



**Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

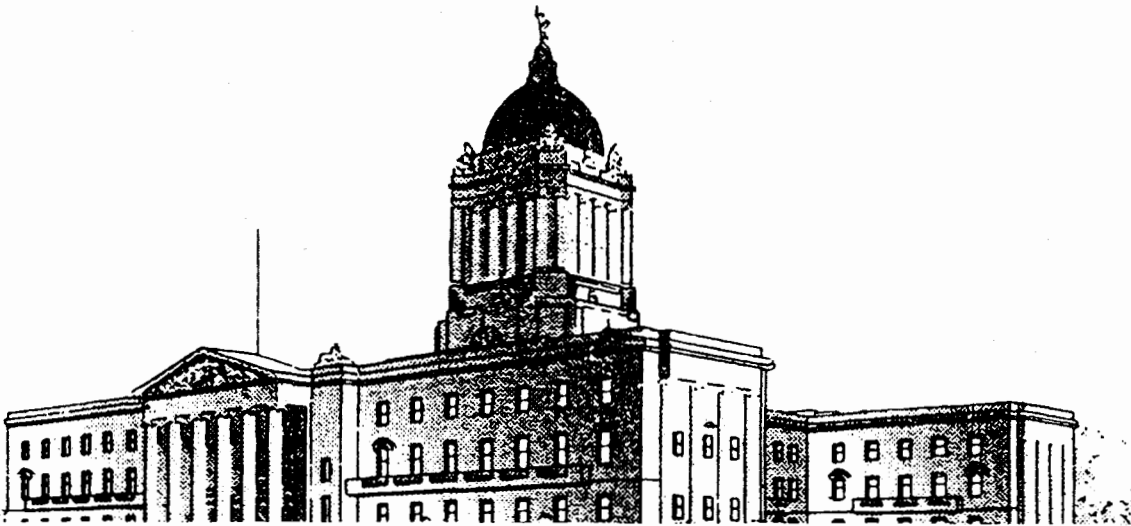
**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



**Vol. LII No. 67A - 10 a.m., Thursday, July 18, 2002**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	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.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
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

Thursday, July 18, 2002

**The House met at 10 a.m.**

**PRAYERS**

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), that the House resolve into Committee of Supply.

*Motion agreed to.*

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY  
(Concurrent Sections)**

**ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN  
AFFAIRS**

\* (10:00)

**Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg):** Good morning. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

It was agreed at the last sitting of this committee that consideration of this department would be done in a global fashion. The floor is now open for questions. I think the minister was speaking as we closed House yesterday at six o'clock. The floor to the minister.

**Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** Mr. Chair, as we left off last night, I believe the question from my colleague was about personal care homes.

This being the primary responsibility of the federal government, as my colleague will know, the federal government had placed a moratorium on personal care homes on reserves for a number of years and just recently lifted that moratorium. The result has been a further demand by many

First Nations communities throughout the province of Manitoba, especially those in remote locations have recently made inquiries to our Government. Where the Government of Manitoba plays a role in this is that we are licensing many of these personal care homes to the various levels as other personal care homes are run in the province of Manitoba.

The need is definitely great as the population of the Aboriginal community continues to get older. Our preference would be, I suppose, to have many of the Aboriginal elders in their home communities within distance of their loved ones, as opposed to having them placed in personal care homes far away from home and away from familiar surroundings. Our efforts will continue as a provincial government with the federal government to continue working on that.

The most recent initiative has been with the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, otherwise known as Nelson House, where the provincial government has recently agreed to license the personal care home in that community. It has been through many years of effort on the part of the community in lobbying with the federal government and, to some degree, with the provincial government that they were able to determine that a personal care home is a requirement in their community.

Many communities, Sagkeeng First Nation in my colleague's constituency, of course, is in need of upgrades to their personal care home and probably a realignment of their current designation as to the level of care that they provide for our elders. The work will continue. I want to assure my colleague that the provincial government is going to be supportive to the best way we know how and to the extent of our jurisdiction with respect to personal care homes that are much needed in many of our communities throughout the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** I, too, have concerns about Aboriginals living in Aboriginal communities staying within their

Aboriginal community within their own nursing home. My concern, as I said, is as a result of several phone calls that I received from people who work in the Sagkeeng First Nation personal care home.

As you state that the Province is now in the process of licensing those personal care homes and my concern is that, knowing the facility as I do in Sagkeeng First Nation and the qualifications of the people who work there, they probably will not meet licensing standards. Does the minister have any plans with respect to relaxing those licensing standards so that the personal care home is not in fact shut down until a new personal care home is built or until staffing get the proper qualifications to run that nursing home?

**Mr. Robinson:** Before I respond directly to the question posed by my colleague, allow me to introduce Jeff Gordon, who has joined us this morning. He is the director of Program Planning and Development Services with the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

On the personal care home issue in the community of the Sagkeeng First Nation, we have also been made aware of the situation there, and I believe that the Member for Lac du Bonnet is correct that we do have to as a provincial government relax some of the requirements that have been called for by the provincial government. It is an issue that I will have to bring up with the minister directly responsible for this, the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), so I will raise that issue with him and I will notify the Member for Lac du Bonnet by a letter accordingly.

**Mr. Hawranik:** One of my constituents who is in Powerview, Mr. Raymond Grand [*phonetic*], who is a contractor, a few years ago contracted with Rea Gold in Bissett, which, of course, is a northern community. He did some work in a trailer park on Crown land in Bissett. To allow a trailer park to be built, he did some landscaping, he did some road building and sewer and water infrastructure on Crown land.

Rea Gold did not pay him. He is still owed about \$24,000. Yet the land on which that trailer court was built is still Crown land. The Province,

in fact, is renting spots in that trailer court for \$120 a month.

Can the minister, on behalf of my constituent, intervene and determine whether or not he can be paid for work that was done to that land to build that trailer court and to really enrich the province, in terms of the infrastructure that is there?

\* (10:10)

**Mr. Robinson:** As far as I understand it this was work done for the mine company Rea Gold, that was in existence in the community of Bissett at the time. Unfortunately, no debt is owed by the Crown. However, realizing the circumstances of the individual who lives in Powerview, as I understand it, I will be asking our officials to investigate the matter more. If indeed there is any way of assisting this gentleman we will definitely do our best.

As in the previous response I made to the member, I will respond to him by letter, upon further investigation by our officials on this issue.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Just a brief comment with respect to that matter, I just wanted to make it clear on the record that, yes, it was done for Rea Gold, but in fact the improvements were done to Crown land and Crown land still remains with the Province. So, in effect, the Province has benefited from the work he has done. Since the Province is in fact renting out this land and making a profit on that land they maybe should share in some responsibility for payment of that bill.

**Mr. Robinson:** As I understand it, the said individual is currently considering taking the matter before the courts. Nevertheless I will be asking our officials to investigate the matter. As I previously said, we will see where there may be some obligations owed by the Province of Manitoba and we will act accordingly and advise the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Of concern to me is the price of milk in northern Aboriginal reserves and of course

northern communities. We all know milk is a requirement for children growing up in any community. From what I understand, the price of milk on some Aboriginal reserves is much higher than the price of soft drinks and alcoholic beverages; it does not make a lot of sense.

Are there any plans by the minister to control the price of milk on Aboriginal reserves in the province?

**Mr. Robinson:** I do agree with the member. The price of food is something I have always advocated, including staples such as milk, is definitely a huge requirement in many of our northern communities.

The Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) has been at the front on this issue. On the issue of milk itself he has been on the front end on behalf of the Government of Manitoba, where he has introduced a program of affordable milk and affordable milk product which has a longer shelf life than other products. I cannot off the top of my head recall what the acronym is for the product. Recently a partnership has been arranged with companies like Safeway to enable the shipping of this product to northern food stores to allow accessibility to communities and the members in north communities to buy affordable products such as milk.

However, the further details will be made available when the Department of Family Services and Housing have the opportunity to present their Estimates in this process, and I would advise the member that perhaps at that time he could pose his same question to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale).

Not for a moment do I want to give the appearance that we are not interested. Definitely, our department is looking at different ways that we can develop partnerships, not only with the federal government, but perhaps with the private sector, in having the price of milk and other food products more easily accessible to communities that are particularly in remote locations of this province. So we will continue with that effort, and, as in all other areas of efforts by the Government, we will certainly advise to the best way

we know how about some of these initiatives that are currently underway.

I might add there was a committee established to look at this issue on food price and nutrition, and we are currently the lead on this working group. I will advise the member and all other members of the Legislature on the particular issues that are faced by northern Manitoba residents.

I know my colleague the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) represents a constituency which has many remote communities, including some of the communities the furthest north in Manitoba, Tadoule Lake, Lac Brochet and other communities. It is unacceptable the price of food and the price of milk that these people have to pay in many of the communities. Of course, I represent some of those communities as well, including places like Shamattawa and the Island Lake communities and Gods River, Gods Lake Narrows, Oxford House, so we must make every effort to ensure that these people who live in these remote communities have accessibility to good nutritional food, not only for themselves, but definitely for the younger people, the children, who rely on these in order to develop healthier communities.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I note that the minister had provided to the House a ministerial statement on May 7 of this year regarding the Camperville water treatment plant. At that time, we thanked him for his statement because it gave us some information and certainly told us what was happening in the community of Camperville because of the loss of their water treatment plant. I think he took appropriate steps to alleviate that situation somewhat until that plant was repaired or replaced.

Of concern, of course, to me is the response from the Camperville fire department. I understand that they in fact do not have proper equipment for firefighting in that community. I wonder if the minister can give us some further information with regard to the kinds of equipment, fire equipment, that they do have and the age of the fire equipment and so on.

\* (10:20)

**Mr. Robinson:** We are working with the community of Camperville. It is an ongoing effort on our part, and we are definitely trying to upgrade many requirements in the community. One of the things that we are attempting to do, of course, is—the applications for 27 projects from something like 19 communities were submitted to the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. Water and waste infrastructure projects have begun at the community of Camperville in addition to Duck Bay and Cormorant. Others will proceed when partners in financing are found. These additional projects include the Waterhen-Pikwitonei water plants, Wabowden and Hollow Water joint wastewater disposal site, which includes as well the community of Manigotagan and Seymourville and a disposal site at Easterville.

I did not have an opportunity, I believe, to talk about these things in any great detail last night in my introductory remarks, but we have a total of 41 capital projects with a value of over \$3 million that have been identified for delivery in this fiscal year on to 2003. The major projects include wastewater treatment plants in Easterville, Pelican Rapids, Berens River, Seymourville, Duck Bay and Manigotagan. I did mention this last night, now that my recollection serves me better, with respect to the Manigotagan fire truck replacement. A similar initiative is underway in Camperville where the department has been working with the community leadership in replacing the outdated fire truck that exists in the community currently, and efforts are being made to correct the situation and ensure that proper safeguards are in place if indeed hopefully not an incident that we experienced in Camperville should occur again. Every effort is being made by the department that I am responsible for and ensuring that this does not happen.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I understand from the interim mayor of the Camperville community council that, in fact, money was allocated last year in the budget of Northern Affairs for the replacement of their fire truck. Can the minister assure us, assure myself and assure the community that that fire truck will be replaced this year?

**Mr. Robinson:** Well, I thank the member for raising this matter because Camperville was an area that did have some administrative problems

prior, and that is why there is an interim mayor and council. One of the reasons that led to the dismissal, I believe, or the resignation of the previous mayor and council was because of matters like that, that there was not the proper management of certain administrative requirements of the community and this department. Our department is working with the newly elected mayor and council, and certainly a priority is the issue of the fire truck and other much-needed services that are required in the community.

So the work is ongoing, and I wish that I could provide my colleague with a more appropriate answer, but I just want to assure him that the matter has been raised with our department. Our department took the appropriate action. An auditor has been working with the community and ensuring that this is one of the first times that this has occurred in our time, both with this Government and with the previous government where a community was unfortunately put in a situation financially as it was in Camperville. Measures are being taken at the current time to ensure that this matter or issues like this should not happen again.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Is there any provision in this year's budget for replacing that fire truck for Camperville in this year?

**Mr. Robinson:** I am advised by staff that, unfortunately, there is no money within this year's capital budget for the community of Camperville, but new and innovative approaches are being considered by department officials together with the community. The community has a responsibility in this for their residents, as well as the leadership in that community. There is definitely going to be a requirement that a partnership arrangement is developed with the community, and the community has been asked to come up with certain ideas as well.

We are trying to be innovative in our approach within government, and perhaps leasing a vehicle is probably the best method as opposed to an outright purchase of a fire truck which is a tremendous cost. But, through the leased method, I believe that this would go a long way in addressing the requirements of a fire truck in the community. That is one of the

options being considered by the department with respect to giving some feeling of safety for the community members that live in Camperville.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I understand that Cross Lake is the only community that has not settled under the Northern Flood Agreement. Can the minister outline some of the issues that are still outstanding and a possible time frame for settlement of that dispute?

**Mr. Robinson:** The member will know that on December 15, 2000, I stood up in the Manitoba Legislature and declared our Government's recognition of the Northern Flood Agreement as a modern-day treaty as recommended by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. During that time, during the making of that statement, I also issued a number of initiatives that our Government was involved with in addressing some of these outstanding issues that exist in the Cross Lake community. We are moving on several fronts with Cross Lake. I could itemize many of the initiatives that have been undertaken by the Manitoba government, Manitoba Hydro and the federal government.

Certainly, one of the things that we began working on was through the Steering Circle initiative that was developed in 1998, and it was an arrangement that was agreed to by then Minister of Native and Northern Affairs, as the department was known then, Mr. Newman, David Newman, was the four-party process that included the federal government, provincial government, Manitoba Hydro and the First Nation of Cross Lake.

Unfortunately, the federal government felt that this was not achieving the goals that it could be on behalf of the residents and the citizens of Cross Lake. So what then became of that is a letter from the federal government to the community of Cross Lake indicating to the community that they were no longer going to be involved in the four-party process because they felt it was a waste of time, I suppose, to find, for a lack of better words. Further, the federal government's decision has been to look at more project-driven initiatives in the community with respect to achieving positive results for the federal government and for the people who live in the community.

\* (10:30)

As the member knows, we are proceeding with the community council side of Cross Lake on road upgrades, the sewer and water initiatives that are occurring there. As well, he will have noted, in my opening remarks yesterday, that we have named a section of road in the community as the Ethel McLeod Drive, based on the recognition afforded the late Mrs. McLeod by The Fur Institute of Canada by being awarded the Jim Bourque Award as trapper of the year, posthumously.

We have been frustrated, to a large degree, by the reluctance of Cross Lake on many initiatives. It appears that every effort that has been made by the governments, both the federal government and our Government, and of course, Manitoba Hydro, it appears that lawyers are driving in high-priced consultants who have no interest in the betterment of the citizens of Cross Lake and the bread-and-butter issues that they have to face on a regular basis. So our Government has been frustrated by the stalling tactics, I might describe them as, that have been put forth by many non-Aboriginal consultants and high-priced lawyers that have no idea about the Aboriginal reality and what it is like to live on a reserve and the challenges that are faced by that particular community.

Certainly, one of the discussions that we held, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) who represents the area as an MLA, one of the initial discussions we had in late 1999 with the current Chief John Miswagon was that he wanted to move on several fronts. We agreed to moving on those areas that he wanted to move on, including the mining opportunities for titanium that exists and continues to exist in the community, the building of a bridge, the Netnak Bridge, which is ongoing, as I reported yesterday, and that work is currently underway. That will bring the community and connect it with the remainder of the province. So the work is ongoing on that front.

The other issues that we are currently working on is the frontline work with the trappers in trying to deal with the issues that they have. We have, I think, to the best of our ability—and I know that my predecessors in the previous

government were also frustrated with the lack of progress that appeared to be there with our dealings with the community of Cross Lake. I think that, if the community expressed some good will and progress-driven ideas, we would be further along.

I wish I could report something positive on what is going on in Cross Lake. It is positive in a lot of ways. However, I wish it could be more positive with respect to bringing down the unemployment numbers that exist in the community, the socioeconomic problems that are faced, the high number of suicides that exist in the community, and we are trying to continue the work.

The bridge itself in Cross Lake is a \$20-million project. I described some of the work that we are doing on internal roads and the construction of a new lagoon. That is going to cost approximately \$3.7 million on the road repairs alone. The new sewage treatment plant will be worth in the neighbourhood of \$1.3 million for this fiscal year.

Other issues that we have been talking about is supporting the Aboriginal summer games that were held there in the year 2001. The federal government's position, having described previously their withdrawal from the four-party process was that the federal government, as stated in their letter to us, they will continue to meet and uphold the existing obligations under the Northern Flood Agreement and have those obligations delivered on a proposal-driven approach. The Province of Manitoba will do likewise on that initiative.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I note in your response you again mentioned Ethel McLeod. I thank you for the information that you gave to me before you presented that award a few weeks ago in Cross Lake. I had the opportunity to go up there but unfortunately was not able to do so.

I note from some of the materials you provided to me that she will be remembered for her love of nature, her spirituality and her generosity. She lived a very full life, something that Aboriginals can all be proud of. In fact, she was legendary as a trapper. I can tell you that my father, having been born in Manitoba in 1915,

also trapped for a living for many years before he worked for the railway.

