, at the end of the day, one will be judged. It may take a while, but you will be judged because you are not making the decision on what is best for patient care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is this kind of turf fight within Winnipeg, who is going to have what prestigious program, who is going to have their picture taken with the minister, you know, cutting the ribbon on this particular program or piece of equipment, this is what undermines the efforts to bring us a unity within our system that can manage and deliver best patient care. Now, I look at the bill that is before us, and I understand that the minister, this was somewhat of a watered-down version of what was initially presented to the boards of the various hospitals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just pardon me for one aside, but one of the decisions that I took when I was still Minister of Health that I am very proud of because I think, at the end of the day, it will prove to be a very good one, it has given my colleagues opposite in the New Democrat Party an absolutely tremendous tool that I hope they use, was the decision or the initiative to have the Health Sciences Centre evolve into the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

I will say very candidly to members, I was very much involved with that. I had discussions with the board. We had quite a few talks about where this would go. I had both the Winnipeg Hospital Authority board, the then Hospital Authority board, and with the Health Sciences Centre board, and it was very evident that for the health authority to have in the long term the ability to be able to make decisions and make the system work, if they were getting resistance, unreasonable resistance from those existing boards, they had to run the Health Sciences Centre.

The Health Sciences board agreed. They saw that as their future. They saw that as the

right way to go, and they voted themselves out of existence and were taken over by the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, and, yes, some people did not like that because that gave the hospital authority a tremendous amount of clout.

I hope today that they use that where it is in the best interests of patient care, because they now have in-house in their own system the largest provider of hospital care in the city of Winnipeg. That will be, is and will be, a tremendous tool for them in bringing about the changes they need because it is a tremendous bargaining chip. Now, again, I hope it is used.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, since we were the party that signed the faith-based agreement—and it was done in good faith at the time. It did lead to some other problems. We worked that out. Let me say, it was never our intention in Winnipeg to see the same need for integration with respect to most of the personal care homes. They are large. They have efficiencies of numbers. They have faith-based components, cultural components. Those are very important in the delivery of long-term care, and they were not ever really part of the debate. It was the hospitals and acute care, because they are so essential to the system.

When I look at this bill, this bill is the next step in the evolution of how the system runs, and it really is dealing about the city of Winnipeg. Some rural facilities that are still faith based, that have not evolved, are affected by it, but by and large, this is sort of the next step in the evolution of process. We hear that this minister had lots of negotiations and discussions and things watered down.

* (15:40)

Of course, you know, my colleague, our critic has indicated I believe already some general support of this bill. I am certainly not going to be voting against it, but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, this bill should be voted against. I will tell you why. It is part of the evolution, but there is one provision in this bill that I think if we all here today stood for the patient and for the best delivery of health care in terms of a

public delivery mechanism, we should be concerned with clause 29.1(5)(b). That is that the minister cannot impose ultimately or the health authority cannot impose its decision unless it is demonstrated that it has made, and I quote, all "reasonable efforts to consider and accommodate the position of the health corporation on the matter."

Well, we have had agreements in place that provide processes for disputes. We also knew that someday somebody had to make a decision and that the health authority would because it is charged with best health care for its people. By putting this in this bill what we in essence will do as a Legislature is provide a vehicle for very unpopular decisions with those health corporations to be taken to court, where they will have to prove, if that health corporation wants to do it, they could force the health authority to prove whatever they did was reasonable to try to accommodate through the health corporation.

But let us remember who is paying the bill. The bill is being paid by the people of Manitoba through this Legislature, who give a pile of money to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Mr. Speaker, we will add with the passage of this bill one more potential hurdle that they will have to prove in a court of law potentially that they had been reasonable in dealing with that corporation to deliver a more efficient health service to the citizens of Winnipeg and Manitoba.

So what are we doing? I understand exactly where the Government is coming from. I understand where the Minister of Health is coming from. We kind of left him with that. But, you know, as we study and we debate health care and we talk about the need for saving medicare in dealing with all the issues coming forward, that one little provision in this bill, a lot of tough decisions are going to have to be made in the future. Sometimes they are good tough decisions. They are about consolidating a program so you can have a better program. If you offend one of those health corporations you could end up in court having to prove that you took all reasonable steps to accommodate them even though you are the payor, you have the responsibility to the public, and they are a provider who gets 99 percent of their money

with which to provide services from this Legislature. It really speaks to how history and tradition and methods of delivery and culture in some ways affect the decisions we make.

Those are my thoughts and observations. I can do it as a former Minister of Health because I lived and fought these battles. So I say to the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and others who may have had a chuckle on my comment, yes, I will join with my party and members of this House to see this bill pass. It is one step on a progression. But I just flag that one little provision. I flag that one little provision here as a bit of a warning on this road of reorganization of health care to meet the new challenge.

How much time do I have remaining, Mr. Speaker? Five minutes. I would just like to add a few other comments, a bit about the future and where things are going. I think it is important to make this point. I do not often get a chance to have these discussions on health care in this forum. The crisis in health care is going to continue to grow, and any political party that says it has a quick answer, whether it is \$15 million in six months, then hallway medicine is fooling the voter, and that warning goes equally for my colleagues, for the Liberal Party as it does to members of the New Democratic Party. With the aging of our population and the demographics we face as Canadians, the demand on our system is outpacing our ability to fund it, and that reality one cannot escape from. I do not know yet how that is going to play out, but I do know this. We have all been defenders of our medicare system and the Canada Health Act in this House. We have passed resolutions to support it, but the dilemma we face is, when the majority of taxpayers of Manitoba come to perceive this system as not being able to provide the diagnosis or the care that they need on a sufficiently timely basis, that they may die, Mr. Speaker, that their support for our medicare system will be gone and the credibility, the moral credibility of any government making decisions on the basis of the principles of medicare, that moral authority will also be gone.

I do not know what will fill that void. I have some of the same fears that members opposite have, but I know we are heading in that direction and not just in Manitoba, in every province in

this country under the regimes of every political party, because we cannot escape the demographics. We cannot escape that increasing demand, and we cannot escape the other pressures of new technology that year after year says we can do more, we can keep you alive longer, we can cure more illness, but it just costs more money. When I was Minister of Health, 35 percent of our budget was health care. Today, it is—what?—40—some percent, almost 40 percent, and it is heading towards 50 percent. At what point do we no longer have the resources, and how are we going to handle that? You know, that is a debate and a discussion we should be having.

I tell you, ministers of Health and former ministers of Health, in the privacy of their conversations, can have those discussions, but the wake-up call for all of us as MLAs has happened right across this land. There are no simple answers, and the answer is not necessarily private health care, American clinics or any of those things. All of them have problems and difficulties for our voters, but we have to have that debate. We have to get some sense of how we are going to survive this increasing demand, and if we stick our heads in the sand and say all is well, because waiting lists are down a little this month, or all will be well if only you put us over there, you know, is not the case. The issues are too great for Canadians and too great for Manitobans, and they really deserve a lot of good, thoughtful discussion, and I hope we have it. I hope we have it for the sake of Manitobans. I do not say I have the answers today, but I do know what the questions are, and if we do not have that debate soon, events will overtake us, whatever our political stripe.

Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed thoroughly talking on what is one of my favourite topics. I thank you for the opportunity to do so, and perhaps I will have more opportunity again in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable Member for Russell, I would just like to remind all honourable members, when speaking on second reading, please do not refer to specific clauses. That is for committee stage, for example, referring to clause 25(b), it is saying, that is for committee stage. So I would just like to remind all honourable members.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to rise and put a few comments on the record with regard to Bill 50 and, I guess, express some of the sentiments of the people whom I represent in rural Manitoba but, in addition, to perhaps put some words on the record that are reflective of what professionals are thinking about in terms of regional health and the health care programs in our province and the direction that we are going in with respect to health delivery services in the province of Manitoba.

* (15:50)

Mr. Speaker, it is not so long ago that we had a different system of health care in this province, and it was one Conservative government that moved to change the way in which we approach the health delivery services in Manitoba. This was based on the premise that we had to do things differently to try to deliver services more effectively, more efficiently, and to allow citizens of our province to have access to health delivery in a better way.

Mr. Speaker, this was not done just in isolation. It was done with a lot of thought, a lot of consultation with people across this province and indeed across the country, and we also borrowed ideas from people who had tried, who had gone before us in this direction and had had some successes. Of course, at the same time, anyone would try to avoid the pitfalls that one might encounter when implementing a new system. So I guess I am pleased to see that this Government today has endorsed the regional health care system and is indeed making some changes and implementing I guess some steps that will allow the system to operate more effectively and efficiently.

But, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the practicality of how our regional health authorities are functioning, and I only have to refer to communities such as mine, communities north of me and communities south of me who are in an agricultural part of the province basically and the populations who live in small communities, a dispersed population where access to health services is not as prevalent as it is in concentrated populations in the urban centres of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I look at the struggles that some of these regional health authorities are facing today, the significant deficits, and, if I might, I will just give you a flavour of what some of our regional health authorities are facing in terms of deficits. If we look at Brandon, we are seeing a deficit that is approaching \$3.5 million; the Central Region is \$2.88 million; the South Westman area, approximately \$1.5 million; the South Eastman area, a \$3.5-million deficit; and the Marquette Regional Health Authority, \$1.8 million, looking at something like \$3 million in this next fiscal year as a deficit.

Now, those are somewhat alarming because they show you that, indeed, there is significant either underfunding as it relates to the regional health authorities, or government has not come to grips with changing the approach that we take to the delivery of health care services in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this is not sustainable. You cannot go on this way before you are going to have a total collapse of the system, or the Government itself is going to have to take over these regional health authorities and inject massive amounts of money to bring them back to a decent operating standard.

Now, I look at my own community, Mr. Speaker, and I say, well, what has changed? What has changed in the way we deliver health care services from when we had the small boards, the hospital boards? There are still people out there who argue that we have created a huge bureaucracy, another layer of bureaucracy and that we have created a little fiefdom where decisions are being made and directed back to the smaller hospitals around the region. However, if we look at the total picture, we find that perhaps there is some short-sightedness in comments like that and, indeed, that people have not been aware of the kind of structure that was there prior to the regionalization of our hospitals around the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have been able to accomplish some efficiencies. I think we have been able to accomplish some better services in health delivery to our people. Of course, technology brings with it a significant

cost. People are demanding more. We can get access to better health care simply by being able to put technology to work and allow it to make lives a little more comfortable for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I am a supporter of the regional health authority concept, but I think that we need to look at the regional health authorities and determine whether or not there is further involvement that needs to take place as it relates to them. I do not believe that this bill really goes far enough. We actually created two tiers of health care service in this province when we abolished all of the health districts and the smaller boards in the rural part of our province but allowed the individual boards in our hospitals in the city to continue. I think the long-term view was that the individual hospital boards in the city would eventually disappear and the city would come under a regional health authority as the rest of the province has come. Unfortunately, to date, that has not happened.

Now, one may say the urban setting is very different from the rural settings, and maybe so, Mr. Speaker, but I think we have to really examine who has the final say in matters as they relate to the delivery of health care services in a region. Now, if you are going to allow a hospital authority to challenge the regional health authority's jurisdiction and their decision making as it relates to the most efficient and effective method of delivery of health care services, then you are creating a problem for the system itself. I think that what the bill here speaks about is going to create a bit of a problem for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority down the road. I do not think that is going to be the case in our rural settings. By and large, the rural settings will continue to evolve in a successful way, trying to enact as many efficiencies as they can.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that gives me some concern, however, is the whole area of emergency services provision in our regional health authorities because those are services that were once delivered by the municipalities, delivered largely through a volunteer approach, a volunteer group of people who gave of their time freely and took as much training as they could, in a limited way, to try to serve their community through the emergency services delivery that every community had.

Today, we move into the whole area of emergency services being taken over by regional health authorities, and the costs have just escalated through the roof. We are seeing now that the volunteers are not as active as they used to be anymore. There are many reasons for that, and I will not go into those, but now regional health authorities are looking at hiring professional people for the delivery of that program that used to be done by volunteers.

Although the minister says, yes, we are still open to volunteers and the regional health authorities say, yes, we are still open to volunteers, the reality is they have closed the door on volunteers, and they have done it in a very innocuous way almost. You cannot tell a volunteer that he has to work during normal working hours when he or she has another job. You cannot demand from a volunteer that he or she has to go on training, get the same training as a paid person, but pay for that training by themselves and also pay for the time that they are away from their jobs, without any compensation by either the regional health authority or the Department of Health for that time that is taken. You are not going to be able to keep those volunteers. So we have really discouraged the volunteer participation in the delivery of emergency services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that was a very important part in rural Manitoba. It is a different situation in the city, but I think, in the rural part of our province, that was a very important part in delivering those very important needs.

I will tell you what the impact is as an example. We have a community near Clear Lake, Manitoba, that has a small emergency services unit with two people in it. During the summer months, when the population in that recreation area increases many-fold, they used to bring in extra volunteers to help deliver the services.

Today, Mr. Speaker, that service is under extreme pressure because the volunteers are there no more, and there are not enough resources to be able to put into that emergency services unit to be able to deliver the service properly. We have a staff of two, plus two part-time, delivering a service for the population of about 40 000 people in a dispersed area.

* (16:00)

It is the second largest area in this province in terms of population during the summer months, and there is an awful lot of stress on those people who deliver that service. What it means is if, in fact, that unit is out on a call, another unit that may have to be called in is as far away as 40 kilometres or more, which means that people who are suffering, whether it is a heart attack or a casualty in an accident or whatever it might be, might have to wait for hours for services to be delivered.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is not enhancing the service. That is regressing the kind of service that people used to receive and should receive. So that is an area that causes me some concern because I think that we are not looking at how we can better improve the system in a practical way.

Sometimes ideology blocks the approach that we take to improving service. I say this because I have challenged the minister on the use of stretcher services. Stretcher services are less costly than ambulance services. They cost about half of what an ambulance service costs, and there are many people who are in our hospitals who need inter-facility transfers, who need to be taken for tests or examinations to our larger urban centres by a medical vehicle but do not need the services of the ambulance to take them there. They could use the services of a stretcher service that provides very excellent service, that provides a very inexpensive service compared to ambulance, yet for some reason they are denied operating in any part of our province except the city of Winnipeg.

We have limited the stretcher services to the city of Winnipeg, and I wonder why. What practical reason is there to disallow stretcher services to operate in any community in our province? But if we do not modernize the system to include that kind of delivery of service to all of our citizens, we are going to suffer the consequences because we will not be able to deliver the quality-type services that the people of this province require.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about regional health authorities and amending how we do things in regional health authorities, I think we

have to face one reality, and that is that the costs are escalating at such a rapid rate that we have to look very seriously at how we can change the delivery of services to save money and perhaps change approaches in how services are delivered. Up until this point, we have been fortunate enough to be able to deliver a fairly high quality of service and allow the taxpayer to pay for it. But when our budget for health care is approaching in excess of 40 percent, we have to ask ourselves the question, how long will we be able to continue this kind of delivery? I say it will not be for very long before Government is forced to look at different ways of delivering the service.

I was disappointed, Mr. Speaker, when this Government decided for nothing more than ideological reasons to go ahead and purchase a private clinic in our province that was delivering a service to all Manitobans and reducing waiting lists at our major hospitals. Now, if the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) state that the reason they had to do that was to allow for more surgeries to take place in the facility, well, nobody believes that. There is no Manitoban that you can sell that story to because the actual fact is all the Government had to do was to remove the cap from the number of procedures that the clinic could do, and more surgeries could have been done there overnight.

Mr. Speaker, as taxpayers, we did not have to purchase that facility to be able to increase services to Manitobans. We did not have to spend money on bricks and mortar. It was not an insignificant amount; \$7.3 million, including the renovations, is not an insignificant amount of money to spend on bricks and mortar for no reason whatsoever. That same goal could have been accomplished had the Minister of Health simply removed the cap or increased the cap so more surgeries could be done at the private clinic.

At the same time, this was all done because there was another private clinic moving into the province, a private clinic that was going to be offering an alternative to providing care to Manitobans. The private clinic was not asking to be certified as a hospital. It was not asking for hospital status. It was a clinic.

Mr. Speaker, we were fortunate in this province to have not one but I think two

facilities of that nature. Now the Government has for philosophical reasons decided to simply close the door on that type of service provision. Now, how narrow-minded can we be when we will not allow Manitobans a choice, No. 1, in where they are treated, and, No. 2, in reducing the waiting lists at our major hospitals by simply allowing people to be able to be treated at a private clinic?

For the life of me I cannot understand why the Government would take that approach. There is no good reason. Whether it is Doctor Hildahl or Doctor Lukie or Doctor Godley, whoever it might be, who are operating a private clinic, not a hospital, a private clinic, those are services that Manitobans require. If we did not require those services those facilities would not exist. But for us as Manitobans to shut the door on access to that kind of a service is wrong.

We are going upstream against everybody else. Everyone else in Canada is moving the other direction. So we moved some way in regionalizing our health delivery services in Manitoba. We moved some way in trying to enact some efficiencies in the system. Now this Government moves in the opposite direction, opposite to what every other jurisdiction in Canada is doing and only based on philosophical reasons, not on any practical or medical reasons.

The Government has moved so far as to say that you will not be able to stay overnight in one of these private clinics, because that may be viewed then as a hospital. Are we really looking at the safety of patients? Are we really looking at the needs of patients when we make those kinds of bold and brash statements? I do not think so. We are simply looking at the ideological and philosophical approach that we have as a particular party in this province to move in a certain way.

I think that is a regressive step. I do not think it is going to do anything to enhance the quality of health care in our province.

Living in a rural part of the province I also understand the costs associated with health care to the individual. There are many people who retire in small communities. Up until this time they have had reasonable access to health care,

but one thing is starting to really make these people think about where they are going to locate. That is the cost of ambulance services.

I have a number of examples in my constituency where people have spent thousands of dollars getting themselves from their communities to a large hospital where they can be treated by specialists and then getting themselves back to their community. If you do not have Blue Cross insurance or insurance of some kind, you pay an enormous amount of money to get yourself there and back.

I remember when the Government first came in one of the first steps that they took was to remove that \$50 fee that was charged to northern residents to come to a facility in Winnipeg. Now, that was the sum total of cost, \$50, to come by jet, first-class service, to a hospital in Winnipeg. You compare that \$50 cost to a cost elsewhere in Manitoba, no matter where you live outside of the city of Winnipeg, where you have to pay the total cost. It is not \$50. It is not \$100. It is thousands of dollars.

* (16:10)

I can give you an example of a person who needed a heart pacer, who was transferred from her senior citizens home to a hospital in the community and then taken to Brandon, not that far away, a two-hour drive to Brandon, where she got the heart pacer put in and then a few days later was taken back by ambulance, because that was the doctor's order, to her community. Her bill for ambulance services was \$2,200. She came to me and said, Len, I cannot afford this. She says: I do not have the money to pay this bill, and I do not have health insurance. I do not have Blue Cross.