In my experience as a person growing up in the community of Whitemouth, I also trapped. So I know the hardships, the difficulties and the hard work that is involved with trapping. I do not trap anymore, of course, but I certainly did until I was about 25 years of age. It provided extra income for our family. *[interjection]* So only five years ago.

So I can understand the community being very proud of her accomplishments and what she has done at such a late age, in fact, showing up many of the men in the community and how they could trap as well.

You mentioned the titanium deposit in Cross Lake. I understand it is a large deposit. It is a deposit that can be mined. In fact, if it is developed, it means a potential 1100 jobs in your community. I know that you are concerned. In fact, I understand that is your community and there is a high unemployment rate in that community as you mentioned.

What progress is being made with respect to the development of that titanium site, and is there any end in sight in terms of having that deposit developed and creating those jobs for your community?

**Mr. Robinson:** At one point there was a potential of creating 500 jobs with the proposed titanium mine at Cross Lake. I just want to make my colleague aware that the discussion on this matter is ongoing. I know that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines will further elaborate on this when her time comes up to provide her department's expenditures for consideration by members of this House.

Just by way of a brief update, in 1983 the Cross Lake First Nation identified lands in the vicinity of what is known as Pipestone Lake. They proposed these as compensation lands. About 10 years after that, in 1993, Alan Paupanikis, a member of the Cross Lake First Nation, staked out 12 mining claims registered under the Cross Lake Mineral Exploration company.



As these claims were in the Cross Lake hold area, the policy of energy and mines at that time was to allow only the First Nations to stake claims for their own use. I believe the same policy still applies. The Cross Lake Mineral Exploration was a company formed to hold the claims as the First Nations cannot hold a claim.

Following the registration of the claims, the CLME, which is the Cross Lake Mineral Exploration, entered into an agreement with Gossin Resources, whereby Gossin obtained an interest in the Tiffany claims. This agreement was renegotiated in 1996 and was ratified by the First Nation in August 1996.

Mr. Minister, the work on the development of the Tiffany mine claim has been ongoing. Gossin Resources have had favorable results from studies that have been occurring at the site. There are apparently four other sites for similar development in the world. Those are Australia, India, South America and the United States.

Cross Lake has maintained their position that the mine land must be transferred to reserve status and has suggested that the province buy out the third-party interest in the land. That is something that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) would have more details about because she has been dealing with this issue for quite some time. She realizes the opportunity that does exist, not only in terms of the possibility for jobs, economic prosperity for the community but indeed perhaps a renewed sense of hope and a purpose in life by the citizens of Cross Lake, which is my hope as well.

I know others would be also given opportunities. The entire province would benefit if there was some movement. A further update would be best provided by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines who has been working on this issue more intently than our department has. However, our department will continue to work with the First Nations community and the community council in developing options related to opportunities that exist in that particular industry. Ultimately, our Government will be made aware of that on any movement. We will provide further details to members of this Legislative Assembly on any possible movement that may occur with respect to the

opportunities that do exist there. I just want to advise my colleague that the opportunities continue to exist in Cross Lake. We hold out hope that perhaps the interest will be developed before that is lost into other interests by development companies who may see that there is too much political infighting within that area and move their concentration to other areas of the world. As I say, there are very few areas, to my understanding, that have deposits of that number or to that amount aside from those countries that I indicated earlier.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Minister, I understand that on December 20 of 2000 you appointed John McKay as one of the members of the board of directors of the Community Economic Development Fund for a period of two years. Is he still a member of that board?

**Mr. Robinson:** Before the member asks me the question, I was troubled by Mr. McKay's proclamation and misguided letter, I suppose, that he sent to businesses in the city of Winnipeg with respect to a wedding social that he and his wife-to-be were having in Winnipeg a few weeks back. It was reported in the *Free Press* that my name was used in the letter that was distributed to businesses that I would be making an appearance at this. Nowhere in the letter, the form letter that was distributed to companies, did it say that it was a wedding social. In fact, it was regarded as a social celebration, I believe was the terminology used in the letter.

\* (10:40)

I was disappointed with Mr. McKay and how he tried to use other people's names in what I felt was personal gain for him. Equally, the Manitoba Métis Federation was disappointed by the actions of the said individual. Therefore, I called Mr. McKay, and I said that the words that he used in the letter that was sent to companies and businesses in Manitoba were inappropriate, and we felt that he should have been very clear in his letter that, in fact, it was for a wedding social. I asked Mr. McKay for his resignation, which he provided. Mr. McKay has now resigned from the CEDF board and has been replaced by another individual from the community of Gillam, a gentleman by the name of Robert Barbe. I have a lot of confidence in Mr.

Barbe, but I want to just get ahead of my colleague. I know where this question is going, but I asked immediately for Mr. McKay's resignation, which I received. Mr. McKay has been removed from that board.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I have a concern in Sagkeeng First Nation, which, of course, is in my constituency, in terms of the water supply in Sagkeeng First Nation. The water supply intake is apparently downstream from the Tembec pulp and paper mill and in fact downstream from the discharge stream of the Pine Falls lagoon. As we all know, lagoons do get flushed out periodically. The water intake for Sagkeeng is downstream of that lagoon.

What further complicates this matter is—well, first of all, there is a boil water advisory issued in Great Falls which is upstream of the Sagkeeng First Nation on the Winnipeg River. Several of the residents in that area, over the past number of months, have been testing their water, and their water quality, it leaves much to be desired as 200 to 300 parts per million coliform in some of the samples, particularly those who take the water from the river. I am told that probably 95 percent of people living in that area receive their water directly from the river because it is difficult to obtain water from wells in that area. It is not just Sagkeeng First Nation that I am concerned about. It is also Pine Falls, Powerview, Great Falls, Silver Falls and all those communities in between, including St. George. What I have been attempting to do is to try to get all those communities together and just in fact, beginning at this point, to getting them to talk together to try to establish some kind of a water system for that whole area, not just Sagkeeng First Nation, but also Pine Falls, Powerview and all the other communities in between because, when one drives along PTH No. 11, you almost do not notice any difference in between the communities. It is quite developed in between the communities, and they all require a new water system.

Now, the Pine Falls, Powerview, St. George, Silver Falls, Great Falls area has applied for a federal infrastructure grant to replace their water system, and so far they have been refused. I believe, as well, that the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs should be participating

in this process to have a co-ordinated approach, to have a water system for the entire area, not just for the communities outside of Sagkeeng First Nation, but to assist us in trying to get infrastructure grants to improve the water system in that whole area. I am wondering whether or not the minister is aware of this problem and, if he is, whether he would be willing to assist my efforts in trying to improve the water situation for that entire area.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Minister, I am quite aware of the water problems that have been experienced in Sagkeeng over the last several years. Certainly, when I represented the area prior to redistribution, it was an issue back then. It continues to be.

I had the opportunity of sitting down with residents from the north shore just very recently, including people like Wilfred Swampy and other people from the north shore, who made me aware of the problem that does exist in the community and the health hazard that the community feels exists in the community as a result of the area that they are in. Upon receipt of that information, I contacted the chief medical officer's office about that. An investigation was carried out, and, to the best of my knowledge, it was deemed that the water had to have the boil order, as the member recommended, call on for the community members. The Department of Health has monitored this issue for a number of years. I do not want to offload here. Since the matter falls with the federal government and particularly the Health Canada Department, our Government is prepared to work with, not only the member, but also the communities that he described, and certainly our Government will take the lead role in finding the appropriate people in identifying this problem because that is one thing our Government is very concerned about. That is an area that we need to address, and that is safe water, drinking water, particularly for the residents that he described, including Powerview, Pine Falls and the Sagkeeng First Nation itself and upstream and downstream from the mill that does exist.

I want to assure my colleague that we will make every effort to ensure that we have some representation, and I will raise this matter with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms.

Friesen), whose department is primarily responsible on this matter, and the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), to some degree, as well. So I will raise these matters with those ministers and assure my colleague that we will act on this issue, and we will definitely work with the leaders of those communities and others to ensure that this issue is addressed in an appropriate way.

\* (10:50)

**Mr. Hawranik:** I have a question in regard to First Nations gaming and First Nations casinos. I understand there are four remaining projects still to be built, and one of which is close to my constituency being the Brokenhead First Nation. I am wondering if you can provide me with an update as to the status of that particular project, as well as the status of the remaining projects that need to be completed and a report as to how the existing casinos are progressing and doing.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Minister, as the member knows, the casino in The Pas opened in February of this year at OCN. The others are in various stages of development. The Nelson House proposal, of course, we are all aware of what occurred there with the town of Thompson, so that initiative has been put aside for the time being. Swan Lake was another controversial initiative that occurred.

With respect to the possibility of the next casino opening up in Manitoba, it would have to be, in my estimation, Sioux Valley, because Sioux Valley has done a tremendous amount of work in identifying investors. It has done some work as well on locations. It was one of the only proposals that the committee that was struck considered that had a backup site in addition to their main location. It also contained the R.M. of Sifton in their proposal. So they are currently dealing with that issue at an appropriate pace, I think.

With respect to Brokenhead, to the best of my knowledge, they have not yet identified investors on how they can proceed with the project in Brokenhead. There are some outstanding issues, to the best of my knowledge, that do exist there. It is not only the community of Brokenhead but indeed a consortium of other

communities that are involved in the initiative at Brokenhead. So the work there is going to take some time.

With respect to time frames, it would appear now that we are down to probably three locations that we can potentially look at now. The Government picked up this project on the basis of the Bostrom Report, and it was based on a report that my deputy minister did which recommended the development of up to five casinos in the province of Manitoba; not five now and five later, but up to five is what we can handle and what was identified as being a possibility in the province of Manitoba.

So if, indeed, within the next period of time these are the communities that I just talked about that were the selected sites but do not have the ability to proceed, then we will have to be more innovative if there is indeed going to be a next round. Perhaps there will not be. I cannot commit my Government to saying that we will have another round of casinos at this point in time. We should give these communities, however, every opportunity to complete the projects that they set out to do and give them every opportunity to succeed.

The Pas OCN casino, Aseneskak Casino, for example, has created over 100 jobs in the community of OCN and The Pas and surrounding areas. That brings a sense of pride to the community. Some people have their feelings about gambling. We all have our personal feelings about certain things. Some view it as a sinful operation, but if you look on the positive end of this initiative, it does provide jobs; it does provide opportunities; it does provide a renewed sense of hope in a family unit for a person to be able to go out and earn a living during the course of the day.

Prior to the casino being developed in The Pas, these jobs were not available in that area, so I think that credit has to go to the Aseneskak consortium who have developed this casino that is now operating on Opaskwayak Cree Nation. We want to ensure and it is on that basis that our Government moved, that we saw the long-term benefits of gaming with the development of a casino that is providing jobs, jobs that were not there prior. We want to ensure that these

communities that have embarked upon the casino initiatives are given every opportunity to succeed.

With respect to time frames, I believe that the minister responsible for gaming, the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) will be better able to provide answers on time frames, when we expect the other communities to open their doors, if you will. I serve on a subcommittee of Cabinet with the Minister of Transportation and Government Services on ensuring that these casino initiatives do succeed.

We, of course, Mr. Chair, are hopeful they will, because, no doubt, the naysayers will be bashing not only our Government but indeed other people for the failure of these casinos. So we want, I think all of us here are to a degree in favour of economic development, certainly on First Nations communities. I believe we are all agreed on that. We want these projects to succeed, and we have every hope that they will.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Have you received any financial reports with respect to the income expense statements of The Pas casino to date? If you have, can you provide me with a report as to how it has been doing as compared to what it was projected to do?

**Mr. Robinson:** I do not have any reports that have been provided to our Government, but certainly I think that regular reporting procedures are occurring with Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, as an example, and the Gaming Commission will no doubt have an annual report provided to them. It has only been since February that the casino opened, so I would anticipate that the reports will be provided. If anything aside from that should become available that we are provided with, I will no doubt share it with my colleague.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Is the minister planning on introducing any legislation this session?

**Mr. Robinson:** Not at the current time. One of the areas that we do want to move on introducing some legislation, it will not be this summer. It will occur probably in the fall, as further work is required on The Northern Affairs Act,

and that will be the piece of legislation that will be introduced in the House, if any, in the fall.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I know that the Province of Saskatchewan has moved in terms of introducing legislation for Métis, and there has been talk about the Province of Manitoba introducing similar legislation.

Can you comment on that as to whether or not you will be introducing legislation in that respect and the time frame within which you expect to introduce it?

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Chair, unfortunately, drafters for legislation like this are not available at the current time. So, if any legislation is proposed, it will come in the fall session of the Manitoba Legislature, and that will be on The Northern Affairs Act in itself.

With respect to the recognition of Métis people in the specific legislation, that is under consideration right now. A Métis recognition act perhaps is what we have to consider in the province of Manitoba to recognize the unique status of Métis people in this province.

Also, it has been proposed to me by others in the community that we ought to consider the designation of June 21 as a day of recognizing the contribution of Aboriginal people to the development of this country. That perhaps is something that we can work on together in the coming time that we have and will be serving together in this Legislature. Certainly a recognition act of June 21 is a consideration as well, but much work has to be done with respect to acknowledging that day as a day of recognizing Aboriginal people.

I will keep my colleague up to date, Mr. Chairperson, on any consideration of any legislation that this department will be introducing.

**Mr. Hawranik:** An issue that is of concern to my constituency, and I think the minister's as well, is the road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg because I believe that that opens up opportunities for mineral exploration, harvesting of forests, more recreational opportunities and

more jobs in those areas. I know that the process is progressing in the sense that you have, I see, appointed Phil Fontaine as a member of the East Side Lake Winnipeg Round Table.

I would like to hear a report as to the progress of that road and the progress of that round table with respect to sustainability.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Chairperson, we do have some interest in this, as well, not only because I represent much of the area that my colleague describes, but there are several initiatives underway currently. Right now there is a request for proposals on an engineering study. At the moment, there is a study going on on several fronts, not only on the environmental side, but definitely on the matter with respect to whether or not the communities want it.

We have the round table initiative which is chaired by Phil Fontaine, former national leader of the Assembly of First Nations who has been designated by our Government to do some work on that, along with the stakeholders, not only from the business community, but also people from the community level, people from Manitoba Hydro, the environmentalists that have a concern of this.

I think that this initiative is required in order—we were fractured prior because, when we first considered this, the previous government had not considered it to any great degree, but when our Government began in 1999, our governing of this province began in 1999, and efforts became more earnest in how we were going to address the east side initiative, much consideration was given, including meetings that we had with the chiefs and other stakeholders with respect to development on the east side.

What we have determined is that, because of the global warming situation we are faced with in this country, the low life, or the shortened life span of the winter road systems, it became more and more evident, and it is still evident that we need an all-weather road system on the east side of Manitoba. It is not only the road development that we are concerned about, but also the economic prosperity of the people who live on the east side.

Currently, our Government is involved, and our department is a significant player with respect to finding federal partners, as one example, to cost share some of the initiatives. Certainly, we as a provincial government would never be able to burden or be saddled with the burden of bearing the costs of all the requirements on developing the east side. We need the federal government, we need the private sector, we need public utilities like Manitoba Hydro to be a player in this, and, if indeed there is a consideration for an export sales initiative by Hydro and a corridor is required and the east side is being considered for that, definitely, that will be part of the overall planning.

So, Mr. Chairperson, we are continuing with the work, and, very simply put, the requests for proposals on the engineering study is ongoing. The seeking out of federal cost-sharing dollars is being sought out. The educational and employment opportunities that will occur if the east side is developed further is also something that is under active consideration. The round table is ongoing, which is comprised of many people that have an interest in that initiative, including the ones I described, chaired by Phil Fontaine. That work is ongoing, and we anticipate positive results. That is the latest I can report at this time on developments with respect to the east side.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I participated in the Estimates of Conservation previous to this, and of concern to me is the fish stocks in the province of Manitoba. Of course, we all know that Aboriginals have treaty rights in terms of their right to fish for food, which was confirmed, not only by the treaties, but, of course, by the Supreme Court of Canada, and no one disputes that. They certainly have the right to fish for food.

On the other side of that is the fact that we have to ensure that fish stocks are sustainable because, if we do not look after our fish stocks, there will not be any fish for Aboriginals to fish for. Of concern was, of course, the actions of the Aboriginal communities in Lake Dauphin and Lake of the Prairies this past spring. As I say, we have to ensure that fish stocks are sustainable, and there has to be fish stocks for, not only

Aboriginals, but sport fishers and commercial fishers.

Of concern to me were the comments by the Minister of Conservation during those Estimates that he was consulting with the Aboriginal community, but he did not seem to want to consult with sports fishers and commercial fishers.

I would like to ask of you what your position is with respect to Aboriginal fishing.

**Mr. Robinson:** My personal position has always been to seek out consensus on matters like this with all stakeholders, whether they be non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal. I certainly cannot speak for my colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin). I was not here for all of the Estimates time he was here for, but certainly I think he has done some positive things, including the Aboriginal Resource Council which he developed which advises him on matters like this.