Now what do you say to someone like that when you have just taken off a \$50 cost to someone who can come from anywhere in northern Manitoba to a hospital in our city? Now I am not saying that person should have to pay \$50. I am not saying that at all. What I am saying is let us start to treat people equitably and let us start to treat people fairly so that indeed, if that person does not have to pay any costs, then why are we charging the people who are now, because of where they are living, being charged

upwards of \$2,000 to be transferred to a facility where the service that they require cannot be gotten at home. There is no way that this person could have gotten a heart pacer put in at home, or a pacer or whatever they call it, pacemaker, at home. She had to be transferred to a large facility.

So I guess what I am pleading with the Government to do is to take a reasonable look at this to see whether or not we can redefine what we mean by inter-facility transfers, because there is always an argument about the inter-facility transfer, what it means. If you are taken by ambulance from my community to Brandon or Winnipeg and you can come back the same day between facilities, you will not be charged, but if you have to wait there for a procedure because the doctor may be in emergency, the doctor may have other cases that are more urgent and you have to stay there overnight, or because your condition is such that you have to stay there overnight, all of a sudden, you are charged the total fee.

Now you have gone there. It is not your fault that the doctor had another emergency or that the doctor could not attend to you that particular day and you had to stay overnight, or that your condition was such that you had to stay there overnight. Now we do not want our hospital beds taken up in the city, because these are important cases, and I understand that, so you try to get those patients out of those facilities and back to their home hospitals where there is usually more room, where there is an ability for them to recover. But my question is: Why should that patient have to pay the total cost because it is conveniencing the health care system as a whole? I think the entire health care system has to look at this issue because it is starting to cost people who do not live in urban centres an enormous amount of money. They are second-class citizens by virtue of the fact that they live outside the urban centres because of the costs that they are assessed to get to these facilities.

I lay another example on the line, Mr. Speaker. If I lived in the city of Winnipeg and I had to go into the hospital for heart surgery and then I had to recover, my family can come and see me, and in a few days, I am home. I have a colleague who just went through that. But I put

you into a scenario in rural Manitoba, whether it is Arborg, Manitoba, or whether it is Swan River, or whether it is Neepawa, or whatever it might be in rural Manitoba. If you are a cancer patient and you come in for treatment, or if you are a patient who has had a heart attack and needs to come in for surgery, and if your loved ones have to come to be with you, not only do you pay the costs for the travel, you will pay the costs for accommodation. The number of dollars that are spent on your health care out of your own pocket are extremely significant as compared to somebody who lives in an urban setting. Now that is just the way it is in Manitoba, and we accept that because we live where we choose to live.

But when it comes to ambulance care and ambulance services, Mr. Speaker, I think that we, as legislators, the Government, has to look at this in a way where we are going to be able to say to Manitobans that, yes, you live in a rural setting, but we will make sure that you are not assessed dollars that are unfair to you as a resident of the rural part of our province. So, there are lots of issues to deal with when it comes to health. I am not suggesting that any one minister or the Government should have all the answers, but I think we really have to address some of these issues if we want to give Manitobans proper care, allow them to live in our smaller communities, and live there with some certainty that they are going to be looked after in their senior years as well.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of private health care comes up from time to time, and again that is when the ideology clicks in and the Government will attack our side of the House many times for wanting to privatize health care, but it is time that all of us took our blinkers off and began to look at the practicality of delivering services to our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we started to have full and open discussions with Manitobans about how we should deliver the services. What is the best way to deliver services? We talk about not wanting to deliver services in private facilities, yet we are comfortable as a government, the minister is comfortable in sending people out of province, whether it is to the United States or Ontario or Saskatchewan, or

wherever it might be. We sent patients away because we cannot deliver the service here in our province. So, in essence, the Government now is using the choices that people should have in the delivery of health care.

Mr. Speaker, I know that if we allowed for some modernization of the way we approach health care delivery, we would be able to treat more people with less money, and we had better start looking at that sooner than later because this is a discussion and a debate that has to take place in a public forum because as a province, we are simply not going to be able to afford to deliver the services that we have in the past with the dollars that are available to us. When we see the health care budget starting to consume the lion's share of the total provincial budget, there are other services that are going to suffer, and they

Mr. Speaker, my colleague the member from St. Boniface spoke about his approach and his experiences as a Health Minister in the delivery of services and some of the steps that he was involved with in terms of the regional health board, and I want to mention one thing about regional health boards. That is that we took the approach as a government, when we were in government, that we would appoint the health care boards, that we would not allow for elected boards. Now we came under some criticism about that. The now Premier (Mr. Doer) of our province, the now Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) criticized us for not taking an approach whereby boards could be elected.

Now Saskatchewan went through an experience where they allowed for elected boards, and if one were to talk to some of the Saskatchewan government members right now, the ministers, or any of the ministers of Health in Saskatchewan who are either present or past, you would get the clear message that health care boards should not be elected, that we should not fall into that trap, because, Mr. Speaker, all the dollars that are spent by these regional health care boards come from the province, they come from the taxpayers of Manitoba. Health care boards do not have the authority to levy taxes. So, therefore, they are simply utilizing the dollars that the Health Department and the Government gives them, and so there is a reason

for them not being elected. There is a reason why the Minister of Health and the government of the day should have the ability to appoint these boards. Because it means that they are accountable to the Government.

Who are these boards going to be accountable to if they are elected? Who do they have to be accountable to for the dollars that they spend if they are elected? I think, in reality, that some of the problem that came in Saskatchewan, as I know it, is that the boards became unaccountable. They were not accountable to anyone, Mr. Speaker. So now the Health Minister, who has given up a lot of authority under the regional health care boards, today, does not have the same input into the delivery of health care services as he did in the past, because he has the regional health care authorities to do that work.

* (16:20)

But one hammer, and one, I guess, strong point that the Minister of Health does have is the ability to appoint members to regional health care boards and, Mr. Speaker, I for one would not want to see that approach changed in our province, because I think it is a very important one. Yes, the minister should consult with the other stakeholders in our communities to get their feedback, to get their representatives nominated, but at the end of the day it is the Minister of Health and the government of the day who should have the authority to make those appointments to the health care board.

My colleague, the Member for Portage (Mr. Faurshou), advises me about the issue of health care providers. We talked about the whole issue of vested interests and conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker, and we have to be cognizant of that. Even though education school boards are elected, one of the things that we do not allow on school boards is that a teacher who works in that same division cannot sit on the school board, and it is for that reason that we should also be very careful about having people who deliver the service sitting on our regional health boards. Now the government of the day has relinquished that rule, and I think it is a mistake. I think that we have to be very careful about people who derive their incomes from a system and then sit as decision-makers on a board in that same

system. I think it is a dangerous precedent to set and I think down the road, we will see that this is not the right-headed approach to take with regard to this issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, all I want to do is encourage the Minister of Health to continue his support of the regional health care boards that we have in our province, to continue modernizing the system, but I am also going to challenge him to take his blinkers off and to make sure that he uses a practical approach in delivering the system, rather than a purely philosophical and ideological approach in the way in which health care is delivered. I think he has made a mistake in assuming the responsibility of the Pan Am Clinic. I think it is a waste of taxpayer dollars when you invest it into bricks and mortar. The same goal could have been accomplished by simply leaving the status of the Pan Am Clinic the way it was and lifting the cap to allow for more procedures to be done. The minister, the Government, have not been able to convince anyone in our province that, indeed, this was a benefit to the health care of citizens in Manitoba.

With those few words, I conclude my remarks on Bill 50, and I look forward to more comments in committee stage. Thank you.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): I just want to put a few comments on the record on Bill 50, because I regard this as one of those bills that, on a quiet Monday afternoon in late June, is passing through this House with not too much controversy. But it is an historic occasion.

I just want to cite one or two other historic occasions like that. What the present NDP government is saying with this bill is, to my former colleague, a former Minister of Health, Mr. Don Orchard: What you did was right and good. What this Government is saying to another former colleague, Jim McCrae: What you planned for and what you did is good and right, and more specifically what this Government is right now, today, saying to my colleague, the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), the last Minister of Health in the Filmon administration, particularly in his heavy-duty role of implementing the planning of regionalization: Oh, what you did in this critically

important issue of health is good and is right and we endorse it.

That is worthwhile commenting on, particularly as my colleague reminds me about the vociferous opposition that we heard from these very same members, the very same Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) who was the Health critic at that time, from the very same Premier (Mr. Doer), who was then Leader of the Opposition, as we introduced, as we talked about, as we planned these fundamental major changes.

You know, it reminds me of another occasion when I was privileged to become the first Minister responsible for Autopac, for Manitoba public automobile insurance. Some of you will remember him, a good man, the popular leader as president of Autopac, a Mr. Dutton that the Schreyer administration had hired away from Saskatchewan public automobile insurance. The very first day that he walked into my office, and I was after all the first Conservative minister that was now responsible for Autopac. I was part of the vociferous opposition to the time that Autopac, Bill 56, was introduced in this Chamber some seven years earlier. It can be said that, by and large, the Conservative opposition of that day, we took particular exception in the manner and way in which it was being introduced. It was outright nationalization, confiscation, if you like, of private property. I believed and still believe to this day that it could have been done the Québec way, whereby we did not meddle with the bent fenders and the tin, we worked only with the public liability and the personal injury. However, I knew what Mr. Dutton was saying. Mr. Dutton was saying it takes a change in government to legitimize the program.

Mr. Speaker, I make no comment. There is no doubt that there was truth in that word. We looked at Autopac. We did make some fundamental changes. You recall that Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, when first brought in, included general insurance and, as a government insurer of general insurance, could not turn anybody down. It soon became a nightmare for them. So we abandoned that portion of it, and you notice my friends opposite

who introduced it have never suggested it being brought in.

Another parallel and I saw that we had in this regionalization of health in, yes, the difficult, the curves that it took, the political will that it took. The Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), in his comments, talked about meeting with 400 agitated people in the community of Dauphin when this was being discussed. I know that here in the city of Winnipeg you have nine obviously pretty strong-willed, independent board of governors who prevented us from maybe taking the final step that I think the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) recommended needs to be taken because, until we do it, we still have a kind of a two-tiered system in the province, but can you imagine trying to work, and that was the difficulty, in trying to provide the caregivers, the equipment, the services to hundreds and, I think, thousands of small health districts and small health boards, which were the case?

In a very similar way, in a parallel course, 35 years ago, that was the situation that we faced in education. Can you imagine the Department of Education today trying to deal with thousands of individual school boards? C'est impossible. There would not have been a way of bringing in the opportunities that our modern high schools provide. Nobody, for a moment, suggests going back to the one-room schoolhouse, even though we had some of us who are aged. Some of us have the memory of it.

What we are doing here today and what the Filmon administration put in place is being endorsed by this Government as having been the right thing to do. It will not solve all the problems, but it will provide an important vehicle for a solution to some of the problems.

Members have spoken about the realization that the long-term sustainability of 100% publicly supported health care is sustainable, in the long view, is a very serious question that needs to be and I am sure will be debated, not only in this Chamber but by governments across this land and indeed by the federal government. I see some very interesting musings from the Prime Minister's office already on this score,

where only a few months ago, in the federal election, he chose the political course of not even suggesting that alternate methods of providing health care would be considered by his Government. I simply wanted to put on the record that what in fact Bill 50 does is endorse everything that the previous Filmon administration did in the fundamental health reforms that were so necessary for this province.

* (16:30)

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 50, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment (Accountability) Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill 11.

Bill 11—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 11, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minnedosa, who has 29 minutes remaining.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): A number of us have had an opportunity to speak to this legislation. We have some grave concerns with parts of it, but at this time we are prepared to send it to committee.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) wanted to speak on this bill either now or at third reading. I was going to just hearken the member to the House as a courtesy now. I know he had some brief remarks on the bill.

Mr. Speaker: For the information of all members, the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) was on his feet and I failed to recognize him. I should have recognized him.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, we have not been able to contact the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). So the remarks will have to be made at another stage in the proceeding.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 11, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, the House will go into concurrence. Before we do so, we can deal with the concurrence and third readings. There are four of them on the order paper.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 17—The Student Aid Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the

Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), that Bill 17, The Student Aid Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that debate be adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: For the information of all honourable members, we had already dealt with the motion, so I will redo the motion to be clear on what the will of the House is.

It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh), seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), that Bill 17, The Student Aid Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that debate be adjourned on this bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 19—The Crown Lands Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), that Bill 19, The Crown Lands Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 24—The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr.

Sale), that Bill 24, The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing that Bill 24, The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed. The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 39—The Archives and Recordkeeping Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), that Bill 39, The Archives and Recordkeeping Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, this may change, in particular if we have another committee struck on Thursday morning, but at this time I would like to announce, by leave, that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet on Thursday, June 28, at 10 a.m., to consider the following bills: Bill 33, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (2); Bill 35, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act; Bill 36, The Enhanced Debt Collection (Various Acts Amended) Act; Bill 37, The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act; Bill 46, The Provincial Court Amendment and Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act; Bill 49, The

Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I also seek consent of the House to have the quorum requirement waived for the Thursday morning sitting of the House. We should get that for now and then we will look at other arrangements in case those do not work out for that particular sitting time.

* (16:40)

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

It has been announced that by leave the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet on Thursday, June 28, 2001, at 10 a.m. to consider the following bills: Bill 33, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (2); Bill 35, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act; Bill 36, The Enhanced Debt Collection (Various Acts Amended) Act; Bill 37, The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act; Bill 46, The Provincial Court Amendment and Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act; Bill 49, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2001.

Also to waive the quorum requirements for the Thursday morning sitting of the House, is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton), that the House resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): The Committee of Supply has before it for our consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): In the recent announcement, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton) said that he had

announced the supports for the grant-in-aid programs of various municipalities. I would like to ask the minister if he could, perhaps, elaborate with regard to the request for the City of Portage la Prairie. I know that the City of Portage la Prairie had made representation toward approximately \$100,000 in level support from his department. I know that the minister did not elaborate at his press conference; however, I would like to ask the minister now if he could.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Not having known that I would be answering questions, I do not have the detailed work with me. I can provide detailed information to the member. I can indicate that in terms of grant-in-aid program this year, we had approximately \$2-million worth of applications for \$1.3-million worth of funding. That made it somewhat easier than last year in terms of decisions, because last year, there was \$3 million. I would suspect that the reason for the difference from last year to this year is the fact that the infrastructure program is now being rolled out, so obviously, municipalities have to make some significant decisions about their own capital programs.

I would assume from the numbers, that a number of municipalities chose to put in fewer applications this year, have identified fewer roads. But, obviously, we were not able to flow 100 percent of the applications through, about two-thirds. It really depended on community by community. First of all, meeting the criteria. There were a few cases where the roads either did not meet the criteria, or else the costing was inappropriate. In some cases, we were able to approve a number of the projects. I know in the case of Portage that was the case—a couple of significant parts of the program. It has been a general process ongoing the last number of years. It is fairly routine. What does tend to happen is the department, even before I was minister, has attempted to balance out some of the communities that were successful in previous years.

There is also a per capita formula as well. The member may not be aware of this, but this has been in place for a number of years. I have certainly kept that in place as minister, and our Government has, which emphasizes on a per

capita basis some of the smaller communities. I point, for example, to some of the special circumstances. This year, one of the largest grants was to Souris for a bridge replacement. As the member will probably be aware, Souris is a somewhat smaller community and, certainly, it is an urgent project. We put in close to \$100,000, in that case.

It can also depend on the particular circumstances of the project. I am not sure if the member is aware, but this bridge has been in critical need of repair for quite some time. I can get the details though in terms of that. The member may have more detailed information on that. Certainly, we were able to fund some of what Portage had put into place this year and we certainly do encourage them to apply again next year, assuming the program is funded. I do not see any reason at this point in time to suggest otherwise. They certainly should keep it in mind.

* (16:50)

Mr. Faurschou: I would like to impress upon the minister, though, that this particular program effectively doubles the provincial dollars when expended within the criteria of the Grant-in-Aid Program. It has remained static over the last two budgets. I want to ask the minister whether his department will be looking favourably as to expanding the level of support, because it is oversubscribed each and every year. I will say that in relationship to the two municipalities which I represent, the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie and the City of Portage la Prairie, that both provide to the minister very carefully considered projects that they believe are very worthwhile and that should be looked favourably upon for support. So I ask the minister if he can provide some direction to this House as to his consideration in expanding and supporting this program in the future.

Mr. Ashton: Well, first of all, I think that, in any program of this kind, you would expect the program to be somewhat oversubscribed, and if you consider the relative oversubscription versus the Budget, and compare it to, say, the capital list for the department itself, you will see that the odds are somewhat greater for municipalities, and, in fact, the experience of the program has been over time at this level that, if people are not

able to obtain everything in a given year, they will be able to apply in other years. In some years, by the way, we have had cases where municipalities have applied and decided not to proceed with projects, and we have some projects actually that were approved and were reapplied for.

But, I do want to stress again that this year the number of applications is down quite noticeably from last year and it probably reflects the fact that the infrastructure program is out there. I would also remind the member as well—I know he is aware of this—that it is not the only program that we are working co-operatively with the municipalities on. In addition to the rural birch program, which is an ongoing program of the department, we are pleased that we do have the grain growers' program, which is cost-shared between the federal and provincial and municipal governments. We made a conscious decision after representations from AMM to support splitting the allocation of that program between the municipal system and the provincial system. So in that sense, as the member will note from the Budget discussions, we are going to have some significant increases in expenditure, certainly on municipal roads system this year, on that side of it.

Of course, that program is particularly important because it will be of particular benefit to rural municipalities, and as the member will know, the Grant-in-Aid Program essentially deals with urban municipalities and urban centres, specific designated roads that are in place. It has certainly been a worthwhile program, but I obviously cannot predict what we will do in the future on it. I think the fact that the applications are down this year is certainly something we would keep in mind, in the sense that you have to be realistic about other programs like infrastructure out there that are obviously going to attract cost-share dollars. We may see, perhaps, a further decline in the next number of years this program is maintained at the current level. But I do not think that \$2-million worth of applications and \$1.3-million worth of funding are really that out of line.

It does mean that with worthwhile projects, people can apply for them, and I stress again that it is not like, for example, our PMTS payments,

going back to the Schreyer government, that paid out specific amounts of money to municipalities based on a portion of tax revenues. This is something that municipalities apply for every year based upon specific eligible streets and specific eligible expenditures. So it is not something that is built into municipalities' budgets and, as I said, it works both ways. Some years, obviously, people are unsuccessful in all their application when they would prefer, obviously, to receive a higher amount, but in some years, as I said, municipalities do receive the projects but do not proceed because they decide to allocate their resources differently. So certainly I will be reviewing the program again this year. My sense, though, is, with the range it is in, I do not think it is that out of line to have \$1.3-million worth of grants given for \$2-million worth of applications.

I wish I could fund the provincial system capital budget with the same ratio, but I am working on that. I am working on getting some more federal money in our provincial system too. We are actually going to get some on the national highway system, but that is another issue.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I appreciate the minister's response and his latter comment in regard to the national highways project, which in fact would impact significantly on the constituency of Portage la Prairie, whereby the Trans-Canada Highway as well as the Yellow-head Route both traverse my constituency.