I believe the member is absolutely right that we have to consider the long-term sustainability of these. That includes hunting as well. I know of no other people than Aboriginal people who have a better sense of this. They are very concerned about some of the slams that Aboriginal people, they themselves have taken in the media as a result of fearmongering by others in society who have decided Aboriginal people are an easy target whenever a situation like this should arise. I agree with my colleague, the matter at Lake Dauphin and Lake of the Prairies indeed became an item of concern for all of us when this matter first came up.

We are moving in the area of co-management. Dialogue has been held with the West Region Tribal Council and other players, to my knowledge, not having been directly involved in this matter with respect to what my colleague, the Minister of Conservation, has done.

My personal position has always been to seek consensus on these very difficult issues we are faced with every once in a while. I think once we can get through the misunderstandings that occur every now and again we will be all better in society and perhaps in a better position

to co-exist, as we do with nature and the very things we are talking about, including fish stocks and the animals we hunt or trap for. If people can have an understanding about how those things are, how those things work, then we would be in a much better position than we are now, where it appears that only understanding exists.

Co-management, I believe, is the area we have to go. Certainly, I would have to agree understanding has to be developed. Perhaps, if our Government is not doing the appropriate job in creating better awareness and seeking consensus on these difficult issues, then I would expect the Opposition to point these out to us. If indeed we are failing in that regard, I would expect my colleague the Member for Lac du Bonnet to point this out to me.

\* (11:10)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. It is my understanding that Fisheries is not in this section of the Estimates. They have been covered in the Estimates of Conservation. So we have sort of covered this issue previously. I just thought I would point that out.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, it may be, but it is an Aboriginal issue as well. I believe I should be entitled to some answers from the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister in regard to that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I think I should ask: Is there leave for the committee to discuss Fisheries in this section of the Estimates?

**Mr. Robinson:** If I may, Mr. Chair, I believe we are just having a global discussion on some very basic issues, so I really have no problem with that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Right. Leave has been granted.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I have a question with regard to Clearwater Lake Provincial Park. Of course, it is a conservation issue, but it is an Aboriginal issue as well, as it involves the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement entered into with the Aboriginal community.

Under that framework agreement, Aboriginal land settlements can occur with respect to Crown land. It provides a clear process within which Aboriginal communities can select Crown land for treaty land entitlement.

With respect to Clearwater Lake Provincial Park the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement provides not for a transfer of park land to an Aboriginal community but it provides for co-management of provincial parks, as long as certain criteria are met.

What is your position with respect to the Opaskwayak First Nation community asking for land in Clearwater Lake Provincial Park under the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement? What is the position of the minister with respect to that?

**Mr. Robinson:** I know that dialogue is occurring right now with the Government of Manitoba, with the TLE committee and other parties, including OCN and the cottage owners at Clearwater Lake. I do not want to interfere in the dialogue that is occurring there. There are provisions within the TLE Framework Agreement to deal with this issue. I do not want to offer my own opinion about Clearwater Lake.

All I do know is that this was the traditional territory of the Opaskwayak people and that it was once used for hunting and fishing and ceremonial grounds according to my understanding and according to the elders that I have spoken with from that area. The framework agreement itself outlines principles to be used as guidelines in the selection and acquisition of land. Acquisition is undertaken on a willing buyer and a willing seller basis, so neither Canada nor Manitoba is really in a position to expropriate any land or interest in land. I know that there is a bit of an impasse at Clearwater Lake, and I know that the minister responsible made a statement in the House in response to a question by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) I believe this past week about the issue. I know that he has taken it under advisement, and he has extended the period of time in order for that initiative by the Opaskwayak Cree Nation to have more discussions and more dialogue with the people who are going to be directly affected, and I support that.

But there are mechanisms, and as I reported yesterday, our Government and our department particularly developed a handbook which is to be used for creating a better understanding about Treaty Land Entitlement. A process for partnership on economic development opportunities and Treaty Land Entitlement is described in detail. So there is a process in place, and I know the cottage owners in the Clearwater area of that area of the province are aware of this, and they should take the opportunity to have a discussion with the First Nation, which I am sure they will, because we cannot afford to have a public fight like this. I mean we all have to co-exist in this province, and we cannot have Aboriginals versus non-Aboriginals on issues like this and creating misunderstandings. So I am quite confident in my colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) in prolonging the process a little further and perhaps creating more understanding about the issue.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I just have a brief comment with respect to that because I feel that the issue is perhaps misunderstood. The framework agreement, in fact, outlines a process where you can have co-management of a provincial park. It does not provide for transferring ownership of a provincial park to an Aboriginal community under a treaty land process. It does not provide for that. So, in fact, the framework agreement is not being followed. Instead, what is happening, what appears to be happening is that the Province is moving to reduce the size of Clearwater Lake Provincial Park, to take provincial park land and now make it Crown land and then, after converting that provincial park land to Crown land, allowing the OCN to exercise their right under the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement.

That I feel is wrong because what we are doing, and I agree there is a connection between the Aboriginal land claim of OCN to that particular land but, in fact, part of that agreement allows for the OCN to co-manage it, not to own it, but to co-manage it with the Province. I think that is in place, in fact, for the Petroform site in the Whiteshell Provincial Park. That is no different. In fact, OCN does not have to ask for that land under the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement. It does not have to ask for ownership of that land but in fact could co-

manage it with the Province. That is what we object to because I feel that, if we do it with one park, it opens up land claims in other provincial parks, provincial parks like the Whiteshell Provincial Park, Bird's Hill Provincial Park and even Grand Beach. I think provincial parks should be for everyone's use, not for private use. There is a mechanism under the framework agreement for the OCN to co-manage it, not to own it but to co-manage it. I think this is the way they should proceed under that framework agreement.

**Mr. Robinson:** I am going to read Hansard in more detail about the comments made by my colleague. I want to study that. I want to respond to him without giving the appearance that I disagree with him or agree with him at the present time. I have to study this a little in greater detail because I do not know if we are actually in non-compliance with the agreement that was agreed to prior. The framework agreement is what we are talking about. I believe that we are falling within the framework agreement, but I want the opportunity to study the Hansard of our dialogue today. I am going to respond to my colleague by letter to further elaborate on my thoughts about the issue and, at the same time, with the Whiteshell matter that he brought up with the rock formations that do exist there. That is going to be a subject, I believe, as well, of a treaty land entitlement issue. There are some communities that are looking at that as part of their treaty land entitlement fulfillment. I just want to leave that issue for the time being and assure the member that I will be writing to him responding to the information that he has provided to us here.

\* (11:20)

I just want to say further that if there are any issues or matters in dispute that are not resolved by the parties or an entitlement First Nation, they can be referred to the Implementation Monitoring Committee. I did say that yesterday, but, in fact, this body has not been used that often and the process has been quite smooth in all other areas. Perhaps that should be a consideration in this matter if there is no positive progress made with respect to Clearwater Lake. I will respond on the other issue with my colleague by letter in the next little while.

**Mr. Hawranik:** You mentioned earlier that you have plans, perhaps within the fall session or perhaps a little later, to replace the existing Northern Affairs Act. That act has been in place since, I believe, 1972. Can you provide me with some information with respect to what needs to be changed in that act or whether it needs to be totally revised or whether there are just amendments that are planned?

**Mr. Robinson:** The act itself goes back to 1975. The last change that occurred was, I believe, in the 1988-1989 time frame. It is outdated to a large degree in certain respects. It is not that we are going to abolish the old one. We are going to pretty much update the current one that we have to conform with the times. There have been some new realities that have set in. Some of the communities, the over 50 communities that are governed by our act, as an example, do not even exist any more. I think that we have to bring things up to date, if you will.

On the details of the act itself, I cannot provide that at this current time because the work is pretty much in progress. We have heard from the communities on their thoughts about it. Their input has been sought. I can say that the results have been positive. We are considering that currently within the department, the feedback that we received from the communities. I will be in a better position, if indeed we are going to introduce legislation, to brief the member on what it contains.

I want to assure the member, as I did my previous critic, the honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) that, at any time, if there is an issue that should arise that requires our staff to brief the member, definitely that staff is always available to brief you on these matters. I will put out that offer at this time as well with respect to this matter.

**Mr. Hawranik:** The Sagkeeng First Nation, I understand, entered into a partnership agreement, or will be entering into a partnership agreement, with Tembec pulp and paper mill with respect to developing a sawmill in Pine Falls. Because of the trade war with the United States in terms of the softwood lumber issues, that project has been delayed.



Mr. Chairperson, could the minister advise what the status is of that partnership and whether or not he is aware of any information with respect to Sagkeeng's capability of carrying out their obligations with respect to the sawmill?

**Mr. Robinson:** Because of the softwood lumber dispute that is occurring in the United States, the initiative has been put on hold, to my understanding. The bands that are part of the consortium that is in the agreement with Tembec, or in that partnership arrangement with Tembec, are currently studying the issue a little further. Mr. Chair, further work is required, including equity requirements by the First Nations that are in this partnership with the Sagkeeng First Nation.

I cannot recall the number of First Nations that are involved in this partnership, but definitely Sagkeeng is not alone on this arrangement they have made with Tembec. Certainly, our support is there for the initiative. Financially, perhaps, we cannot contribute, but morally we can offer the support they require. There are certain aspects that our Government is involved with, with respect to forest licence allocations and so on, but because of the uncertainty of the industry itself with respect to softwood to the best of our knowledge it has been set back a little. Equity partners are also required in order for the project to proceed. We would have liked it had the project proceeded in a much quicker fashion because it does provide a lot of opportunities with respect to employment for Aboriginal people, particularly in that region.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Chairperson, I would be willing to go to a line-by-line discussion at this point.

**Mr. Chairperson:** All right. We will go line by line. We will turn to page 23 of the main Estimates book.

19.1. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Executive (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$642,400. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Hawranik:** What are the staff vacancy rates in the department?

**Mr. Robinson:** I am advised we are required to keep a 6% vacancy rate, as required by the

Government. The department itself is staffed by, roughly, 84.5 positions are contained within the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. That is not a huge number either, given we are responsible for 82 percent of the land mass of the province of Manitoba. So we are viewed sometimes as a government operating within a government. I just want to advise my colleague that a 6% vacancy rate applies.

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Do you feel the 6% vacancy rate will still allow you to continue services as they were before, as they existed prior to this budget?

**Mr. Robinson:** What we have done, Mr. Chairperson, since coming into office is we have made some restructuring moves. Not to any great degree, but I think with the current staffing, yes, we would always like to have more staff because of the requirements, not only on the Northern Affairs side of things but because of the many and complex Aboriginal issues that arise from day to day.

However, I think, within means and given the financial circumstances governments have to face in the modern day, we are able to do the job that is required of us. I must commend all the staff in our department for the hard work they put in every day because all of them are very required and all of them are very productive in the jobs they do, including the gentlemen that are with me this morning.

To make the answer a little shorter, we would like to have more, yes, we would, but with what we have we can do the job that is required of us.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister advise how much funding lapsed overall from last year?

**Mr. Robinson:** I am going to have to take that question under notice, and I will reply to the member by letter.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can you tell me some of the duties of your special assistant and the executive assistant, their qualifications and when they were hired?

**Mr. Robinson:** Currently, the executive assistant position is vacant for me. However, the special assistant is Lorraine Bear. She is a member of the Peguis First Nation. She is a former schoolteacher, took a break from that, came from a small business, brings a vast amount of experience to the job and advises me accordingly on some events that occur at the federal level.

She has done some work with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. She has done some work with the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. She is involved with the private sector in her own time, and she is well aware of the circumstances that First Nations particularly are faced with in Manitoba and in Canada. She has proven to be a very valuable asset to my office.

The position of executive assistant is currently vacant and will remain so for the balance of the summer. That is the only staff that I have within my office at the current time.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 1. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Executive (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$642,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$238,800.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I notice that in this Other Expenditures line is the travel expenses of the minister and his executive assistant and so on. Having been provided with information with respect to his travel expenses, I notice that his travel expenses are almost double what the next minister is allotted, the next minister being the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton).

Can the minister advise whether that is typical of any minister in the past? Has it been around the \$70,000 range in the past? Have other ministers travelled to that extent?

**Mr. Robinson:** I will provide a breakdown by letter to the member. As a MLA and representing a constituency as I do, Rupertsland, where I have no transportation system other than airplanes to get to my constituency, I am usually one of the members of this Assembly who has the biggest travel budget expenditures, if you will, because many of the communities that I have to fly to, it has to be done by charter aircraft.

With respect to the ministerial office, I can say that the requirements and the call for us and particularly in my role as the co-chair of the federal-provincial-territorial Aboriginal organizations forum right now, we are required to be in other areas of the province and in other areas of Canada on different occasions.

I do not know if this differs much from the previous ministers who were charged with this responsibility or not, and that is why we will provide the member with a breakdown of previous expenditures in this area over the last few years, and I will gladly provide that.

I know the member, if indeed he becomes a member of the government side—hopefully not right away—will come to realize that these requirements are becoming more and more demanding, and sometimes we can accommodate the needs of the people who call our office in order for us to be present at a certain location in other areas of Manitoba or in other areas of Canada.

But I could say that this particular portfolio, generally, because of the complexity of it and because of the uniqueness of it, is quite demanding with respect to the travel requirements. But I will provide the breakdown on travel expenditures over the last few years to the member at the earliest opportunity.

\* (11:40)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$238,800—pass.

2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (a) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$375,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$117,300.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I have a question with regard to this particular line. I notice that, from 2001-2002, it was \$126,700 and was substantially reduced in 2002-2003. Can you advise me why that was reduced? There is the same amount of staff. I am wondering why that line would have been reduced.

**Mr. Robinson:** All departments were expected to comply with the requirements of our

Government and some of the cost-saving measures we must take, and this is one the areas that we identified within our department that could take a bit of a hit. That is why the reduction.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 2.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$117,300—pass.

2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (b) Local Government Development (1) Programs/Operational Support (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$185,700—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$92,500—pass; (c) Community Operations \$8,017,500.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Chairperson, I notice that the budget is a little over \$8 million, and I am not sure what is in that budget category as to what is involved in that area.

**Mr. Robinson:** That line would reflect the requirements of the community councils to carry out the work that they have to do. So that is the expenditures required by community councils to carry out the work for their constituents and also their own governments within their own areas.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Does that involve any salaried employees in that budget?

**Mr. Robinson:** Yes, all the salaries of the community council employees, whether they are council clerks or recreation workers, public works staff, that is the line we are talking about, and that is where they receive their salary from.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 2.(b)(1)(c) Community Operations \$8,017,500—pass; (d) Regional Services \$498,500.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I see that there is a substantial reduction from one year to the next, and it involves a \$91,000 reduction, which is a 16% or 17% reduction. Why is there that reduction? What did they do to accomplish that reduction?

**Mr. Robinson:** It is again an area we thought we could save some money. In complying with the Government's overall agenda in trying to save some money, this is an area that we thought we could afford to lose money on, and this is what we went through in the Estimates process. Therefore, that is why the reduction as indicated.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read line 2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (b) Local Government Development (1) Programs/Operational Support (d) Regional Services \$498,500—pass; (e) Grants \$253,700. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister tell me where these grants go and for what purpose they are given?

**Mr. Robinson:** That is to allow the Northern Association of Community Councils to do the work that they have to do in maintaining an office in co-ordinating the activities of the over 50 communities under our act, and they are underfunded to a large degree as well. But they maintain an office in Winnipeg. They have a president, vice-presidents and an executive, and they also have a co-ordinating office located on Albert Street in Winnipeg. It is really an effective co-ordinating body in dealing with our Government. It is the representative organization of all the matters and the councillors that are under our Northern Affairs Act.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read line 2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (b) Local Government Development (1) Programs/Operational Support (e) Grants \$253,700—pass.

We will go on with 2.(b)(2) Northern Region (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$824,300. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Hawranik:** I note that the Salaries and Employee Benefits are for employees in the Northern Region. Can you tell me where these staff are located and what the current vacancy level is?

**Mr. Robinson:** We have two staff members in The Pas, one vacancy there. We have twelve staff members in Thompson, two vacancies. We also have a staff complement in Dauphin. But that is the staff complement with this particular line that we have in the Thompson office.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read 2.(b)(2) Northern Region (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$824,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$337,700—pass.

I will read 2.(b)(3) North Central Region (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$756,300. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Hawranik:** I notice that in the budget details, in this particular area there was a reduction of one Professional Technical staff. Can you tell me why there was that reduction, and with that reduction, does he think he can maintain the current level of services in that region?

**Mr. Robinson:** Again, in keeping with the wishes of the Government, we had to make some decisions. As I said at the outset of our Estimates process of this particular department, we have had to make some very hard decisions with respect to maintaining this department's expenditures. That was a reassignment within the department, and I cannot specifically tell the member where the position may have gone, but in complying we feel that we can do the job that is required of us with the current complement that we have.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read 2.(b)(3) North Central Region (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$756,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$269,300—pass.

2.(b) (4) Northern Affairs Fund (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$212,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$57,100.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I know that this other expenditures includes transportation expenditures, and I note that the transportation will be down by 25 percent. What has changed to merit that decrease in transportation budget, yet in other areas I see, in the budget, transportation has increased or stayed the same? So I am concerned about why that has come down 25 percent when in other areas it has in fact increased.