I want to ask the minister, and it is a question that I began to pose to the First Minister (Mr. Doer) and was unable to answer because of the banging of the gavel by the Deputy Speaker because we ended the allotted time for Estimates, but it was in regard to Highway 26, which is yet to be repaired from this spring's flooding. I speak specifically of the bridge that is near Baie St. Paul that is still out. My understanding is that it is not because of the efforts of the Department of Transportation, but is being held up for repair by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I am wondering whether or not the minister is co-ordinating and co-operating with the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) and the First Minister (Mr. Doer) in which to effectively

repair this very vital road as it relates to my constituency.

To see no activity whatsoever in repairing a bridge that has been there for I do not know how many decades, that is being held up by a federal department that I do not believe truly appreciates the importance of having that road reopened, I would like to ask the minister right now: What is he doing about this in regard to communicating this message to the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairman, Hansard will not record the frustration in the member's voice, but if it could, I would say it would reflect my frustration as well. We have had problems, not only with the bridge the member has pointed to, but, for example, the bridge washout last year on Highway 291. What does frustrate me is I recognize the role of the federal department. They have hired additional inspectors, and I respect the importance of ensuring that whatever we do is environmentally sensitive, environmentally friendly, but what has happened is we have got a whole series of delays that really go beyond proper environmental scrutiny. In fact, we are seeing similar situations. The member has pointed to our existing structures as being subjected to the same type of scrutiny, and we are also having difficulties, in some cases, of simply having meetings with the relevant federal officials, let alone getting a process that works.

I can indicate I have met with numerous municipalities who have got the same problem, and they are saying the same thing. That is that they have no objection to proper environmental scrutiny, proper scrutiny for impact on fish, but there has to be a process that works and that is going to recognize that, when we deal with bridges, for example, and other highway structures, it can create a great deal of inconvenience for people. Some of the by-passes and the temporary structures have to be put in place. I can indicate that, in the case of 391, which was the subject of a major washout last year, we have actually looked at other options instead of just simply returning to the previous structures and have looked at, for example, putting culverts in because of the fact that we will not have to wait for a delay that could cost us a season in terms of construction time.

It is important to stress that, when it comes to bridges, there are some real difficulties in the construction season. As the member will know, this is Manitoba. We have pretty long winters. It does create difficulties, particularly with certain types of construction. So I agree with the member. I think he will know that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is aware of the concerns as well on the drainage side. I can indicate that just as recently as about a week and a half ago I had a meeting with a number of municipalities, mostly in southeastern Manitoba, that place this as one of their top concerns.

*(17:00)

We have made it known to the federal government and will continue to do so that once again it is not a question of not wanting proper environmental scrutiny. There is nobody that does not want that, But there has to be some recognition of, for example, if you have a bridge in place before it is washed out or otherwise affected by flooding or any other disaster, obviously that structure may have been in place for years if not decades. Should that involve the same kind of scrutiny in terms of analysis as a brand-new structure that may have some significant impacts on drainage and on spawning grounds and fish and other habitat related matters?

So, as I said, if Hansard could record the level of frustration, I think the member's frustration would be noted. Certainly I would like to note my frustration as well.

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the minister's response. Nowhere in my question did I want to appear that I was not in favour of recognizing the importance of the environment and to have construction and repair work in harmony with nature. However, as the minister stated, when an existing structure that has been there for as long as this bridge has, there has certainly got to be a different protocol than when addressing a new structure.

Now, I know my honourable colleague from Russell wants to ask the minister a couple of questions, but I do want to remark at this time about the minister's attendance to the activities at the Transport Institute on the campus of the University of Manitoba when recognizing the National Transportation Week two weeks ago.

I was slightly disappointed though that the minister did not make a ministerial statement as to the activities that went on during that week insofar as the transportation industry here in Manitoba is one of significance. Every other activity that we come to take for granted on occasion, the transport industry has a great impact on. Each and every item that sees its way to our table or to our home or to our workplace has to involve transportation. By listening to the thunder aloud, I hope that is emphasis to the message which I carry to the minister, that the transportation industry is a very important one. I will say also that the minister almost encouraged me enough to ask questions of him when he made the statement that his question-and-answer period in front of the industry stakeholders at the Transport Institute was much less challenging than that of the Question Period here in the Chamber. I almost stepped forward to the plate to answer the challenge at that time.

In note of the importance of that conference as well as to say, Mr. Chairperson, the conference was participated in by a number not yet seen by the Transport Institute for many, many years. It was very nice to see the level of support and interest shown in the industry through the participation and attendance to the conference that was held at the Transport Institute. So in any event I appreciate the opportunity to question the minister this afternoon and turn the floor over to my honourable colleague from Russell.

Mr. Ashton: While I am waiting for the Member for Russell to ask a question, I was just going to remark that I certainly appreciate the Member for Portage's comments about National Transportation Week. Certainly, I appreciate his advice. Perhaps it could have been a subject of a ministerial statement, but I tend to believe that members of this House, all 57, understand the importance of transportation. There is another House in Ottawa that needs, perhaps, some education and, I think, maybe some of the general public, although I quite frankly think a lot of the general public understand as well, too. So I appreciate the member's comments.

Questions are always welcome. I always look forward to questions, whether it be in this House or in public events. My only regret is that I did not see the member until the end of my

comments. Otherwise I would have acknowledged his presence. I have felt over the years it is really important when we are out in public to acknowledge colleagues and fellow members. I did not know before I went in that the Member for Transcona was going to be there, but to give the member credit, I know there were a number of other members there. I will make sure that they were acknowledged again as certainly I remember many events I attended where other ministers perhaps of other governments were also, if they were aware that other members of the Legislature were there, they certainly acknowledge their presence.

It was quite an interesting discussion. Certainly the previous speaker, Reg Alcock, had some colourful views, but I will not get into that. I will just thank the member for his questions on a very important issue.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the Minister of Highways whether or not he has travelled Highway 16 in the recent past.

Mr. Ashton: As someone who has followed oxymorons over the years, I do not know, recent past, I am not quite sure what the definition of that might be. Sort of sounds like Progressive Conservative, industrial park. If the member is saying, have I been on Highway 16 since I have been minister of highways, yes, I have. Have I been on Highway 16 prior to that? Yes, I have. I have been on quite a few of our highways actually prior to being minister as well. One advantage I have, similar to the member opposite, he has come from outside of the city, I do tend to drive quite long distances. I have travelled most of the highways in Manitoba. Those that I have not, I am making a point of getting out and looking at. Highway 16 I have visited in the recent past, I believe the term was.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, maybe he has been on Highway 16. By the number of times he changes vehicles, maybe that is where his vehicles fall apart. But in seriousness, I ask this question very seriously of the minister because I recall when the Member for, where was Albert Driedger from, Steinbach, was the Minister for Highways, this particular individual used to accuse the minister then of flying over the highways rather

than driving them. Maybe I could turn the tables on him now and muse whether or not in fact he has simply been flying over the highways rather than driving them.

Mr. Chair, I drive 16 fairly regularly. I have been in discussion with truckers who drive that highway who tell me that it is, and I think we all know this and appreciate the fact that the truck traffic on Highway 16 continues to grow, while the highway continues to deteriorate, especially in the last two years. Last year there was an insignificant amount of maintenance work done on Highway 16.

That has come to light this year when we see just the horrible state that that highway is in. I note that between Newdale and Minnedosa there is some reconstruction being done, repaving being done, but what appals me and appals some of the drivers who drive the large units is the fact that it is an NDP fix. Instead of paving the entire road to its shoulders, we are seeing a layer of pavement being put on the main part of the driving surface but the shoulders are only being paved part way out, leaving a ridge on that shoulder that is about two inches high. With the amount of traffic on the highway, you simply cannot get off that road to allow faster moving traffic by for fear that you will end up in the ditch. I tried it this morning, just as an example from the comments that were made to me. It is treacherous.

* (17:10)

The people who are doing the repaving have indicated that that is as far as they have been told to go and they are fulfilling their obligation. But I want to get the minister to tell me whether or not this road is in the same category as Highway No. 1 and our major highways in this province and why it is not being repaired to the same standards as our major No. 1 highway is because, indeed, I am insulted and horrified that we would be doing that kind of a patchwork repair job on this highway at the present time, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I am surprised by the question. I would certainly appreciate details on which stretch of the highway he is talking about.

But I am surprised because the criteria that we are using right now are the exact same criteria that were in place for the previous government. In fact, in 1995—and I have the document—the previous government, then Glen Findlay, Minister of Highways, brought in the standards that we use now in terms of traffic counts, and, in particular, one of the areas they did cut back on in 1995 was on full and complete paving of shoulders. So that is not an NDP fix; that is his own government.

I know the member would prefer us to believe that somehow the road system magically appeared a year and a half ago and that any of the issues related to roads also appeared a year and a half ago, but I am sorry, it does not work that way. There is a bit of a theory of evolution here in terms of roads.

I will be the first one to say there are a few challenges on our highway system, particularly this year when it has been a particularly bad spring. I mean, up until a year and a half ago, the member was part of a government that was in for 11 years, 11 years, and they established the policy in 1995 that moved away from full and complete paved shoulders, and I can show the member the document.

An Honourable Member: I will show you the work.

Mr. Ashton: The member says he will show me the work, but I would suggest he talk to Glen Findlay, because Glen Findlay and the department at the time had to deal with the fact that there were more pressures on our road system, and I can tell you the kinds of measures that the department took in 1995. This is the Tory policy on roads. For example, the thresholds for four-laning were raised, Mr. Chairperson, and, increasingly, what they looked at and what we are looking at, to be fair, I do not mean to be critical, are things such as passing lanes.