**Mr. Robinson:** Again, Mr. Chairperson, it is a cost-saving measure. Limiting the number of trips without bringing any undue pressure to any particular community, or undue hardship, we have had to make, including this one, decisions to ensure that we are still able to carry out the work that is required of our department and at the same time trying to follow the Government's guideline of trying to maintain the cost-saving

measures that we have to be a part of, as well as part of the overall government operations.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read line 2.(b)(4)(b) Other Expenditures \$57,100—pass.

2.(b)(5) Program Planning and Development Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$398,200.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I notice that there is a \$27,000 increase from one year to the other, and yet there are still six full-time positions that are maintained. There are no extra positions that were created in this department. I am wondering why there is such an increase in salaries being allocated in this department.

\* (11:50)

**Mr. Robinson:** When the reorganization of the department occurred, there was also a reclassification process. Therefore, the salaries fluctuated as they did to bring everybody in line. So that is why the reflection is noted here.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read 2.(b)(5) Program Planning and Development Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$398,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$100,900—pass.

2.(c) Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (1) Support Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$323,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$84,200—pass.

2.(c)(2) Agreements Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$489,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$140,600—pass; (c) Agreements Implementation \$1,355,000.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister tell me what is in here and how much is legal expenses and to which firms?

**Mr. Robinson:** That particular line is all Northern Flood Agreement-related expenses, and the only legal expenses that would be reflected in that line would be the Department of Justice.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read line 2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (c) Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (2) Agreements Management

(c) Agreements Implementation \$1,355,000—pass.

We will go on to the next line: 2.(c) (3) Policy and Strategic Initiatives (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$372,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$132,500—pass; (c) Aboriginal Development Programs \$2,293,300—pass; (d) Aboriginal Economic and Resource Development Fund \$1,400,000—pass; (e) Healthy Child Initiatives \$113,000—pass; (f) Partners for Careers \$200,000—pass.

We will read 2.(d) Communities Economic Development Fund \$1,514,900—pass.

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,916,300 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

*Resolution agreed to.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will go on with page 24, 19.3 Capital Grants (a) Northern Communities \$5,158,300—pass; (b) Community Access and Resource Roads \$235,000—pass.

Resolution 19.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,393,300 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Capital Grants, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

*Resolution agreed to.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The time being 12, I am interrupting proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of Routine Proceedings.

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

\* (10:10)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau)** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will now resume

consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

We are now currently considering item 3.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Chairman, it has been suggested that maybe we look at going broad-based again, and I would put that request forward, at least this morning.

I know I certainly was not here for the discussions that took place around Executive Support and the committee with the critic. So I would be prepared in his absence, at least this morning, to spend a few hours looking at some broader questions. I know I had started some of that yesterday, but I just have some more questions in regard to climatic issues, a number of those as well. Would that be a reasonable request?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** Is it the will of the committee to allow flexibility on questioning?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Mr. Chairman, we had come to an agreement with the critic that we would work line by line, but given that the member is covering for the critic, I guess we can do that as long as the member recognizes that in some cases the appropriate staff may not be here because they have not been notified because staff knows that we are on Executive Support. They always time their attendance at committee based on where we are in the Estimates process. So, if the member understands that, then let us proceed.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** Okay, it is the will of the committee to allow flexibility, so we shall proceed.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for that consideration. If I get too far away, stray too far away from a topic that we need more expertise in, please go ahead and let me know, but I think the areas that I want to look at this morning are probably pertinent when I look at the expertise that you have before you this morning. For myself and the quite capable staff

who are sitting here with us, I am sure that I will not have anything that will be stumping anyone here this morning. So, thank you very much, Madam Minister, for taking that into consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I know that my colleague from the Ste. Rose riding yesterday, Gladstone, the member for that area was asking some questions around, I believe, the issue of the elk. I will not go back to that. I will let him deal with that as he did yesterday. I know the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) had some questions around some of the issues of the risk management programs that perhaps Ottawa is looking at.

I guess just before I start on that—and I have a few more areas. There are questions that I wanted to ask the minister on that whole topic because there was a lot of concern amongst producers across the province as well.

Just as I left yesterday, I was discussing the issue of drought and that sort of thing in my region that I represent in Arthur-Virden in the southwest corner of the province. I had more discussions with producers in that area, with farmers in that area, last evening, and I just have to reiterate that concern again in regard to the kinds of situations that they are facing.

That region of Manitoba, as the minister well knows—it extends right up into her own area—has been very much in a state of flux. I will not say distress, because many people have been able to deal with the change in the Crow very adeptly, but it has thrown others into turmoil, to use that word. But those who have adapted and are adapting to it certainly are making changes in their operations, and those changes generally require an infusion of capital or an increased operating cost at the least that may take five to ten years to absorb in their operations.

Mr. Chairperson, when we are looking at the different decades of farmers who are out there, and I include myself as one of those who is in his fourth decade there, I would certainly say that it is very dependent on how long you have been farming as to your view on how you are going to proceed and how you are going to look at the future.

We are in a situation where I think farmers are trying to make as many adaptations in their operations as they can. I remarked to my wife as we drove to Winnipeg last weekend that, as we drove from our farm to Winnipeg, Manitoba is certainly becoming a very diversified province. I think a good deal of that is the entrepreneurship of our industry, and a good deal of that I think is also owed to our fine universities and schools that we have and an education process that is ongoing in Manitoba for the kinds of management needs that we need to continue to supply our young farmers with and some of the not-so-young who have been there awhile who are continually upgrading their skills in the farming community.

I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I think it is incumbent upon us to look at some of these regions, and I guess I would say that it is not just in special crops and corn and sunflowers that are growing profusely out there in this heat and with the little bit of moisture that they are getting, some regions doing better than others, but it is in the area of fence posts as well. When I look at the number of fence posts that are growing in my region, being pounded in the ground and having wire attached to them, and look at the cattle operations that are growing right up into the minister's own home region, there is a lot of change taking place. That has created a lot of dissension in some people's lives. I know some of that has been on the minister's doorstep at different times, as well as my own, and we elected officials are here to try to deal with those as best we can.

I want to not be as critical this morning as perhaps as putting forth a voice of concern for, as these people have tried to do what would seem to be the right thing and change their operations into the kinds of livestock operations that we are seeing, whether it is in hogs or whether it is in, as I just mentioned particularly, in cow-calf operations, not even feeder operations as much but certainly in cow-calf.

We may have got the fence posts ahead of some of the other needs that we have, but it is the immediate reaction that farmers make if they are changing those operations, and, of course, they are finding themselves in a circumstance right now, as I pointed out yesterday, where

there are some shortages of water in our region, not to mention the fact that some of the pastures are in a pretty desperate state as well.

Last week, I had the opportunity, as I drive back and forth on No. 1 and in some of the areas off of No. 1—I do not like to stick to that road all the time. You get used to seeing the same thing, as the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) just pointed out. We travel the same highway going back and forth, and I like to go No. 2 as much as I can as well and get off the pavement onto some of the gravel roads. That is where you certainly get a first-hand view of a lot of the changes that are taking place. I do that as much as possible, and I can only say that we have got a tremendous beginning.

I would like to put it in that term in regard to the expansion of irrigation in Manitoba because that is certainly a plus for industry. I guess I would say it involves higher risk and perhaps a different degree of management than some of us have been used to as farmers over the years. It is certainly an opportunity for Manitoba because with that comes a higher value product in most cases as well. That is not necessarily always in potatoes or in corn that we are irrigating or in winter wheat and some of those crops, but as much as the forage expansion and the alfalfa that we are seeing raised in Manitoba and the grasses that are there, we are quite quickly developing a very highly valued export industry around forages. The quality of that product is becoming known North American-wide as well as internationally, with some of the forage that is being exported into other areas in the form of pellets and cubes. I think those are good moves as well.

\* (10:20)

As we move forward with areas of water and water resources, as with humans, all of these other areas that we are trying to look at in agriculture and expand need water. That is a key platform in any kind of development or any kind of business plan, and I would say that while we have done some things in bringing natural gas to some communities, I know that there are municipalities, my own being one of them, now sending out questionnaires to look at, even opportunities to bring water into rural areas, pipeline kind of basis, and I could perhaps ask the

minister if she is aware of what support the Government has put forward, not so much in the area of what I was asking yesterday with PFRA and their programs as far as pumping water in the dugouts, but what kind of programs, if any, she has been able to work with in municipalities on as far as making waterfication, if you will, available in R.M.s to rural residents?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member raises an important issue when we talk about the importance of water. Every family, every community needs water, and without it, it makes it very difficult, whether it is to have a livestock herd or a healthy community or a good crop. All of those things are dependent on water. The member talked about the water line expansion into communities. I believe that that is what the member was referring to, and that would be an issue that falls under the Water Services Board and under Intergovernmental Affairs. I know that there is work being done, but I would suggest that that might be in that department that the member could get a little bit more information on the Water Services Board's expansion.

With respect to irrigation, which is also very important, particularly with the expansion of the potato industry in Manitoba, I want the member to know that we continue to run our irrigation program despite the fact that the federal government is not putting in money now. We are working with the federal government to negotiate a new agreement and get some funds from the federal government so that we can have an expanded irrigation program. But our money is there and staff continues to work with the various groups that are looking at irrigation expansion.

**Mr. Maguire:** I am certainly aware of the fine work I think that the minister has done in regard to trying to bring some greater awareness to the irrigation circumstances, and I was not speaking so much of pipeline water to communities. I was just asking the minister whether through Agriculture, as I certainly will be asking the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) some questions around this area, as well, but has she had any requests from rural municipalities through Agriculture for her department to support water being pipelined from the communities out to rural residents?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Again, the member raises an issue, one that we take very seriously, and that is why we have put together a drought committee, and the Water Services Board is on that committee. So should there be requests about moving water from a municipal well into another area, they would be referred to the Water Services Board and then arrangements would be made. PFRA is also involved in the committee. But when there is a shortage of water, we also work with the people to try to find a source of water close by so that there is not the need to pump long distances.

I guess some of the things that the member is talking about are long-term solutions and right now it is looking at short-term solutions and how can we make use of wells that are in the area. I know that in my area, in my community in fact there is a community well and that water is available there and many producers are coming with trucks to that well and hauling water for their livestock. I think those similar kinds of wells are available in many parts of the province, and those are the things that are going to work in the short term. But the department, and the people involved in the drought committee, work to try to co-ordinate that so that we can make use of the water that is available in an area.

Then we have to look at long-term solutions for water supply and those are the things that rural municipalities plan with their councils. There is an example in Swan River right now where there is a water treatment plant being built and plans are being put in place to distribute that water into—there are plans made with other municipalities to try to get water out to some of the other areas. So there is that kind of work being done by the municipalities.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the minister's response. I believe there is also a similar project going on in Wallace, between Wallace and Virden, in looking at expanding their water services in the community of Virden and perhaps going beyond the town limits in regard to some distribution of water there as well.

I know there is a vast difference between trying to take on something that would put water into residences, as I asked the minister, as

opposed to providing water to a farm site that could be used for not only potable water in homes and drinking water, but water for livestock because that is of course the larger user of the volumes that would be involved. So it is a vastly different request if it is on that basis.

I would assume that for municipalities that are looking at this, they have a water source and they would obviously be looking at the kinds of expansion of water that would be going into livestock operations at the same time as they were going to lay the pipe to do the job. Might as well be looking at that as well. I know there are some municipalities looking at that.

I just want to go back to my earlier comments about the kinds of change in farm structure that we are seeing in western Manitoba today particularly, and all of Manitoba is adapting as the Prairies are from that result of the '95 action of the federal government. But I think that I could make a comment that the federal package that is coming out today is a day late and a dollar short from the kinds of change that took place. The change is ongoing, but there were very little dollars there for the farmers to make that adjustment from the federal government initiative at that point.

\* (10:30)

Seven years have gone by since that change and now they are coming around to looking at using some of what I consider western Canada's dollars to be utilized in some of the programs they are looking at through the Agricultural Policy Framework. I guess better now than never is another analogy that might be a phrase that is maybe applicable to today's situation as well.

I guess the response that I see of the farmers in that area was to not only go from the special crops that I have pointed out, but there are soybeans being grown in western Manitoba as well now. Manitoba has a record acreage of soybeans this year, as you are aware. In a number of cases they are certainly coming through this flooded situation in this southern area of Winnipeg here to the U.S. border and east in better condition than some of the other bean crops and types that are in the edible bean area. I think obviously that they are a fairly hardy crop



and we will have to continue to look at those as far as development.

As far as going back to the livestock expansion that was taking place in western Manitoba, my reference to the girl with the fence post, in pastures in the cow-calf industry, while the request was made for either some kind of a program for hauling water, piping water, or deferral of taxation on the sale of cow herds, I did not get a request from this particular individual for movement of cattle to other areas for pasture or for supplemental support in the area of pasture development.

I am wondering if the minister has considered that kind of action at all in their programs, or if in fact they have looked at, as I think was put in place at one time, a support program for greenfeed supplies in those areas. Obviously if they do not have pasture right now, they may be able to cut some of their own cereals for winter feed, if that was the case. I guess I would have to say that that might be a little bit longer term request. But if these people were able to get to that point of freeze-up with some kind of program for pasture, I wonder if that has been considered.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** The Member for Arthur-Virden, just to finish his question. Do you want to finish your question, sir? No? Okay.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Again, I would tell the member this is an issue that is under discussion and one the department is working through. There are several options to improve the hay supply. We will share with the member a few of them. There are wildlife management areas and land controlled by Ducks Unlimited where there is land that could be harvested for hay. In fact Ducks Unlimited has made an offer, but my understanding is no one has taken them up on their offer to cut hay in the areas Ducks Unlimited control.

The other area is through crop insurance. There is the opportunity, should there be a stand of light crop, there is ability to have an early adjustment through crop insurance in order to harvest that crop and put it up as greenfeed. As well, the department has in the past and will this

fall assess the situation. If there is a need to ammoniate straw to make it a better quality of feed then the department will work with producers in that area as well. So there are a few options.

I think one of the other things that is a concern is the fact that the situation in Alberta is much more desperate and we are going to see people from Alberta looking to buy hay from Manitoba. We know a lot of hay this last winter went to Alberta. That demand for hay in another province is going to drive the price up and that is going to put pressure on our producers, or on the hay supply in this province.

The other issue is there is livestock from Alberta coming into Manitoba now and people trying to keep their herds going. That is taking up some of the hay supply. So there are a few options that can be looked at to ensure there is a feed supply. One of the ones is the land that is controlled in management areas, which are normally lower areas and may have a better supply than some of the higher land that is in agriculture production now.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate that. There certainly is a number of thousands of head of livestock, cattle particularly, coming in from Alberta, as there is on the eastern side of Saskatchewan in some areas. They are not a whole lot better off moisture-wise on the eastern side and the central portion of Saskatchewan, of course, than Alberta. In light of the fact everyone thinks the southern Prairies are awash with water from Lethbridge to Emerson or Kenora, it is a bit difficult to be asking these questions in regard to water support in the southwest part of Manitoba, again, in some of those areas.

It is not all regions of the constituency I represent or the neighbouring ones around us, but there certainly are pockets in those areas that are of great concern. On a pretty widespread basis, when you look at the overall moisture from last July to now, it is still very much below normal in all of that area, even though there has been some significant sharp rainfalls in locations. It still has not really been enough to create enough runoff to get into the waterways to fill dugouts, even though it has raised the Souris River a couple of inches, as opposed to the feet

that have been raised here in the Red and the eastern Assiniboine, obviously, as well.

I guess I know these are short-term requests and short-term needs that are there. The minister has said that a long-term approach is needed. I know that is obviously part of the federal government's plan or objectives in what they are doing with the Agricultural Policy Framework is to try to create some better management opportunities for our farmers in Canada, not just our region.

I am wondering if the minister can enlighten me as to her thoughts and views of how some of those programs they are talking about in the Agricultural Policy Framework, what she would like to see in them, I guess. What would flow out of some of those, or, first of all, maybe it would be fair to ask where she thinks the federal government is going with, with some of those activities?

\* (10:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member talks about where the federal government is going on the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement. I want to tell the member the Agricultural Policy Framework is a joint effort between the provinces and the federal government.

When we first started to talk about this Agricultural Policy Framework, I really looked at it as Ottawa trying to catch up in many of the areas where they had dropped off and provinces had continued. The federal government recognized that provinces were doing some very good work, but it was not the same kind of things that were being done across the provinces.

That was really my first reaction when we first started to talk about this Agricultural Policy Framework. As I said, we are doing some of these things. We are doing these things in Manitoba. The federal government wants to come in and be part of it. That is a good thing, because the federal government, they took a lot of money out of agriculture under the guise of meeting the requirements of the WTO. They took, at the highest point, over \$2 billion annually out of agriculture. We know the hardest impact of that was on the Prairies. Now they are going to start

putting that money back in but they are going to distribute it across the whole country. So they are putting some money back, and we are certainly happy they are putting that money back in.

When you look at the Agricultural Policy Framework the most important component of it is the risk management section. That is a very important tool for our producers. It was for me one of the most important pillars of the Agricultural Policy Framework because, as I said, if we do not have a safety net, a risk management component of the framework then the other ones are not nearly as important. A lot of work has gone into the risk management component. There have been many scenarios.

One of the things we asked for when we started this process was a review of the safety net programs to see which ones were working. We also asked for a review of the funding formula. So there have been different announcements, issues that have been floated.

Mr. Chairman, one of them, for example, is that we know in December the federal minister, without talking to provincial ministers, announced through one of the media there was not going to be any more crop insurance, there was not going to be any more NISA, and there was going to be an enhanced CFIP program. Well, producers reacted to that. Since then, there have been other scenarios that have been floated out.

They have changed. We had one where it was going to be we were going to have crop insurance, then all of the money from NISA was going to flip into CFIP. There have just been a variety of things.

Producers and provinces have continued to pursue this, pursue flexibility in programming. The last one we had from the federal government was it was only going to be enhanced crop insurance and NISA. We still do not know what those enhancements are. That is something we have to watch very closely, because what are useful enhancements in Ontario may not be useful enhancements in Manitoba. So we have to work very carefully on that one.

The concern was there was going to be restriction to those two programs. So we have

worked and we now, at the last ministers' meeting, got a change to the framework agreement that says all programs we have will be a basis to look at what we use to develop the new safety net program.

The other issues under the framework agreement are also very important. There is food safety. Our producers I think have been leaders in food safety. If you look at what some of our organizations have been doing, say, with the cattle producers with their ear tagging for traceability, the work that has been done under HACCP by various commodity groups. There is traceability. It is work that producer groups have been doing and that provinces have been involved in.

Certainly, the environmental issues are very, very important. One of the things that fits under that is the work that we have done on covering new ground through the Tyrchniewicz report on how we can have a livestock industry grow but still have sustainability and address environmental issues. As a department, we have the Agricultural Sustainability Initiative covering new ground, programs that were there that the federal government was part of but then pulled their money out, and the province continued on in it. Now the federal government is coming back in with some money. Again, they took it away, and now they are looking at ways that they can bring some of it back in. Those are important issues.

Renewal, certainly we recognize in Manitoba that renewal is a very important issue. We have to get the next generation of farmers in this province or else we are going to have some very serious problems. Our program, Bridging Generations, is one of those programs that fits under renewal. Again, the Province of Manitoba recognized this and went ahead and did it without federal participation. Now this program fits under the umbrella of the Agricultural Policy Framework for across Canada.

\* (10:50)

Science and innovation, certainly research is very important, and technology is very important. This is a new pillar. I know that a program that was important to the previous minister was

the ARDI program because it allowed for money for research. I believe, under this science and innovation pillar of the Agricultural Policy Framework, we will be able to continue with that kind of program. As agriculture changes and becomes more diversified, the member talked about how diversified rural Manitoba was, we have to have research. I very much support seeing some public research and public dollars going into research that is available to all people of Manitoba. I think those will fit there.

When you look at what happened with the reduction in support for agriculture by the federal government, Manitoba was the biggest loser. Manitoba lost more with the elimination of the Crow than all the provinces east of Manitoba combined together. We want a fair share back for Manitoba. Although a lot of money came out of Manitoba, I am not sure how, when you take things away and then start to bring them back, but distributed across the country, the amount that we gain in this province compared to what we lost will be less than what other provinces will gain. I am pleased with the things that are under the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement because I think they are all important to build a healthy agriculture industry, and they are all important for the sustainability of the industry in the long term.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Chairman, just to set the record straight, I think the minister, maybe she could correct this, just indicated that Manitoba lost more from the loss of the Crow than all the other provinces to the east of us. They did not lose anything because there was no Crow in eastern Canada. I would just like to point that out.

I know that these programs that the minister has referred to are part of this package, and it is a five-year package. It probably will not be implemented until next year. There is some bridging money in place, and I guess we are looking at some short-term needs in different areas of the province, as I have pointed out.

You know, we were referencing earlier the fact that there are Alberta cattle coming to Manitoba. I would say there are thousands of cows in Manitoba, it has been indicated, that have come to Manitoba because the people with pasture

here felt that they had a sustainable enough growth that they could take on some extra cattle for a year in a desperate situation from our neighbours to the west in both provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but particularly from Alberta it seems at this time. I know there are Albertans even looking at coming to Manitoba, and particularly eastern Saskatchewan, and purchasing land to expand their own farms and moving. Those are just opportunities for some, and sort of forced circumstances on others.

Our PMU industry is valuable in regard to making sure we have enough pasture for it as well and enough water resources for that industry to continue. So I raise the fact that while there may be some glorious opportunities to move and sell hay into Alberta yet, there are still opportunities right here in Manitoba. I guess we will not completely halt the export of the demand locally for all of the product that there is. In the areas of alfalfa, particularly, just like in the wheat industry, we have established industries or established markets that will take those export products, and we must continue to meet those as much as we can.

Another story to the minister, just for her edification as well, and I know she is in touch with the other ministers across Canada; but in Alberta, basically in the Calgary to Red Deer corridor, even as of yesterday there was wheat estimated at eight bushels an acre by crop insurance and written off at this point, and it is heading out in the eight to nine inches high area. This crop was written off as a crop that might go eight or nine bushels an acre, and these people are looking at putting their cattle on it as quickly as they can.

I guess if there was any kind of circumstance in Manitoba that—I know normal crop insurance procedures will take place in our area if there are pastures in those circumstances, but if crops have a secondary use, if there are some that are in that great a stress in Manitoba, we need to look at those kinds of support programs and move quickly with a crop insurance settlement so that we can allow the farmers to utilize those crops as either green crops or pasture as quickly as we can.

I wonder if the minister could just indicate where they would be at with that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Just to correct, on the comment that the member made about no loss of the Crow, what I was referring to was not only the Crow but the loss in total federal support, safety net support. There were losses in eastern Canada in the safety net package, but Manitoba's losses were higher than all of the provinces east of us, and that was in the range of \$350 million annually that we are losing. So the losses in Manitoba were far more significant than they were in eastern Canada.

With respect to the crop insurance and the ability there to make similar arrangements, that is exactly what can happen. If there are light stands and people want to turn their cattle out to them, they can call crop insurance, an adjuster will come out and do the assessment on the crop and then the farmer will have the ability to use it whatever way he feels suitable. I can tell the member there are lots of adjusters out, if farmers make the call. Those adjusters are not working very hard right now and the farmer would not have to wait very long to have the adjustment made and allow him to proceed with changing that over into a pasture or for greenfeed. So those tools are there, as they are in other areas.

The member talks about Alberta. I am very familiar with what is happening in the Edmonton area. There are a lot of livestock that are going to market right now because there is just no feed supply there and it is a pretty desperate situation there. My hope is that in a couple of days this heat is going to turn and we are going to have a good thunderstorm and maybe a little bit of moisture that will help all of us.

**Mr. Maguire:** Certainly, I guess my question was more around expediency. I know the crop insurance department will be working and corporations will be working as quickly as they can to try to appease the needs of the farmers in those areas. No doubt about that. I know they do an excellent job.

I guess, just in a summary, the minister has indicated there is a drought committee in place but we do not have a drought program that we are looking at, at this point.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The drought committee is working. Where there is need to make arrangements for feed supply, if there is a shortage of feed,

there has always been a list of feed and things like that that happen. Where there is need for water, as we had discussed earlier, the department works with people who are looking for ways to move water. Those things are in place. There have also been arrangements made and identification of lands in management areas where there is hay available, but there has been no call on that hay at this point.

There is a drought committee working and the committee continues to monitor the situation as time proceeds. That is the work that is being done now.

**Mr. Maguire:** But there is no program in place right now.

\* (11:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the drought committee is co-ordinating a lot of activities that take place within various departments and making services available for producers, but if the member is asking is there a new initiative, is there a new program, no, there is no new program.

**Mr. Maguire:** Okay. I know the minister is aware of the circumstance, cattle coming into Canada and Manitoba, needing our pastures as much as we can and trying to do what we can in balancing that export industry.

I guess I had a few questions this morning around the water issues in Manitoba, trying to provide water to some rural communities as well as rural households and farm needs. Some areas will go ahead with those kinds of programs, from my understanding. Some will do it in partnership with the provincial government and they will do what they can in Intergovernmental Affairs and Water Resources to do it on their own in those areas.

I know the federal government has this Agricultural Policy Framework in place and they are putting money into it. The 589 million the federal government has come up with for a number of the other areas they have outside of some of the five pillars they are working on might seem like a fairly large number to some people, but spread over five years it is not a lot of money

when you take a look at the fact, as the minister has indicated, that she feels strongly the risk management pillar is the most important pillar.

Certainly, I have indicated, I think, our university, our education, our training facilities and that sort of thing are top-notch in regard to the kind of training that is provided, and I would never question that risk management is an important area, but Ottawa seems to think the environment is the important area. At least that is where they gave the most money out of that \$589.5 million. They put up \$264.5 million, and spread over five years across all of Canada, \$50 million a year does not go very far to do very much in regard to meeting the needs of our environmental needs.

Of course, I understand full well that here in Manitoba we have the toughest guidelines in particularly manure management of anywhere in North America. We have a lot of responsible actions being taken by farm groups and farm organizations and farmers individually across this province.

So, if they are looking at these kinds of dollars as what they see as the highest priority, then I would put forth that perhaps that is coming as well from—it is not just from the farm community in wanting to have an opportunity to farm but from the consumers of the country saying you have to do a better job in convincing us that everything that you are producing on those farms today is of top quality, and I think that that is, you know, coming from a society—and I am including farmers in that—that pays very low prices for food on a scale of the disposable income that we have in the world today, in Canada particularly, that this is something that the federal government has just latched onto and said we are going to do something, but they do not know what they are going to do yet.

I think you have indicated that, as far as where they are at with some of the other pillars, and that is the flexibility that you are saying is the reason that you did not sign onto the program. But when I look at the support that we are looking at in agriculture in Manitoba—and I am not going to get into the differences between our provinces, but Alberta has just indicated that they are one of the provinces that has signed

onto the Agricultural Policy Framework, and yesterday they announced I think it is a \$324-million program for drought assistance in the province of Alberta. It leaves me, as I have already had a few calls from farmers in Manitoba this morning, about where we would be in regard to the kind of support that would be required.

While it is of a natural disaster proportion, a good deal of that is in flooding in Manitoba, and we have had some questions of the minister on that in the southern and eastern regions of the province where our hay lands have been washed out, where some of the crops have been under water for so long that they will not amount to much either and, in particular, drowned-out areas of the southern and southeastern parts of the province where, in fact, crops have been completely lost. All of the inputs were in them, and I know that we have had a discussion on that around Crop Insurance's responsibility in that.

But how does the minister respond to the fact that we have such a wide variance in provincial governments and their support for agriculture in the areas of Canada that have been shown? We know that the drought in Alberta has been ongoing. It has been two or three years old. But here you have a province that is absolutely dedicated to its farmers and absolutely has the backing of its consumers because they are all aware, as Manitoba consumers, I believe, are aware, of the importance of agriculture to the provincial economy of that province.

So where does that leave Manitoba farmers at in this whole equation if Alberta's government is going to support them in not only the Agricultural Policy Framework but with another assistance program of \$324 million of new money over and above the kinds of programs that we have in crop insurance as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the member refers to Alberta, comparing Alberta to what is happening in Manitoba. There are a couple of things. I think the situation in Alberta is much more serious than it is in Manitoba as far as the drought goes, and I hope that we do not get to that situation. They are pretty desperate there when you look at the amount of rain they had over the last couple of years.

Yes, Alberta has put in \$324 million. Their industry is about double the size of ours. Alberta has the ability to pay. Alberta has a strong oil industry and they have the money. Manitoba does not have that kind of money and if we got into that kind of situation it would be a real problem for us. The member knows what the economic situation is in Manitoba. It has not changed that much, but if we get into that kind of drought situation it would be devastating for the province and the Province, Manitoba could not put in the kinds of dollars that Alberta has.

When you compare the two areas, when you compare what we have in Manitoba, I do not want to say that the situation is not serious in Manitoba. We are short of water. We have less moisture than is our normal level in parts of the province. We have another part of the province that has too much moisture, that has been getting too much moisture over the years. My hope is that we can get through this, that the moisture will come, because we do not have the dollars that Alberta has.

\* (11:10)

Now the member talked about Manitoba farmers being at a loss because we did not sign the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement. I made it very clear to the member yesterday that the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement is the plan for our programs for next year. Our safety net programs for this year are in place. We have crop insurance, we have NISA, we have CFIP. So those programs are there for our producers. The Agricultural Policy Framework is developing the programs for next year, and our producers asked us not to sign the agreement until we got further information. We are working on the requests of the producers, and we are in discussion with the federal government.

I can assure the member that we will have safety net programs for our producers for the next crop year, as we do for this crop year.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Chairman, I think that that is some slight solace to the farmers in Manitoba who were in the Legislature a couple of weeks ago in regard to the flooding situation that they have with their cropping concerns, and as well those who are faced with pockets of drought in

western and other parts of Manitoba. I guess from their perspective in the farm community, they are looking at a province that absolutely has supported its farm community, that has put a program again in place and not waited for the federal government, to rely on Ottawa again.

*Mr. Gregory Dewar, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

Yes, we always are up against this argument that Alberta has lots of energy and so they have lots of resources to purchase those things. I would submit that a little bit of that is also perhaps some of the sound management that takes place in their province as well in regard to how they have their debt under control and their deficit under control and completely virtually annihilated half the debt about two years ago, as well, in that province. They did not use the resources to fund a bunch of new programs that they could not afford at that time. They reduced debt with it, and they are now in a position where they can actually help their farmers in some of these kinds of programs and other sectors of their industries as well.

I would submit that most of the farmers that I have spoken to see this kind of a commitment as the same kind of commitment that the colleague to my right, the member from Lakeside and former Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba, presented along with my predecessor, Mr. Downey, in Arthur-Virden in southwest Manitoba, as being fairly similar to the \$50-an acre program that they brought forward and put out when the farmers in our area were in extremely dire straits as well, and they do not see that from this Government.

The minister has indicated that Alberta has a lot of power and a lot of strong energy-sector dollars coming forward. Let me say that this Government must think they have an equally strong power base and resource to draw on there as well, because they did not have any qualms about taking \$288 million out of Hydro a year ago to use \$150 million of it to pay off a deficit a year ago as well, never mind what they are going to do with \$138 million. They have not indicated what they are going to do with it this year. So I just want to let the minister know that, from a view from outside the Perimeter Highway, that

is a little bit of what seems to be seen as reality in rural areas of Manitoba.

We can talk risk management and cover crops and all of the other issues, but it is certainly not the issue that is predominant on their minds today. They are looking at the kind of fiscal responsibility in management that they would like to see a government have so that there is something there in times of need in some of these regions and we do not have to be waiting hat in hand sort of thing for Ottawa to come to the table again and then say that the program that they have brought forward here now is one that is going to suffice all of the needs.

I know that the minister has not signed the Agricultural Policy Framework in Ottawa, but if we are going to continue with the same kinds of CFIP programs that are on the table today into the future. As she has indicated that these programs will not be available for a year at least anyway, then can the minister give us any indication of whether she will today participate in her share of the \$600-million program that is going to be in place for bridging that she likes to refer to?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want to refer back to the comments that the member made about the farmers who came here from southwestern Manitoba going back empty handed. I guess the member has forgotten about the changes that were made to crop insurance that we brought in, the excess moisture insurance, the adjustments we made this year for those people who could not seed so that they could get their crop insurance as they asked for. There were other changes to the forage program that had been made to help producers ensure that should there be difficulty with restoring their forage, instead of having an ad-hoc program, we now have a program through crop insurance.

The member seems to forget that we have reduced crop insurance payments so that producers are not out of pocket as much money but have coverage, in fact, have better coverage than they had under the previous administration because they now have excess moisture insurance and there have been other improvements. But improvements to crop insurance are an

ongoing thing. As crops change, there is need for improvements and we continue to make those improvements.

The member talks about people walking out of here empty handed. That is not what I heard from producers when I talked to them. They had some specific issues that they wanted addressed. Certainly, the issue of the part-time farmer is one that they wanted addressed because there are farmers who work off farm but still have the expenses and the losses of a farmer. I think that is a very important issue, and it is one that was raised at the western premiers' meeting and one that has been there for a long time that we are trying to get addressed, so that part-time farmers can have the same kind of coverage for losses should there be a flooding situation as other farmers do.

The member was hearing a very different message than I was when I talked to those producers. Certainly there is a concern about the amount of losses they are going to have. That is why we are raising the issue with the federal government.

The member talks about, again, I want to refer back to Alberta and their need for ad-hoc programs. Alberta has a crop insurance program but they have around 65% participation. In Manitoba we have around 85% participation in crop insurance. So there is less need for ad-hoc programs because there is more participation in the risk management programs that are there. Our producers look at crop insurance as a very, very important tool.