We are doing work right now on Highway 10, looking at passing lanes, because they have almost the same kind of benefit as four-laning does in terms of safety and are obviously far cheaper to build and have far less impact on our landowners and other uses of the highway.

I have had this discussion with the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), as well, who has raised some issues with me. The policies that were set in 1995, that were changed at that point in time, are the root of why in some cases you will see older stretches of the highway having fully paved shoulders, Mr. Chairperson, and the new projects having only partially paved shoulders.

That was not my decision as the minister. That was not our decision as the Government. It was the reflection of the previous government at the time, of the need to balance resources with needs on the highway system, and it was an appropriate decision.

Now, you know, if the member were a new member of the House, I might understand him criticizing not only us but the previous government, but by criticizing what he has criticized here, and I know he raised this within committee last year, I assume he is saying that he is criticizing the previous government, as well, because they in their 11 years moved towards this more restrictive approach on our highways. I mean, that is a responsible thing when you have limited resources. I am not criticizing it.

But I have not changed those criteria. One of them is in terms of the paved shoulders. We recognize that unlike a number of years ago, there are higher thresholds now in terms of passenger counts. The reality is when you have to stretch the monies, as you do in any capital budget, we believe the appropriate decision that was made back in '95 is one that we continue to uphold, and that is to make sure the resources are put in place.

That may mean, yes, not fully paved shoulders or other types of amenities, but, on the other hand, when we are dealing with major challenges on the highway system, we have to see what we can do to creatively use our resources. So, when I say this, I am not being critical of the previous government, but I can show the member the changes that were made, the previous requirements that were in place and what are in place now.

I can say to the member opposite, just on his previous comment too in terms of flying versus driving, I am the Minister of Transportation, so I do indeed fly as well, and I do take trains. I have travelled between communities by skidoo. I have travelled by ferry. So I do travel all modes of transportation. To be fair to Albert Driedger at the time, I do remember he actually did travel up north. I remember it. He did travel up north in some very adverse weather conditions, came to Cross Lake and travelled on 373 and 374, highways, by the way, which we are starting to do major repairs to, in fact doing significant upgrading on. But ironically he came up, and his car was covered with mud. Albert said, you know, maybe there are some concerns about roads here. What was interesting was he was replaced as minister three weeks later. I do not know if that had anything to do with him going down and saying we have got to fix that highway. So I did not want to leave on the record any suggestion that Albert Driedger did not travel those highways. He did and was somebody I had a great deal of respect for. He was somebody that really did care for the province, and I certainly miss his presence in the Legislature.

To make a long story short, I have been on Highway 16, and I will be on it again. I travelled it on many occasions, and I appreciate the member raising these concerns on behalf of his constituents. I am sure I would have done the same thing, but, once again, Mr. Chairperson, the criteria he is criticizing are criteria the Conservatives introduced.

Mr. Derkach: I hate to tell the minister this, but he is wrong, because I can just point him to the reconstruction that was done on Highway 16, and I am not talking about my constituency, Mr. Chair. This is about a major interprovincial highway where, if you compare us to Alberta and to Saskatchewan where those provinces are taking steps ahead in terms of improving their highways, in Manitoba, we are going the other way. Anybody who is a long distance driver will tell you that Highway 16 in Manitoba is starting to regress rather than improve. We rebuilt the section between Russell and the border, I believe it was, in 1999 or '98, and that section of Highway 16 was paved shoulder to shoulder.

I can also point to sections of Highway 16 that were reconstructed after 1995, where the sections that were reconstructed were paved shoulder to shoulder. I can point the minister to the section of Highway 21 between Griswold and Hamiota, I believe it was, where once again the road was paved shoulder to shoulder. I can point the minister to Highway 45 that was reconstructed after 1995 and once again was paved shoulder to shoulder. So when the minister tells this House that indeed the policy was to pave a strip along the shoulder, that is not true. Secondary roads, that was done to, but major highways were paved shoulder to shoulder.

When we see what is happening on Highway 16 right now, where the crews are working and putting another layer of pavement over and leaving a ridge which is dangerous if anybody were to pull off partially onto the shoulder is just not a good driving condition on a highway that is used as much as Highway 16 is. I think the minister would have to acknowledge that. The paving crews cannot do anything about it because this is the directive of the department.

They are paving over the same section of road that Glen Findlay, when he was Minister of Highways, paved between Minnedosa and Newdale, which, for some reason or other, went bad. We do not know why that highway fell apart as quickly as it did, but that was done since 1995. The minister is now in charge of that, and he is repaving that section, but he is not paving it shoulder to shoulder as had been done post-1995. So he cannot tell me that, indeed, the practice of major highways was only to pave a narrow strip along the highway, because that just did not happen. I have just given him several examples.

I do not know what the policy in the department is, but when you look at the approach that was taken on these major highways, it was paved from one shoulder to the other. I will take the minister for a tour on any one of those highways that I have mentioned, that I am familiar with, and I will show him what was done in those areas. Then we will have the proof of the pudding, if you like, rather than talking from theory and from paper.

* (17:20)

Mr. Chair, what I am speaking about is a major highway in our province. It is an inter-provincial highway. I would challenge the minister. I have taken this highway right from Winnipeg to Edmonton, and I would have to say that up until about three years ago, when Saskatchewan started to do major work on Highway 16, Saskatchewan had the reputation of having the worst section on Highway 16 in the three provinces, but Saskatchewan has done a tremendous amount of work on Highway 16. They are once again paving that Highway 16 shoulder to shoulder right through because of the amount of traffic.

We understand that you cannot afford to four-lane this highway. Right now, the Province does not have the money. There is some four-laning going on on the extreme west side of Saskatchewan and in Alberta, but we have not been able to arrive at that point yet in terms of the finances of this province, and I understand that. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chair, if you were to drive 16 in Alberta or in Saskatchewan where it is just a two-lane highway, there are sections in that highway that have been designated as passing zones which have been paved and built wider so that traffic can get by. That is something that needs to happen on Highway 16 in Manitoba because of the increased density of traffic on that highway, especially truck traffic.

If you take a look at the percentage of truck traffic on Highway 16 and compare that to Highway No. 1, and the minister can correct me, but I believe that the percentage of truck traffic on Highway 16 is higher than it is on Highway No. 1. Now, in total volume the traffic is not as great on No. 16, but in terms of percentages of truck traffic to other traffic, it is higher on 16, and the wear and tear on that road is beginning to show.

Mr. Chair, if the minister wants me to talk about a constituency issue, I will reference the section between Russell and Binscarth that was rebuilt three years ago. It was supposed to have payment on it the following year. We have waited now three years. There is no pavement on it. The highway is virtually falling to pieces. I give credit to the Highways Department. They

are doing a tremendous job in trying to keep it up, but when you have shoulders that are so soft because of the reconstruction that it is absolutely dangerous for anybody to get off on those shoulders, I think we need to pay attention to a highway that is utilized as much as it is.

I will give the minister some latitude in that regard. He needs some time to be able to sort some of these issues out and to pay attention to those sections, but when I look at the work that is being done right now, the substandard work that is being done in terms of the approach that is taken to the reconstruction of this major interprovincial highway, and you compare that to any section in Saskatchewan or Alberta, we fall very far short of the standard that is being utilized anywhere else on Highway 16 and the other jurisdictions when you compare the work that is being done between Newdale right now and Minnedosa.

Mr. Ashton: The member should be aware on 16 and, in fact, we announced in the spring program a number of projects that are going to rehabilitate the pavement on 16. I will not go into details, but that is a public document. In fact, there are a number of other projects that have been identified on 16.

I want to tell the member, too, that one of the issues with 16 has been the fact we have not received one cent of federal money on our highway system since 1996.

We have within the department this year identified and really started to work on the fact that we are going to have a strategic highway improvement program. We may, in fact, have some money this year which is somewhat surprising because the original indication is that it would be next year. I can indicate when you look at the profile, the National Highway Program, obviously 16 is going to be a significant candidate for that.

But I hope the member will understand that, and I can get the details of what he is looking at, but in some cases we are doing the pavement rehabilitation. We are doing a lot of that this year. It has been a pretty bad spring, probably one of the worst on record. In fact, there is some, for example, in the Member for Turtle

Mountain's (Mr. Tweed) area, 523. We have already identified some major remedial work that is being put in place on Highway 6 in the Member for Interlake's (Mr. Nevakshonoff) area and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). There are a number of other areas in the province that are particularly negative.

I want to stress again that this did not happen overnight. Obviously, with a negative situation this spring, we have an older road system, it is more vulnerable to that kind of damage. That is what has happened, including on parts of Highway 1, but I do want to stress again that this year we are putting \$103.9 million into our highway system. The base budget is \$100.5 million. I just want to indicate that if you actually look at the expenditures over the last number of years, it compares very favourably. In fact if you look at the last number of years, there have been a number of years in which—in fact the previous member was in a government that spent as little as \$91 million, \$90.7 million, as recently as 1997-1998. So this did not happen overnight.

Rather than focus on our areas of disagreement, perhaps I will take the comments from the member as being issues of concern to his constituents. I certainly respect that fact, but the long-term situation is that whether it is on Highway 16 or other highways in the province, we need some of that federal money in. I do know that is probably the one issue that we all agree on in this House. That is the need for more federal money onto our highway system.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I am not questioning the minister on the amount of money that he is spending on Highway 16. I understand that the federal government has not put any money into the program in the last number of years. There should be some obligation on the federal government, especially with the amount of revenue that they are receiving from our gasoline tax or fuel tax in this province. None of it is coming back to our roads. I do not care whether it is No. 5 in the Member for Dauphin-Roblin's (Mr. Struthers) area or whether it is on Highway 83 into the Swan River area. It does not matter.

Now, Saskatchewan has not received any money from the federal government, neither has

Alberta, but I happen to travel these highways fairly regularly. I can tell you that in Manitoba we are falling far behind what is happening both in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The quality of reconstruction that is being done in Manitoba is horrid. I cannot describe it in any other way. It is actually leaving the highway in a dangerous condition. That was pointed out to me not by any of my constituents, it was pointed out to me by truckers who said, what are you guys doing? They cannot allow their machines to get off the road onto the shoulder to let anybody by because of a dangerous lip left halfway on the shoulder that could render that vehicle into the ditch very quickly, and a car especially.

I tried it today just as a matter of test driving the area that is being repaved. There is a ridge on the shoulder that if you hit it at any highway speed, it throws your vehicle off to the side. Then when you try to re-enter again, it is the same thing. It causes your vehicle to swerve. Now, anybody who does not have control of a vehicle or has not got the experience could end up in a problem. I do not think we should be constructing highways in a way which leaves them dangerous to the driving public, Mr. Chair, because Highway 16 requires the use of that shoulder to allow traffic that is moving at a faster rate to get by them.

Now, we can argue the details for ever and a day. All I am asking the minister to do is to reconsider when he is doing his reconstruction. I know he will talk to his engineers and the engineers will tell him the story. But indeed I think that you have to listen to the people who use these highways, who will tell you that we are leaving our highways in a more precarious state than anywhere in the three jurisdictions that Highway 16 covers.

So I am not going to try to blame the minister for this. I am simply indicating to him that as he is launching into reconstruction, whether it is between Neepawa and Minnedosa, Newdale and Minnedosa or wherever on Highway 16, that he should pay special attention to ensuring that the road is paved shoulder to shoulder, as is No. 1. The minister knows that the reconstruction that was done on Highway No. 1 between here and Portage la Prairie last

year was paved shoulder to shoulder. There is good common sense for doing that. It is a safety issue. I drive that road every week, Mr. Chair. I can take the minister for a ride if he would like to come. He will have to agree with me that the section that was redone is paved shoulder-to-shoulder.

* (17:30)

I am only asking that the same consideration be given to a major interprovincial highway that is used by a large number of truck drivers. There is a lot of freight moving on that highway, grain, dry freight, petroleum. There are a lot of tourists who use that highway as well. When you have camper trailers moving down that road, you have to allow for them to be able to pull off the road, because they do not travel at the same speed to allow the faster moving traffic to go by. Right now we have convoys on that road because they have to be careful where they allow people to pass.

So I only ask the minister to really take this under advisement and to reconsider when they are paving. I am not at all pointing a finger. I am sure that he can say that we are rebuilding these roads in accordance with the standards that were developed during the previous administration. I know what was done on Highway 16 and some of the other highways. I only ask the minister to take that under advisement.

I noted that when his department rebuilt the stretch from north of Hamiota on Highway 21 last year, that was the first section that they narrowed the shoulder pavement from the full width of the shoulder. Four feet, is it, three feet, whatever it is. I can accept that on that highway, because that highway does not have the same intensity of traffic as Highway 16 does. So I can appreciate and accept that. But I think when you are talking about a major highway like No. 16 is, you have to pay special attention to that. What I am seeing being done there right now falls far short of a major interprovincial standard that I think should be applied and is being applied in other jurisdictions, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chair, once again I take the member's comments seriously. I always appreciate input on highways issues. I certainly gave input over the years before I was Minister of Highways. I just want to add that in terms of

shoulders, in many cases we are dealing with highways that literally do not have a shoulder at all on some major highways, major trunk highways. So that is a challenge.

When you announce a project, and I was just looking at some of the spring project that we announced this year, when you announce shoulder, grade and gravel, a lot of people, their eyes glaze over. You know, people like to see pavement or a major structural improvement to a road, but anybody who knows the highway system knows that the long-term stability of a road and also safety factors can depend on a solid shoulder, solid base. It is a challenge.

We have some other roads, I know in the Member for Lac du Bonnet's (Mr. Praznik) constituency by Milner Ridge, for example, that are extremely narrow. There are all sorts of challenges that are out there, highways that not only do not have the shoulders but do not have the specific length. If the member can give me a note on some of the specific stretches, I will undertake to look at it directly.

By the way, actually just one thing I did want to correct the member on is that the car I am driving, the Government vehicle, I think it is the oldest one in the fleet. It used to be the former Minister of Highway's vehicle, and I have not changed it. It was a Red River flood rebuild actually. *[interjection]* Yes, rebuilt by Red River community college, yes. It is an interesting vehicle. It has got a bit of history to it.

I do want to just say to the member, just to finish off, I hope he is not suggesting that Saskatchewan roads in general are better than Manitoba roads, because I could take the member blindfolded in Manitoba and then I could take him into Saskatchewan and he would know the difference. He would know exactly when he is there. *[interjection]* Well, there may be some elements with 16, but Saskatchewan for the last number of years has not put back in what it has raised in gas taxes. It is doing that now with its new budget.

The Manitoba government, and this is one area I do not disagree with the previous government again, for the last 15, 20, 25 years, what we

raised we put back into the system. It means we have a system where there are challenges, but our system is in a heck of a lot better shape than Saskatchewan's. Generally, I would hope that would not be the barometer. Alberta is a bit different, obviously. They are about the only province in the country putting in more money than they raised on gasoline taxes, and that is the resource revenue that they have, so it is somewhat different.

But I appreciate the member's comments, and I do hope he will note, too, some of the other improvements we have in his area this year; Waywayseecappo intersection, for example. I know that is an issue the former chief of Waywayseecappo raised with me very early on. We took a look at it, the member raised it and I think it is a good example of how, with a relatively small amount of money, we can make a significant impact on safety. So you know, I can mention some of the many other projects that are happening in the area. The member mentioned on 21, but I will leave it at that because I do now remember it in terms of him wanting to see additional work done, and we all do, and I will just stress again that Highway 16, with the Strategic Highway Initiative Program funding coming up, will certainly be a candidate for that, and we will certainly be involved in projects on that. I see the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is probably wanting to raise some issues in regards to Highway 1, or perhaps the traffic lights in Virden, which I know were a major improvement for that community. But anyway, I will not jump ahead to the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). I thank the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) for his comments.

Mr. Derkach: Just finally, and very briefly, I just want to say to the minister, I am not criticizing him for addressing issues of other highways in my jurisdiction, or any other, but what I am particularly trying to focus on is the condition of an interprovincial highway, which I think is very critical to the marketing of our products here in this province.

Highway 16 has long been used by major freight haulers in our province, who use it right through to Edmonton and to the coast. Mr. Chair, other jurisdictions have put extra money into their interprovincial highways, and that is

all I am asking this minister to do is to make sure that No. 16 is not downgraded in terms of the standards, because it is far too important a highway for us. If he wants to do other things with other highways that is fine and I know that he is spending money. I also know the fact that he is spending more money in the north, and that is understandable with him being Minister of Highways. His constituents would expect him, and northern Manitobans would expect him to do that.

Now, some of us may object to the percentage of dollars that are going into the northern roads, but that is the prerogative of being in government and being a Minister of Highways, and so I may not like it but I have to accept that. But one of the things that I can impose on this minister is that he live up to a commitment that Government must have in terms of ensuring that interprovincial roads, whether it is No. 1 or No. 16, are really looked after to the highest standard, because these are very major roads in terms of marketing our products in this province. That is all I am asking the minister to do.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Chairman, first of all I know the minister of highways went over Highway 68. I do not know whether he has been there lately. It is about 50 percent less of the pavement there, that there was when he went through there last time, and I would encourage him to take another detour someday when he has got lots of time; when he has lots of time, with nice slow rides, nice out in the country there, and watch for oncoming traffic when you are going around the repairs. Because not everybody slows down, but most should. I am really concerned that there—I am convinced that there is not going to be an upgrade on that road, so I hope that the minister can tell me that there will be some major repairs that will be undertaken.

Mr. Ashton: I certainly want to acknowledge the condition of Highway 68. The Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) here has filled me in from personal experience, and if I can put it on the record, he says: oh yeah, with an emphasis. So I am certainly aware of that, and in fact I should have mentioned Highway 68 as one of the hardest hit by the conditions this spring.

Mr. Chair, 6, 68, sections of 5 and 23 are in bad shape, so we are doing what we can. We are shifting resources into the areas affected. We are trying to rehabilitate the roads back to the previous condition they were in. We are working around the clock in some cases. We are having to put out specific contracts. We have done that on 5 and 23, so I appreciate the member's comments, and I will be out on that road. I have driven it on many occasions in the past and I can show him a few phone messages from concerned Manitobans that echo his comments. He is quite right. It is in rough shape and we are trying to do, in the short run, what we can to bring it back to acceptable highway standard.

* (17:40)

Mr. Cummings: Twice, and I believe three times now, in Question Period, I have raised questions about the water that went up the Portage Diversion during the spring flood-fighting efforts and no one, including myself, is questioning that the floodway needed to be used or that it was inappropriate. But I think the minister of natural resources either misunderstood, or chose not to accept, the facts that I was putting on the table. I have also asked the minister, and I am asking this minister in his capacity as Minister responsible for Government Services, if he has apprised himself of the extent of additional flooding that may have occurred as a result of what, I believe, was about five inches of additional water that was diverted out of the Assiniboine into the lake. That is a measurable amount, the quantity that flows and the volume that is leaving and the height of the lake can all be correlated remarkably well, and, in talking to my constituents, none of them is looking to farm government programs, none of them is looking to have government say they are not going to use the floodway. But every time that floodway is used, if the lake happens to already be at a high level, there is artificial flooding, and I think no one would even deny that, even if they knew that it might lead to some form of liability.