With respect to the \$600 million, I think we have to look at how this money came on the table. This money came on the table because Manitoba and Saskatchewan continued to lobby the federal government at a time when other provinces were not lobbying the federal government to have something in place to address trade injury. The federal government ignored that request, said there would be no more ad-hoc money, and then when the U.S. farm bill came in Mr. Vanclief said we were going to have do something to bridge our producers and that all Manitobans would have to pay, all Canadians would have to pay to help farmers bridge through this U.S. farm bill. When he talked

about that, that to me indicated the federal government recognized this as a trade injury.

When Mr. Chrétien announced the \$600 million, he said the federal portion would flow whether the provinces participated or not. Again, that is a clear indication that they recognize this, despite what they call it, as a trade injury package. We have indicated clearly we cannot take on federal responsibility.

*Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

\* (11:20)

Trade is a federal responsibility and trade injury is a federal responsibility. The federal government signs the agreement. The federal government has the responsibility. If you look to the U.S., it is George Bush who is signing the cheque. None of the states are putting money in for this trade injury. I think we have to be very firm in that position, that it is a federal responsibility. I think the federal government has recognized that and they have said their money will flow. We have said we will not participate in trade injury.

There are many other areas where the Province of Manitoba supports farmers through a variety of programs. Those are the ways we are going to continue to support farmers, but we are not putting money into the ad-hoc trade injury package because we feel very much it is a federal responsibility. There are several other provinces who have indicated the federal money will flow but they will not be putting provincial resources in. Again, it is a matter of what the Province has the ability to do. We will not be taking over the federal responsibility.

**Mr. Maguire:** I would have to say to the minister she knows full well the \$600 million they have referred to as bridging, the federal government does not look at that as anything to do with trade injury. So we can have platitudes about how she sees it as trade injury all we want, but the federal government has done a very good job, I guess I would say, in their right in deferring away from trade injury any of these particular packages. None of this money they have forward with is referenced to trade injury anywhere.



We would all like to work harder to try and get them to see the light, there is no doubt about that, and to get some actual trade injury money on the table, as all of the farm groups in Canada have asked them to do. So we cannot say they are listening to farm groups. I mean if we were listening to farm groups, if they were, they would have had some trade injury money on the table obviously.

The federal government in their Agricultural Policy Framework has sent around a good number of packages, particularly in some of their pillars, to look at the U.S. programs that have come under the farm bill, but they will not acknowledge that anything they have come forward with now is anything more than a supplement to the programs that we already have and has nothing to do in their blind wisdom, if you want me to put it bluntly, with trade injury.

Of course, they are seeing that that way they can involve the provinces to get the money on the table, obviously, to help provinces pay for a portion of it, but it also keeps them from getting into a battle on a trade basis with our southern neighbours.

So I guess I have a great deal of problem with trying to be—I do not know if it is politically correct to use the term beat a dead horse further with a stick, but I think you get my picture. They do not have any acknowledgment of trade injury programs coming forward there at all. So we have to work with what they have given us. As farmers, that is all that is left out there on the ground. There is no acknowledgment of trade injury by Ottawa. So I guess that is why farmers continue to say damn the torpedoes on Ottawa; they did not do what we asked them to do the first time. But they are caught in a position where they have to thank them for the dollars that are coming forward because at least they see it as some kind of program on the ground that will perhaps help make some transitions.

Let us face it, the Government, the way they have put this forward, has not done it in regard to the trade injury. They have done it around trying to placate consumers in Canada to make sure that we have a branded product that is seen for what it is, the safest product that you can grow anywhere in the world, that you can eat

anywhere in the world, and that is already in place in Canada. So who are they trying to support here? Is it farmers or is it consumers?

This package of money that they have put forward—as I have pointed out, over five years what is \$264 million? I mean, you could have that on an annual basis in Canada, and it still might not do much to placate consumers in regard to a brand in Canada connotation for our agricultural products or meeting the needs of repair and management or some of the other areas that our environmentalist friends would like all farmers to do at their own expense. At least there will be a few dollars here to help defray some of those. But without the minister being able to give us any indication of what her support will be in these, farmers are left with desperate straws that they are grasping at out there and are left trying to find out where they fit into this whole package.

If you take credit for having the \$600 million on the table in each of these next two years under whatever guise the federal government has put it there, then will you make a commitment today to be a participant in those programs as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I think that producers know where we are at. We have told them, and producers have said that we need a trade injury package. I believe that no matter what the federal government calls it—and they have their reasons for calling it bridging—it is the part of the program that is to address the additional injury caused by the U.S. farm bill.

However, it is only a two-year package, and the U.S. farm bill is a six-year package, so that leaves our producers with nothing after the two-year period where they have put in this ad-hoc program. So that is a problem. The federal government does not recognize their full responsibility.

The member talks about where we are with support for agriculture. I made it clear and the Premier (Mr. Doer) made it clear that we are looking for more detail. We have told producers that we will be there on the 60-40 portion that is under the Agricultural Policy Framework, but we will not be there on the trade injury money of

the \$600 million. We know that it is going to cost more to meet our requirements under the Agricultural Policy Framework, somewhere in the range of about \$15 million annually, to meet the requirements and the additional spending under the Agricultural Policy Framework.

Our Premier has said that we will fill our commitment there, and producers know that, but we cannot take on federal responsibility. I want the member to also know that only Ontario and Alberta are sharing in the \$600 million, and they are the provinces that are not receiving equalization payments. They are the provinces that have the ability to pay. When you look at the cost of this, to participate in this trade injury package for a province that is not suffering much because of trade injury, in Ontario, it will cost about \$1 per capita. In Manitoba, it will cost, if we were to participate in this, it would cost about \$8 per capita. That is the ratio of what it would cost in proportion to what it would cost in another province.

The member will say, well, agriculture is worth that much money, and certainly it is an important industry. It contributes a lot to the province, but, again, I will tell the member that, as a province, we do not have the ability and are not prepared to take on federal responsibility when we know that the federal government, despite what they call it, do know that there is a problem with the U.S. farm bill. They have even made those comments publicly and have decided to frame it in another context to try to pass on cost to the provinces.

I will tell you what I have said. I said to the federal minister, well, if you want to start sharing these things, perhaps we should be starting to share health care on a 50-50 cost, maybe we should start to share highways on a 50-50 sharing. If we were going to share some of those costs, then we could be talking about sharing agriculture, but trade is now the responsibility of the federal government. I am not looking to get Manitoba to the table to be negotiating international trade agreements. That is the federal responsibility, and they have the responsibility of trade injury.

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Maguire:** The minister has indicated that she is not going to participate in any trade injury

programs, and I have indicated earlier that farmers would still like to see that kind of dollars in commitment coming from Ottawa for some kind of a trade injury package. I do not think there is any of them that would argue that the whole package that the federal government has come forward with would be perhaps not nearly enough if it was directed at a trade injury package in itself, but the government has also got a third package of what they call \$600 million on the table, and I think it is \$589.5 to be exact. Can the minister indicate to me whether the federal government, at first, at least, wanted any of the provinces to be involved in cost sharing that package as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Could I ask the member to repeat his question?

**Mr. Maguire:** There is a third \$600-million package on the table as well, according to the federal government, and, of course, that is actually \$589.5 for some of their other programs that they have put in place. My question to the minister was: Did the federal government, of course, want the provinces to be involved in that cost sharing as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Of the \$589 million that the member referred to, a little over \$500 million will be strictly federal dollars, and they will target that money where they want it. There is about \$80 million that is in a water strategy, and in that portion of it, if it fits in with our programs, there would be a provincial share required in those, but the details have not been worked out. The majority of the money that the member talks about is federal money, and they will decide how it is spent and what their programs will be. There will be discussions with provinces, but as far as sharing it, there is only about \$80 million across the country, and, hopefully, it will be targeted to where the need is. That might be some of the areas where, working with the Water Services Board issues that the member raised earlier about getting water to communities and those kinds of things, might be able to be addressed under.

**Mr. Maguire:** It is a little bit of solace perhaps that the federal government has put that half a billion on the table for some of those programs and their fillers. The minister has indicated that

there was about \$80 million in those programs, and can she confirm that that is over a five-year period as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** That is right. It is over a five-year period and across Canada.

**Mr. Maguire:** So, roughly \$16 million a year for across Canada and 10 provinces and how many municipalities. You get my picture. As I said earlier, while it is dollars on the table, I would say that the publicity around this one has helped government a lot more than it will help farmers. I think that, while we need to continue to monitor some of those programs, I guess, when you put it all in the big picture, I have some concern. I think if you take anything back to the federal government, it should be that you are extremely concerned about how these funds are managed and how they actually get back to the farm, that they do not get tied up in bureaucracies, that they do not get tied up in a whole bunch of permits and forms and red tape that is going to create expanded bureaucracies working on these kinds of programs while the consumer gets a lot of good publicity or thinks that there are industries actually doing something, that perhaps the federal government is leaving short change on the table to actually get done and accomplish the objectives that we would like to see in this matter.

I am not saying they should not be done. I am saying they should be done. I guess I just am being told by farmers that they see this as an opportunity for the federal government to try to maybe squeeze more good will out of this than will actually translate into helping farmers make the transition from where they were to where they need to be with the programs that have already been forced on them by the lack of support from the federal government in some of those areas. That is why, I think, they are certainly asking the provincial government to be as involved in any of these programs as they have. I know that there is difficulty in finding money in budgets everywhere, but, as I said earlier, it is a priority matter of spending.

I guess I look at a further question of the minister at how they would look at Minister Goodale's announcement, public works, of, I believe it was, last Friday. He announced a

\$100-million package. I assume that comes out of that \$590 million, and \$100-million cover crop, \$10 million for shelterbelts on the Prairies, mainly on the Prairies is my understanding, not solely on the Prairies but mainly on the Prairies, and another \$80 million left out of that \$190 was a bit more nebulous as to what it was going to be used for. I wonder if the minister can enlighten me as to any more details around how that \$80 million over five years will be used.

Before you recognize the minister, it is my understanding that a good deal of that, as well, would be for environmental areas. I am just wondering if there was any detail in discussions with the minister that she could share at this time and how that would be expected to be gotten out to farmers.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the member asked about whether I discussed these kind of things, the low level of funding, with the federal government, and how I felt about it. I have to agree that there was a big announcement, but, when you look at the amount of money that is really there and you distribute it across Canada and you distribute it over five years, it is not that much money. So that was one of the things that I raised.

\* (11:40)

The other issue that I raised is how much money was taken out of the Prairies in their desire to meet world trade requirements. It was the Prairies that took the brunt of the hit and took the biggest hit on it. Certainly, our farmers have done a very good job of adapting, but there was a big loss in the amount of money that was coming out of the federal government into the Prairies. So those are the kinds of issues that I did raise with the federal government and will continue to raise because, with the kinds of changes that are being proposed, there will be costs.

The other issue that I did raise as well is what kind of costs are going to be passed on to the producer who has no ability to pass on costs. For me, that is also a very important issue.

With respect to Mr. Goodale's announcement and the drought initiative, what he

announced was \$60 million for water supply expansion programs to reduce the risk of future water shortages through planning and development of secure water resources. He announced \$20 million for an acceleration of the national land and water information service to provide information analysis and interpretation of land and water data required by farmers, industry and government to make improved agriculture land and water management decisions.

That was the \$80 million that I talked about earlier. He also announced \$100 million for a green cover program, and that is a forage program for seeding down fragile land, sort of a land set-aside program, and then he announced \$10 million for an expanded shelter belt program.

Those are the details of what we have now of the announcement. More details will come, and there will be more announcements on how the other portions of that money will be spent.

A lot of the detail will be worked out as we get into the bilateral agreements, and I am sure that the ADMs, when they meet early next month, will also have the opportunity to have discussion on more of the detail.

**Mr. Maguire:** I am willing to defer to my honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) here for a few moments as well, and some questions that I know he has.

I appreciate some of the discussion with the minister this morning around clarification of some of those programs. We just have to make sure, as I pointed out earlier, that a lot of this money gets targeted back to the farm and actually gets there.

I think that there is a good deal of concern on farms today around environmental issues and the kinds of environment that we need to have to allow us to have the opportunity to farm out there. I guess I would say that there are many concerns in the farm community around the fact that there are some issues in regard to the Livestock Stewardship Initiative that was announced that has been seen as not coming forward, that there is not a lot of action out of that particular package.

It concerns, I think, farmers who feel that they are having pressure put on them by environmental groups, by consumers and by others, that they feel threatened in regard to their ability to continue to provide incomes and a way of life, for want of a better term, for their own farm families in rural areas.

I would just like to put that on the table before I turn it over to the member and ask the minister to continue to keep that I guess in the forefront of her thoughts as she is trying to guide the development of some of these programs, because this will be a very critical development time for the restructuring of some of the departments in Ottawa that I see going on there. With people being moved in different areas, there could well be at least completely new working relationships between departments in Ottawa that have not been there in the past perhaps. Some will be cut up; some will be added as these new programs are developed, and I think it is extremely critical to be in the forefront of having input into how they are developed, so that Manitoba can participate in it and that our farmers will not be short-changed in relation to provinces in other areas, have provinces or have-not provinces, that will sign on to this program in the end.

I just hope for the sake of Manitoba farmers that the minister has an ace up her sleeve and a number or an agreement that she can at least take to Ottawa to convince them to help her participate in this kind of a package and that we will not be rolling the dice, I guess, if you will, double or nothing, because I think that Manitoba farmers cannot afford to come out of this with nothing again.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I can assure the member that there is a plan, and the plan, as I indicated previously, is to look at the agreement, have consultation with our producers and then take it through the government process that is required.

Certainly, Mr. Vanclief is well aware that there were some provinces that were not able to sign when we were in Fredericton because of some outstanding issues, and he made it very clear in the media that the agreement was an open agreement and that when provinces were ready, they could sign on.

Even those provinces that initialed the agreement still have to go through the process of signing it and have to get ratification from their respective governments to proceed on it, and the producers are well aware of that. We have some steps to go through. I can assure the member that we will have details worked out. Once we get to the point where we can sign the agreement, then we will work on our bilateral agreements with the federal government in the best interests of Manitoba producers.

\* (11:50)

**Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside):** Mr. Chairman, without getting back into the debate about the adequacy or inadequacy of the level of federal support through Manitoba Agriculture, there is one measurement that I think is important to us. It tells the minister whether or not her senior staff, particularly those who are responsible for crunching the numbers—can the minister tell me that at the end of the day Manitoba's traditional percentage share of federal support is being maintained, or is it dropping or has she managed to increase it? If the minister understands. I used to think about that. We hold ourselves up to other provinces. I know that there was very considerable concern at the time that the federal attitude towards a support program was shifting from the greater emphasis on risk that we tend to place on the Prairies to sales in other parts of the province. One of the reasons of concern was that that would reduce our percentage share, and I think the minister is aware of what I am speaking of. I am just asking her, and I know that her negotiations are not complete, but does she feel that at the end of the day Manitoba will maintain close to or at the traditional level of percentage support from the federal government?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I know that this is an important subject for the member. I can tell him that, as it looks now, and details are not completely worked out and those will come in the implementation of the agreement, we will be maintaining our level of the percentage of the share that we have had in the past.

**Mr. Enns:** I thank the minister for the answer. I think I challenge her to challenge her staff to make damn sure that we do. It is an important item. We politicians can argue as we have and as

we must about the adequacy of support or the level of support, but from the professional staff level, it is important that they advise and they put their minister, they put the government of the day in the best possible position to ensure that Manitoba's share of federal agricultural support dollars are, at best, maintained at traditional levels. Every watch has to be kept that we are being edged out by more powerful agricultural lobbies in Ontario or Québec or elsewhere. For Manitoba's position, it is a challenge that you have to, and I am sure you do, maintain with your senior staff, that we maintain as close to the traditional level of support as we have received and, of course, always trying to improve it.

I appreciate that some of these programs, there are variations in the takeup of the program and the limitation of the program. In essence, that percentage figure is important. I am prepared to pass this item if you want to move on.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** Did the minister wish to reply?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We do. Staff takes this issue very seriously. There were huge discussions in the past, and there will continue to be huge discussions on this. It will depend on the design of the program, but you know that, if we are making improvements to NISA, there is a high takeup in that program in Manitoba. There is a high uptake in crop insurance, depending on how it works out, but it is an issue that staff takes very seriously and one that will require a lot of time in negotiations.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** I understand we will be going to the resolutions on page 32, line item 3.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$513,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$62,600—pass; (3) Other Policy Studies \$71,200—pass.

1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$802,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$428,300—pass.

1.(d) Information Technology Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$442,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$72,400—pass.

1.(e) Human Resource Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Mr. Enns:** What is the current vacancy rate in the department?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Currently, we are at a vacancy rate of about 8.7 percent.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, to the minister: Is that meeting the target that the department has been directed to by the chairman of Treasury Board?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** At the present time, we are above the target. It is just the situation that we have that we are at 8.7.

**Mr. Enns:** I appreciate the information, the information being, of course, that it is the chair of Treasury that sets targets for the level of civil service employment in the province of Manitoba. Pass.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** Section 3.1.(e)–

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I am glad the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is fully alert this morning, so I would like to correct the record. It is Cabinet that sets targets for the entire Government with respect to all policy, including vacancy rate levels.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I am always alert in the mornings. It is in the afternoons that I have the little problems with.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** Section 3.1.(e) Human Resource Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$283,400–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$46,800–pass.