Now, when the floodway was put in place, it is my understanding that predictions were that it might be used two or three times per decade, which would be once every five or four years that they could expect some water. There was significant water in the Assiniboine in '96. In '97, there was not so much water in the Assiniboine, but there was lots of water in the Red and the

Assiniboine was basically headed north, as much as we could, to the capacity of the floodway in order to provide relief for the Red where it goes through the city of Winnipeg. There was a recognition at that time that the loss of—at that time I believe the figure was that about six inches of elevation was added to the lake from artificial sources. I am sure the minister knows exactly where I am going on this, but let me say that it seems to me to be a principle that is reasonably well accepted and clearly enunciated in most cases, where flood-fighting efforts have caused collateral damage, if you will, to use the military term, that those persons who were inadvertently, or in some cases intentionally, harmed by events that occurred in flood-fighting, they received some relief.

In '97, this was recognized because it was considered part of the flood-fighting effort to protect the city of Winnipeg. There was a huge amount of damage and the feds were involved, obviously. I am wondering if the minister can update me on whether he has given any thought to the problems that may have arisen from the additional water being put into the lake, and it is not just on my side. It occurs in St. Laurent and areas up the other side of the lake as well. I would acknowledge that a good portion of that land is not highly productive, high value land, but when you are dealing with an operation where pasture and grass are the two ingredients that you need in order to produce the product that goes off of your farm, a loss of 50 percent of that in any year is a significant loss. There are some people who are that dependent on some of the land that has been lost. I do not think it is enough to say they should have hay insurance. This is natural hay. The insurance coverage that is available through Crop Insurance does not replace the value of the shoreline grassland that can be harvested, and certainly there are times when replacing the pasture is extremely difficult because we are facing a burgeoning livestock and cattle industry in particular out there and alternate pasture is sometimes at a premium. So I give the minister an opportunity to comment if he has, first of all, apprised himself of the situation and, secondly, what he believes should happen.

Mr. Ashton: I am certainly aware of the situation, and I give the member credit for having

raised the issue in Question Period. I can indicate that we are currently finalizing details in an announcement, hopefully, in the next period of time related to not only the spring flood situation but also the fall excess moisture that we faced last year, which has affected a significant number of municipalities throughout the province, a significant number of individuals. I would anticipate an announcement on that fairly soon.

As the member is aware, the Disaster Financial Assistance program is a federal-provincial program. There are provisions in that program, and if the member has any specific concerns, he can raise that with me. Certainly I would like to get the information. Mr. Chair, '97 is a good example where there was a fair amount of coverage through the DFAA program. It is a very important program in the province. But, rather than get into any details, I think perhaps I will undertake that if the member wants to provide me with details. I know he has raised it in the context of the Conservation side as well. I cannot speak for the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), but we are hoping to have a disaster financial assistance program to deal with the spring flood situation. If there is flooding, presumably this would apply as well. It depends on the type of costs, obviously, that people have found themselves facing, some of the damage. But there are some very basic principles that were established to DFAA, and if we are in a position to announce a program, which I can indicate we are hoping to have an announcement fairly shortly on, then, obviously, we would follow the basic principles of the DFAA.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question is for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Lemieux). There is tremendous interest at the moment in the new arena, and now that the question of heritage status appears to be answered at the City of Winnipeg level, there is some focus on the provincial process for making a decision whether or not at a provincial level the Eaton's building would be classified as a heritage building. Clearly this is of considerable interest to the proponents who want to know what the process is, who want to make sure that there are no delaying lawsuits because the Province did not follow due process, and from the opponents they are very interested in a fair process.

I know that the minister has indicated his anxiety and enthusiasm to receive as soon as possible a report by the Manitoba Heritage Council and has indicated in his answer last week that he is very interested in the due process. So my question to the minister is: Can he elaborate on the process involved at a provincial level providing a decision for heritage status or not?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): The easiest way to respond is maybe by going through what I have been advised is the process. The Member for River Heights is correct in saying that the City has gone through their process and certainly, has not deemed the old Eaton's building site as being a heritage site. Also, when the Member for River Heights mentions the proponents, I am not sure if he means the people who would like to have the building—*[interjection]* Oh, okay. Yes. I just received a nod from the member from River Heights that he was referring to the people who would like to keep the Eaton's building.

* (17:50)

Well, the proponents for the new arena, Mr. Chair—Mr. Chipman, Mr. Graves, the people who are wanting to spend \$86 million into this particular complex, and to build an entertainment complex—are certainly ones who want to have portions of Eaton's. They have made that quite clear, I understand through different sources, that they believe the Grill Room—there is the Wall of Honour, there are a number of different ways of respecting that particular building. As I have been told, this is what they are saying. They are saying: You do not have to keep the whole building in order to respect the sentimental reasons, as well as other reasons, why you wanted to preserve parts of the Eaton's building.

Now the process that we are involved in, currently—I am not sure who brought the Eaton's building site forward to the Heritage Advisory Council, but it ended up on their agenda two or three weeks ago. My understanding is that they dealt with the issue. They talked about it, they discussed it, and from those discussions they are going to present or send a paper to me.

Now within the legislation there has been a lot of talk, I understand, with regard to what happens then; in other words, what happens after the minister gets the paper. Well, the legislation, to the best of my knowledge, is quite clear. What they are doing is giving their suggestion, their knowledge to the best that they know about the building, and they are trying to make reference about this particular site to me. Other members that I have spoken to in the House, they are telling me that there is nothing absolutely binding with regard to their recommendation, whatever it may be. They are just saying it is an advisory body in nature, and the legislation does not prohibit the minister from dealing with the issue one way or another.

So what I am doing is I am awaiting their report to me, and I am not sure. It usually takes about two to three weeks, I am told, after they deal with an issue. There are other issues they dealt with. My understanding is that the Maison Gabrielle Roy is another building that they looked at, and apparently there is a church. So they look at a number of different sites, Mr. Chair, as to the heritage designation.

Having said that, I am certainly awaiting their paper, whatever they are sending to me; whatever guidance or advice or recommendation or partial recommendation or whatever they are putting together. I have not received any recommendations from the advisory council on any other matters, so this is a first for me. So I am certainly awaiting that, and I am not sure how it is going to be worded or how it is going to be presented. My understanding is it is just a paper. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: My follow up to the minister. When the report is presented, will the minister be making the report public?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, my understanding is that this has not been done. It is a confidential document, actually, between the minister's advisory body and the minister. It is not a document that is a public document. It is something that they have deliberated over, and they are going to be presenting it to the minister on this particular site. I have certainly been advised that this is not a public document. This is a confidential document between the advisory

body, the minister's advisory body, and the minister. So as far as it stands, my understanding is that this is the norm, and I was going to be following exactly what has previously taken place.

Mr. Gerrard: I think many people are going to be quite disappointed that this document will not be available for Manitoba citizens to have a look at and to be shared.

Is the minister planning for any public input or public hearings on this question?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Chair, when I first was notified that the advisory body had first received a request to look at the Eaton's site as a potential heritage site, I asked a couple of questions very similar to what the Member for River Heights is asking me.

I said: What is the normal procedure? What generally has happened? They said: Well, generally, the advisory body will just make a recommendation, and the minister either takes it or leaves it, and based on a number of different facts that the department also has input into. The department also has some input into the process where they also provide the minister with advice based on the document. So it is not only the advisory body that gives recommendation to the minister, but the department itself also has an opportunity to look at the recommendation and to have their input into a particular site, whether or not it should be a heritage site, based on their vast experience dealing with different issues such as heritage sites.

Mr. Gerrard: My question is: When can the public expect a decision from the minister on whether or not Eaton's or parts of Eaton's would be designated a heritage building?

Mr. Lemieux: That is a difficult question because, as I mentioned previously to the Member for River Heights, this is a first for me as a new minister, receiving a report like this on any site at all. I would hope that it is not a lengthy document, to spend a lot of time looking through. I am hoping that the recommendations are quite clear. The moment those recommendations come forward, I certainly would want to have my department have the opportunity to

have a look at it, take a look at the recommendations, and also have some input as well.

I do not look at it as being really a lengthy process. Certainly, to be fair to all, whether we are dealing with the people who feel that they may have a sentimental value related to the Eaton's building or if they feel justified in wanting the Eaton's building to become a heritage site, I think in many ways as a government there is an onus on you to be not only forthright but to try to pass on whatever the decision is to those people who are awaiting it. So I do not believe this is going to be a long drawn-out process.

I am certainly looking forward to either it is or it is not, unless the recommendations are more complex. They may be recommending all kinds of other options. As I mentioned previously, the Grill Room and the Wall of Honour, the Timothy Eaton statue, all of those items are part of showing respect to (1) the Eaton family, (2) the memories that many people, many Manitobans have, that went into Eaton's.

I should say that the proponents themselves recognize and have stated right at the very beginning—and I certainly make note of the True North Project, having an open house, a public open house where they plan to share the plans as well as answer any questions with regard to this project and with regard to the entertainment

complex. They were doing the best they could to make it an open process where people, if they were opposed to the demolition of the Eaton's building, had an opportunity to have their say.

Through the City process the opponents of the demolition of Eaton's also have had an opportunity. I am very pleased to say that that has happened. One thing I certainly will look upon also is what has happened, and I would think anyone would take a look at what the City did, take a look at what has taken place maybe at the public open house, all of those forums which have already taken place, open forums.

As the Member for River Heights mentioned, is this going to have public input from Manitoba? I believe that there has been plenty of input from Manitobans into this particular project.

Mr. Chairperson: Time being 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 25, 2001

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