Proceeding chronologically, we have already passed item 3.2.(a), so we will go to (b), which is the Net Income Stabilization Account on page 32. Are there any questions? So we are prepared to pass that. Is it the will of the committee to proceed? Okay.

3.2.(b) Net Income Stabilization \$21,960,000–pass.

Resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$52,277,500 for Agriculture and Food, Risk Management and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

**Resolution agreed to.**

**Mr. Chairperson:** As item 3.3 has already been passed, we will move on chronologically to item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing. Are there any questions in this section?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, under the constant prodding of the then-member of the opposition, the critic for Agriculture, we were pleased to initiate a program using some surplus funds for innovative research and development in agriculture, particularly in the nutraceutical field.

I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the late Dr. Clay Gilson, who chaired a committee that was established. It was a joint federal and provincial committee that had the responsibility of overseeing the expenditure of a considerable research fund, totalling jointly I think upwards to \$18 million, \$19 million. Among the major programs that was very near and dear to the heart of Dr. Clay Gilson was the nutraceutical field, and we were able to make a substantial commitment to the new facility at the St. Boniface Hospital in connection with the St. Boniface research facility.

My question simply is: Is this group still functioning? Are some of the current statements respecting nutraceutical research dollars part of that program? Who is the current chair of that group, if that group is in fact still functioning?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, to answer.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I want to tell the member that that committee is still in existence, a very important committee. Mr. David Gislason is the chair of the committee. The work at the St. Boniface Centre is continuing. They are currently recruiting the lead scientists for the St. Boniface Centre. The announcement that was recently made for a nutraceutical centre at the University of Winnipeg is separate from—*[interjection]* for the University of Manitoba, I

am sorry—is separate from this group, but the group is indeed functioning.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Jim Rondeau):** The hour being twelve o'clock, I am interrupting proceedings.

## JUSTICE

\* (10:10)

**Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos):** Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Justice. Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 117 of the Estimates book, Resolution 4.1.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** I wanted to ask the Attorney General a couple things that we did not update yesterday.

When Estimates first began, about a third of the way through it, we started to bring to your attention the rural dilemma at Plumas, Westbourne and Portage la Prairie with the increase in property damage, the burning of houses. I also let you know that the Plumas residents had met together. In excess of 125 people met together because they had deep concerns about what was happening in their district.

In rural Manitoba, Mr. Chair, we know that distance plays a great part in not allowing police forces to get on site; as I say, distance, just simply because of the kilometres, simply because of the constraints of distance and road conditions.

Can the Attorney General update this House on the status of what is happening out there right now and if any additional resources have been put in to help these people?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** There were concerns about increases in certain crimes in the Portage area and the general area around that city a few months ago. Some of the concerns were around auto theft in particular.

As a result of those concerns and the pattern that became known, a special task force was put together, lead by the RCMP and including four detachments, also involving MPI, which assisted in putting this together, and as well involving the Winnipeg Police Service's forensic unit.

As a result of the collaboration of these detachments and agencies, there were a number of arrests made. Those are now being dealt with in Prosecutions. There were some individuals who were actually from Alberta, I understand, who were suspects and I believe had charges laid against them.

The task force actually was made up of about 35 members. The detachments included in this were Portage la Prairie; Westlake, which includes Ste. Rose, Amaranth and McCreary; Blue Hills; the Brandon Major Crime Unit; Spruce Plains, which includes Gladstone, Carberry and Neepawa; and, as I said earlier, MPI; and the Forensic Identification unit, actually of "D" Division. So, as a result, there were actually over 10 arrests.

There was great co-operation and we have to commend the collaboration between the RCMP and the Dakota Ojibway Police Service in relation to its investigation on the Sandy Bay First Nation. By the way, the view is, of law enforcement personnel, that they sense that this particular challenge has been countered, but they are eager and willing to reorganize a task force if another outbreak arises.

The RCMP, nonetheless, report that they are doing a joint patrol. They are doing joint patrols with Dakota Ojibway Police Service in an effort to address any cross-border or overflow criminal activity from Sandy Bay and Amaranth.

So, Mr. Chair, the RCMP has recognized the significant issue of concern to people in the area and responded, and I commend them for their response and their organizational efforts. I also, again, just note that this has indicated that not only can this be done, but how it can be done and such a task force will be resurrected if need be.

In Plumas and surrounding areas, I know that particularly around, I think it was in May,

April—areas in the Spruce Plains detachment and in the vicinity have had incidents where the RCMP and the Sandy Bay Dakota Ojibway Police Service have been investigating. I am aware of a town hall meeting called by the residents of Plumas and the surrounding area as well, members from Spruce Plains, I believe the MLA was there, I have had a discussion with the MLA on this, were in attendance.

\* (10:20)

I think there was a very positive meeting in the sense that the police were very responsive to the concerns of residents, and there is an interest in a citizen patrol in the area, and it is around that that I have also had discussions in this committee with the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), and advised the member on the availability of the citizen on patrol assistance that can be available to local residents. I highly commend the local residents for looking for ways that they can involve themselves in countering this challenge. I understand that in May there were a number of charges laid against individuals from Sandy Bay First Nation. That was as a result of a high-speed pursuit by the Spruce Plains detachment, and that was following an alleged break and enter in a residence south of Neepawa. Those matters are proceeding, and I know that there is continued interest in the community in terms of their involvement. But, as well, I can advise that the Spruce Plains, the Westlake detachments and the Sandy Bay Dakota Ojibway Police Service are investigating further incidents.

I understand the community agrees that it is a community challenge, and the staff sergeant in the area has advised the department, and this information comes from that, that they are all working with the RCMP to combat the problem. So I think the message from this is that it is clear our police agencies in Manitoba are eager, willing and capable of responding to local outbreaks like this that happen from time to time, and always have happened, and can be very effective in supporting the concerns of residents and reorganizing, even if on a very temporary basis, a task force to counter such outbreaks. I think the 10 arrests, for example, from the task force work is a testament to the effectiveness of this kind of an operation.

So a very close watch is being made of the Portage la Prairie, Amaranth, Sandy Bay, R.M. of Rosedale, the Plumas situation.

**Mrs. Smith:** On to a new topic now. I know we have agreed to go globally, so I am trying to get the last questions that I need answered. If we could do it in a timely manner, perhaps we could wrap up the Justice Estimates today, depending on how long it takes to answer the questions.

Mr. Chair, there have been new judges appointed, a new batch of judges, the Honourable Barbara Hamilton. She is not a new judge. She goes from being a judge of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench to a judge of the Manitoba Court of Appeal, and Martin Freedman has been appointed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal. John Scurfield has been appointed judge of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, and Mr. Scurfield replaces Justice Ruth Krindle. We have Colleen Suche who replaces Barbara Hamilton on the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, and Marilyn Goldberg goes to the Family Division.

So in actual fact, am I correct or incorrect in saying there are two new judges on the bench, or with the allotment and the reconfiguration, could the Attorney General confirm how many new judges are on the bench? Prior to this appointment, there were 39. It was my understanding there were 39. Could you bring this House up to date as to exactly how that has happened this week?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Chair, These appointments I am very pleased about. I think these are just excellent additions to the court. I think the Court of Appeal is strengthened, as is the lower court. The appointments follow the retirement or elevation of other judges. Of course, Marilyn Goldberg was until yesterday a master and dealt with a lot of family issues; in fact, some of the real nitty-gritty of family issues, and she now is going to the Family Division.

I might just say that Martin Freedman, a person held in very high esteem, I think, by everyone who knows of him and his work, comes directly from the bar and not from another position on a bench. But it has to be remembered that he has a wealth and richness of experience as an arbitrator, as a person who can



bring parties together and get decisions made. I think it recognizes the importance of that kind of background, that one need not only serve in a lower court to be recognized for judicial responsibilities, but those skills can be also attained and recognized through arbitration work.

Mr. Chair, it is my understanding, and if I am wrong I will get back to the member, but the staff advise that, to the best of their knowledge, this now puts those two courts at their full complement and that this is filling vacancies that have been there. I know the Family Division vacancy has been there for some time, and I know the Chief Justice has been urging for these appointments of this number. I know that, with Justice Hamilton's ascent, Colleen Suche fills that, Scurlfield replacing Krindle, and then Goldberg and his staff advisory replacing Duncan.

I think that this should help to expedite the processing of family matters. The court advises that this can be very useful in moving along with the case management initiative that is underway in the Family Division. I am just very pleased, and I advised my contact yesterday as well that this is just a very positive addition to the judiciary of Manitoba. These people come highly recommended, several of whom I know personally for their work.

**Mrs. Smith:** I am sure all these people are extremely competent and I am very pleased that they have been put in these positions, but that is not my question. My question is: What is the total number of judges now today available in the courts?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I will provide that number to the member. If we are not in Estimates I will send over a note in terms of the total number of judges. We should be able to get that very quickly.

**Mrs. Smith:** Could that possibly be today?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** That is highly likely, yes. Perhaps someone is listening right now.

\* (10:30)

**Mrs. Smith:** I wanted to go back to the domestic violence trial dates. Early in July, the Attorney

General said that domestic violence trial dates could be set within six weeks of entering a plea to the charges against them. Could the minister talk about the actual real time space that domestic violence trial dates can be set? It is very unbelievable that domestic violence trial dates could be set within six weeks in the court system. In fact, my research has shown that it is impossible, so I would like the Attorney General to please explain why he believes that domestic violence trial dates can be set within six weeks of entering a plea.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The information on when the first trial dates are available is information that comes from the department. I have no reason to question the information that is passed on to me. It is, of course, not information I have first-hand. It is what the professionals advise me based on the schedules of the courts. That time line was a figure that was given to me—as I recall, I think that was in early June or perhaps even in late May; I am going by memory now—and that was based on the dockets and what was happening at the time. What, of course, happens this time of year is that with the summer vacation rota or the summer rota, as it is called historically, I think there is sort of that annual slowdown a bit so there were some changes that occurred as we got into late June I am advised.

I understand that discussions have been ongoing with the judiciary in terms of freeing up trial dates for in-custody matters. As well, trial dates can arise when there are openings, and I think that we will see a lot more of those kinds of openings as the backlog reduction and police overtime initiative unfolds. In fact, that is proceeding according to plan now, and I know the ADM of Prosecutions has been working on this issue, as well as the police.

I only have this concern is that I am always looking to determine how best we can measure the timeliness of court cases as we are proceeding with our plans. I think I might have said this in Estimates to the member—I cannot recall if it was in Estimates, but there are various measures that are available as to time lines and historically, or I should say, as long as I know, the department has relied on a measure of the time from a date of plea to first available trial date. Then there is some certainty in that

measure; I understand that. I remember raising these issues with my predecessors. So that is the one measure. Is that the best and the fairest measure?

I have an interest in looking to see what is being done at the front end to reduce the time from the time of first appearance. That is where the concentration of a lot of effort is ongoing right now. So I have an open mind to how we can look at. What we often get then from defence lawyers is a statement to the effect, well, I cannot get a date until X, but that date will be one which is a date coincidental with the trial dates available from the courts and the available dates for the defence counsel. So I do not think that is a fair measure either. Should there be some measure around when the bulk of available court dates is? So I think we are looking at the whole issue of measurement.

I just have a note here that appears to indicate that when it comes to family violence, and that was what the member was talking about, we were talking about information we had in May and June, this is I guess historical information here really now. But the note says here that we have to emphasize the dates fluctuate on a daily basis, and the court and Prosecutions and Family Violence continue to monitor the diary regularly to ensure that the earliest dates are available. I note here that, as of July 3, there are a number of September dates available and that is even with the summer rota. I guess that is the latest information. That is from two weeks ago.

I think, you know, it can be a shifting measure, or a shifting availability. I certainly would welcome any suggestions from the member in terms of how to put in place a good measure. For now, I think we will just continue with the measure of plea to earliest trial date, but we are rethinking that. I have asked the department to look at other options. But there will always be, I think, that discrepancy too where you have defence counsel, and somebody like, you know, a very busy defence lawyer. I think we could expect to say, well, he is not available for many, many months and the court date being aligned with that person's availability may be somewhat later down the road than that of someone who has a more flexible schedule. So that, I do not think, is a very reliable statistic.

\* (10:40)

As well, I know that, across the country, there is no consistent measure of timeliness. I know that there have been attempts made to do some comparisons and it has been fraught with difficulties. All I can say is this, that I think anything that can be done to reduce time lines should be done. I think that it is not just a matter of saying, well, generally, let us reduce time lines. I say it is a matter of looking to see what kinds of cases really need swifter turn-around times and get going on that. So that is why there has been attention on family violence cases and because, by the way, the in-custody matters are causing a strain always on the Remand Centre and the number of people in custody at any given time.

**Mrs. Smith:** Well, in all due respect, no matter how this is being spun here today, it is my understanding that domestic violence trial dates are actually four to eleven months. That is the research that has come back to me. Certainly not six weeks. I would agree that anything that can be done, and certainly that is why my question earlier about the number of provincial judges on the bench today, because, currently before these appointments, there were 39. At this point in time, it is my understanding that domestic violence trial dates really have a problem, along with some other trial dates as well.

I think Doctor Gerrard has a couple of questions now that he wants to put to the Attorney General, so I will defer to him for a few minutes.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** My first question concerns the fact that Manitoba has the highest homicide rate in the country. I am just wondering whether the minister can provide more details on this statistic.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Just dealing specifically with homicide, I will first of all say that one homicide is too many. One homicide is a tragedy that can change a family and survivors for generations. In terms of the statistics and the measure of homicide, Manitoba and Western Canada have for some time, disproportionately, had higher violent crime and homicide rates. It is the nature of the country. Demographics, challenges and

different parts of the country produce different measurements.

When it comes to homicides, and the member knows, sometimes homicides and the measure is affected even by medical technology and even by the availability of an ambulance, proper responses. So there are some complicating, interesting factors that go into when there is a homicide as opposed to attempted murder, for example. The difference between life and death sometimes can be very circumstantial, depending on many things.

The number of homicides is always a relatively lower number than other types of crime. So, when there is a change of even 10 or 20 homicides in a year, the percentage can sometimes not adequately convey the difference because the numbers are relatively different than other types of crimes.

In Manitoba, for example, in 1996, we had 45 homicides in that year in the province. In 2001, there were 34. So you see that if you compared 2001 to say 1996 there was a 24% decrease in homicides in 2001. You know how statistics can say some different things, depending on the direction you look at them, I find. In fact, the more you look at them, the more interesting are the combinations, I think. So I think you have to look at the whole picture. You have to have a fair view of the statistics.

In Manitoba, for example even back in 1991, in that year there were 42 homicides. We have had as low as 27 homicides in '95. So what we see from the numbers there, the difference. Manitoba has, at times, suffered from the highest homicide rate in the country. In fact, Winnipeg has had the highest homicide rates in '94, '96, '97, '98 and 2000.

That is the background to it. It is a very tragic and unfortunate situation, of course, to have the highest rate in the country. What will happen next year, we do not know. But certainly with 34 homicides in 2001, 34 too many, we can see that any change up or down will significantly cause a significant, perhaps a very pronounced, percentage difference.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I wonder what research has been done into what is contributing to the high rate of

homicides in Manitoba and in Winnipeg. You have talked a little bit about geography, Winnipeg in particular. Rural Manitoba, by implication, may be lower. What you mentioned, demographics, particular demographics, Manitoba is not so different from other provinces that one would expect that we would have such a high homicide rate.

Is there a particular issue of whether it is primarily as a result of knives or guns or particular instruments? What is the investigation of the basis? Are we dealing with individuals in some instances who may have particular stress or mental problems? What kind of research has been done, and what is known about this so that the approach can be made in an intelligent way to try to reduce it?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Chair, the law enforcement agencies are reporting that there appears to be a pattern of alcohol use associated with many of these tragedies. Of course, the challenge of domestic violence, whether it is at the assault level or the homicide level, is one confronting the world, but one that has also been a significant challenge in the area of homicides.

The Canadian Centre for Justice statistics has taken a stab—that is not the right word—has made efforts to explain trends. One of the trends that they have talked about when we are looking at the general decline in crime rates since the early nineties was a decrease in the proportion of persons aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 34. They say that young adults have higher rates of offending and victimization than other age groups. So, if that portion of the population continues to decline, crime rates can be expected to decline. If you are in jurisdictions where that population is increasing, you can expect the opposite. In fact, it was interesting to hear the observations, or the predictions, of criminologist Doug Skoog in the media yesterday and today.

\* (10:50)

Now where that does not seem to bear out is in the year 2001. There was a 73% reduction in rates of youth charged with homicide. I think that is more applicable to general rates of crime, but fluctuations in other social and economic conditions have been recognized to interact with demographic shifts to affect crime rates. The

national crime prevention work that has been done over the last five or six years, I think, has been quite extraordinary and commendable in terms of looking at the risk factors associated with criminal involvement. I do not have those documents with me, but they do talk, of course, about the drop-out rate and its correlation to youth crime. They talk about, of course, the other demographic and socio-economic indicators. I know I have had discussions with eminent people like Yude Henteleff, for example, who very forcefully put the view forward that there is a strong correlation between learning disabilities and criminal involvement. We do know about other incidences that appear to be related to criminal involvement.

The member asked specifically related to homicide. I know there has been some research on this one, but I think the research has been more associated with criminal involvement generally.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The minister has mentioned the association between alcohol use and many of the homicides. I know that the Government has moved to make the sale of alcohol available on Sundays. Is there any evidence that the pattern of days on which there are events has changed, and what kind of approaches is the minister taking with regard to this if it is a significant risk factor, associated factor, with homicides?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I am just conferring with the Minister responsible for The Liquor Control Act because I have had this discussion every once in a while with him in terms of the Sunday opening. He advises that there is no evidence available that suggests that there is a link between increased criminal activity and the change in those hours.

I want to just leave with the member—I know he is looking at the homicide rates—that when you look at the evidence as to whether Manitobans have greater personal safety now than they did in the previous year, if you accept that the measure of Canadian Centre for Justice statistics on violent crime is the best available measure of that, it is important to keep that in mind that the violent crime rate in Manitoba went down 2 percent in 2001, while bucking the national trend which saw an increase nationally

across Canada. That is very disturbing to see that there is an increase in violent crime across Canada when we have seen a decreasing trend for quite some time.

In Manitoba, I am heartened, I am hopeful, that this may be indicative of a trend. As the member knows, the nineties were a very difficult time for the violent crime stats in this province. We had led the country through many of the years in the nineties and had the highest violent crime rate increase in some of those years and suffered from increases. I mean, I do not think that—I will just leave it at that.

I think homicide by itself, we should be careful that that is not the measure of safety. There are other kinds of criminal offences where there is a greater measure of the level of violence in society, assaults being one of them, of course, and robberies and so on. Assaults did go down by 2 percent. Robberies went down 2 percent in that year. Then, of course, there are the other categories of crimes against property.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I would like to ask the minister a question or two about the rate of sexual assaults. I understand that the overall violent crime rate, for example, while it may have gone down a little bit, is still in Manitoba among the highest of the provinces. I think I remember seeing a reference to the fact that the sexual assault rate in Manitoba continues to be relatively high. Maybe the minister would comment.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The sexual assault rate went up one percent in 2001 over the previous year. I would say it is still 37 percent, something like that, lower than the early nineties. Saskatchewan had a higher rate in 2001. So that is my understanding of the statistics.

The challenge of sexual assault, though, is that there are some studies that suggest that many of the instances of sexual assault are not reported, for example, within trust relationships within families. That is an ongoing concern. That is why we established the child-friendly courtroom and enhanced the support service. It is important to get across to Manitobans that the justice system will support them when they come forward, that it will do all it can to reduce

any further victimization as a result of the justice system.

As well, that is why there are initiatives like the National sex offender registry, which I think we all support, which is so important. We, as well, invested significant funds, hundreds of thousands of dollars as I recall, in the violent crime linkage system, managed by the RCMP, to provide the evidentiary linkages.

As well, we are looking at other ways of dealing with sexual offences and making sure that there is a better level of reporting and more effective responses, of course with the overall objective of reducing victimization.

I do not know if the member has any other questions with regard to sexual assault.

**Mr. Gerrard:** We talked a little bit about, with homicide, some of the risk factors. I would ask the minister: In terms of sexual assault, what, in Manitoba, has been identified as risk factors and what measures are being taken to look at and prevent problems?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** One of the correlates to sexual offences is the predatory nature of it. It is a serious factor and a very challenging factor. One of the correlates, it is not determinative, but one of the correlates is, of course, earlier offences and repeat offences. That is why, unlike other offences, there has been an emphasis on notification to communities. In Manitoba, we have a Community Notification Advisory Committee, for example. The Province provided some leadership on that one and we have enhanced it in terms of offences against children being able to lead to community notification.

That is why the National sex offender registry was such a priority. It is because, unfortunately often, there is a higher risk identified when there has been earlier offences. The VICLAS initiative, with the RCMP as well, is based on that linkage.

Another area that is related to this is the whole area of stalking. For example, we did successfully lobby the federal government to double the penalty from five to ten years for stalking, which then also allows the option to the

courts to have indefinite sentencing, which, by the way, I support in cases where there is someone who just continues to be a predator, who is obsessive, when it comes to sexual assaults or stalking. I think we have to move away from this notion.

\* (11:00)

We had a brief discussion yesterday that there should only be sentencing based on an earlier precedent in terms of a restricted period of time. That provision of the Criminal Code can be better used, I think, and that is why we put in place, in Prosecutions, a High Risk Offender Unit. It is comprised of three prosecutors, and I think there is a support person there. What they do, we have those people off from the workaday of Prosecutions so that they could put together those applications for indefinite sentencing in those kinds of orders that provide better supervision and control over released sexual assault offenders. So that is part of the nature of that crime, and I think in large part, I described some of the responses.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I would ask the minister whether there is any indication that the measures on your research which would show that the measures being taken to date eventually had any impact. I mean, the sexual assault rate in Manitoba continues to be high, relative to the Canadian average, for example.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The approaches across North America, of course, are different in the different jurisdictions. In one way, I guess, they are all incubators for different policy approaches. But, in Manitoba, I think there has been leadership demonstrated over the years in terms of innovative approaches that, on a rational basis, suggest a difference is being made.

Can you measure a crime not committed? No. That is the problem with many of these approaches. But we can say that we now have in place the infrastructure, the organizational ability and successes in concentrating or focussing, or specializing is the best word, on the high risk, particularly the predatory, offences. Mr. Chair, the establishment of the High Risk Offender Unit, I think, is probably the first in Canada or one of the first—*[interjection]* It is the first in the

country, so there are people watching this closely that look to innovation in prosecutions, and, of course, we are very closely watching this.

There was a frustration on the part of prosecutors in particular, and of course policy-makers, that there had not been the time available, the dedication of resources to putting together those applications for the court, the evidence, the interviews of witnesses sometimes going back and victims going back some many years, so that there can be better use made of the Criminal Code in terms of dealing with predatory and high-risk offences. The Criminal Code, by the way, has markedly improved just in the last even few years, in terms of providing new tools to deal with people who can be expected to re-offend on a sexual assault. So that is the state of play there.

In terms of a mathematical measure, it is so difficult in the area of crime prevention. In fact, I think that is one of the reasons that a lot of crime prevention initiatives have been either defeated or not wholeheartedly endorsed across all the political spectrums because it is so hard to measure at the time of allocation of monies or at election time the effectiveness of prevention tools. I think it rests with policymakers and the public to assess the rational connection between strategies and the objective.

**Mr. Gerrard:** A couple of follow-ups from that question. One is: What proportion of the sexual assaults would in fact be committed by high risk offenders? In other words, if one totally eliminated the high risk offender-based sexual assault, what would be left? Secondly, just to make it clearer how these statistics are derived, is the number of sexual assaults based on the number of charges or the number of convictions? If there was a sexual assault last year but a conviction this year, when does it come into the statistics?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, just starting with the second question first, the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics I think has had a very difficult time over the years having consistent measurements of crime. Sometimes it is said that victimization surveys actually may be a better indication of the prevalence of crime in society. I will just give you one example. Part of the reason for

the increase in crime, the general crime rate in Manitoba, aside from the auto theft driver, was that they changed the measurement of when there was a mischief offence. They changed it from recording mischief offences only when there was a suspect—not a conviction but a suspect—to when any time there is a report of a mischief offence.

I have no quarrel with that, by the way. If someone is asserting that mischief occurred, then that should be part of the crime statistics. I mean, you are preparing apples and oranges even already, in 2001 over 2000. I know, too, that many offences in here, like bail violations for example, that is law enforcement driven. It is driven by probation and police charges being laid about the violations, so when there is an increase in bail violations, it does not mean that there are more people breaching their bail. It means there is more enforcement of the bail conditions. Is that a bad thing?

So, we have, with the different crimes, different ways that it is being recorded, but my understanding from these statistics is that the measure is based on complaints from most kinds of crime. The police in fact just yesterday were saying how the reporting differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. That, as well, I think makes it difficult to compare one province's statistics to another.

I will just go back to the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics, and I will just conclude my remarks. They say that this report is an examination of 2001 police-reported crime in Canada. So really the answer to the question is how does a particular police agency report its crime to the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics? Surely criminal incidents that come to their attention comprise this and those are incidents detected through police investigation. I think that is a general description. It certainly leaves it open to different police forces to report on a different basis.

\* (11:10)

There, also, is no distinction in the measures between high-risk and the medium or lower-risk sexual offenders. We have that kind of analysis internally in Corrections. We can provide those

kinds of figures to the member if he wants them, or if he has further breakdowns he would want, he could pass that on to me and I would be pleased to get that back to him, because I think we could put that together. I think those kinds of figures may exist on a fairly timely basis.

**Mr. Gerrard:** If the minister could put that together and provide that information, it would be most helpful. I think that, Mr. Chairperson, finishes my questions for the moment. I will pass it back to the Member for Fort Garry.

**Mrs. Smith:** I would like to ask the Attorney General, we are here in Estimates and it is easiest to ask at this time. The security management bill—we had met as an all-party delegation, and members on our side of the House did bring forth some amendments. It was agreed that the Justice Minister's staff and the Justice Minister would compile everything and bring it forward. When could I see that so we could put this under examination?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** That was given a draft; it was compiled across the departments. I think the person for doing that—I was given that, I think, yesterday, or the day before. I just have to spend a few minutes just to review it. It is in a letter form and, hopefully, I can get it to the member, hopefully, today. If not, I will certainly try and get it to her tomorrow. So I know all the issues, all the concerns may not be addressed to the satisfaction of the member. So be it, we can have those discussions, but I think many of the concerns, though, were certainly addressed, and, I think, particularly in the area of the aerial spraying. There were some other questions that were outstanding. I was very pleased with how that had gone. I hope that this is a satisfactory way of moving the bill forward, and I think the objective was just to break down the logjam a bit just to get the thing moving along. So, hopefully, that will facilitate that.

**Mrs. Smith:** Could I also ask that for Bill 48, if I could get a spreadsheet on that because I do not have that spreadsheet and that information? If I could get it today, it would be very much appreciated. That is The Legal Profession Act. I would very much appreciate that.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** If there is a side-by-side or document that exists, we will give it to the member. I am not sure that there was one for that act. But we will give the member whatever we have in terms of the technical notes.

Mr. Chair, I might just also add, though, I want to make this offer—yesterday, we introduced the common-law property act, 50-something, but similar to The Charter Compliance Act. The staff put together notes on the impact of the amendments on each act. That was completed yesterday, so I am eager to get that to the member as soon as possible, perhaps even if we can walk that over today to you, because there were some translation challenges that we had with that bill, let alone the logistics of putting the burden on the Family Law group as we did with our legislation this session. So I do want that to go over to the member so that she can get looking at that. I think the principles are straightforward, but I think I know the member will want to be satisfied on each act in terms of what the changes are.

**Mrs. Smith:** If these things could be done today, that would be helpful at our committee levels, and also No. 51, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act. Do you have a spreadsheet or a side-by-side on that particular bill that you could share with our side of the House?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I believe I signed the letter off to the member and to the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) about three weeks ago on that, so the member should have that. If it did not go to her, perhaps it went to the Opposition House Leader. It is traditional that, when the bill is tabled, within a week or two the side-by-sides or the explanations go over there. If the member does not have it—I mean we can look for it, but I suspect that if she does not have it, the Opposition House Leader will have it.

**Mrs. Smith:** In the busyness of the House, it would be very helpful if you would send copies to both of us because, in actual fact, that is my jurisdiction and I am the one who deals with it. The House Leader is extremely competent, and he and I work together very, very carefully, but that one may have fallen through the cracks. I will consult with the House Leader on that as well, but having copies is very helpful. The other

one that was mentioned, 53, I think it was, I do not see it on the Order Paper here. There is one more bill that I had some questions on, but my notes are not here so I will bring them at a later date.

If we could get these compiled, 34 and Bills 2 and 48 and again 51. That might be, 51 may be, the House Leader did discuss The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act. Perhaps it was sent. I know the content, the number I am not sure of. So he may have had that information; I am sure he does. But if you could send it also to me, that would be very helpful, and I will speak to the House Leader today. We did not talk numbers when we talked about bills, we talked about content, so I will just double-check with him, and we probably have discussed that one because we did the other day. So I will just double-check on that.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I have advised the Opposition House Leader and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) that Bill 54, the conflict of interest act, will be distributed today. I do not know if the member is doing that or not. That was assigned to me through some convenience. It is not particularly a Justice bill, but as a House Leader I am having carriage of that. Unless I am advised otherwise, I will just continue to deal with the Opposition House Leader on that bill in his capacity as House Leader. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Before the member speaks, she will be recognized for Hansard purposes.

**Mrs. Smith:** My apologies. I got caught up in the content and in the discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bill 51, that is one I do need the side-by-side and the spreadsheet on. I will double-check with the House Leader, but it is the conflict of interest that we did discuss. I am not sure of the bill number. You tell me it is Bill 54?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Mrs. Smith:** All right. That is the one that has been under discussion, 51. I need to have that information on that particular bill.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I am sorry the member does not have that information, because, of course, it is a statute that we can get through, I think, usually fairly easily. It is not usually a substantive bill.

\* (11:20)

**Mrs. Smith:** That is probably why, in all due respect, it slipped through the cracks, because if there was a problem or anything there, certainly that would have been immediately on my desk.

Going on to another area right now, during the last election campaign the current Government promised that they would establish a home security loan plan for seniors for some action on home invasions and, indeed, auto theft. So could the Attorney General please outline what has happened with that promise: the home security loan program for seniors? I understand that the dollars that were attached to that particular initiative was \$180,000. I would like to know if this loan program has been made available to seniors, and to how much money, how much support has been given to seniors in this area?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Chair, the amount, just as a preliminary point, was when the program was fully operational. This initiative is one that is being developed jointly between the Seniors Directorate and the Department of Family Services and Housing. We are looking at this initiative as part of a larger package actually, of seniors security initiatives.

Options have been developed by a working group, in terms of how this program can be delivered in a way that meets the objectives and is fair. I know there have been consultations with several outside agencies as well, in terms of how the program will look. We recently had a meeting with representatives of the working group, I think in the last couple of weeks. There has been some good development on it. They have been asked to come back with some further options. So the working group is going back, and there will be some consultations with the three affected departments. We expect a further document back and further results very soon, over the next couple of months or so.



**Mrs. Smith:** So, to clarify, what the Justice Minister is telling me: that there is no home security loan program currently available for seniors, but there is a working group in place that is examining the situation?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** That is correct, yes.

**Mrs. Smith:** During the last election, another thing that was brought forward, another aspect of that was to—there was a promise to take action on home invasions by making prosecution of home invaders a priority. Mr. Chair, could the Justice Minister please tell this House how home invaders have been made a priority using specific examples, how long it took, and what happened when they were brought to trial?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There are actually a couple of initiatives we can discuss in terms of the focus on home invasions.

First, in terms of its prioritization that is necessary when it comes to prosecution, the gang unit, although it is called the Prosecutions' Gang Unit, has also been charged with responsibility for generally dealing with home invasion prosecutions, and there may be some exceptions as to when that is impossible. That includes, for example, when regional courts deal with home invasions, and it may be that there are some couplings with other offences, which give a good reason for that unit not to prosecute home invasions. That kind of specialization and, as well, the attention to home invasions and prosecutions now means that we have not only the access to, but, of course, the latest intelligence on the precedents in Canada, the ability to strongly put the arguments on precedent to the court to strengthen when there is a focus on the prosecution of home invasions.

The other action that we have taken as a province, and we have had some assistance from other jurisdictions, is to try to convince the federal government to establish a separate offence of home invasion in the Criminal Code. I think most Canadians would be very surprised to discover that there is no offence of home invasion. Right now, the Criminal Code will treat a home invasion conviction as break and enter or a type of robbery. I think quite frankly that that does not emphasize the gravity of the crime. I think

there is a qualitative difference in how it could be recorded. It is not just a break and enter with violence; it is more than the sum of its parts. So I think this is an abhorrent and repugnant crime. It is horribly victimizing. It strikes terror into people and, indeed, into communities. I think there must be a signal to the courts on how serious the crime is. In addition to that, we have argued with the federal government that it can masquerade as well the criminal record, and might even misinform anyone referring to the criminal record as to the risk and background of an offender.

The actual incidence of home invasions also then is not known, and it may be that in Winnipeg Police Service there is a measure of home invasion, but that measure will not be the same across the law enforcement agencies in Canada. I know that as a fact. So there are different definitions as to when there is a home invasion. It causes a problem for the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics in reporting the incidents of home invasion. I think it is important just for the nature of criminal intelligence that we know who the home invaders are, what the backgrounds are, who is being victimized, what the locations are to combat and prevent that kind of crime. So that is part of our strategy. Of course, we look forward to when we can unveil the home security program. We are going to do it right, of course. It is multidepartmental, but we are committed to having that unveiled along with other initiatives. I only wish that the federal government would be more responsive to our request for an offence of home invasion.

By the way, the nature of the offence is one that, I think, is a very tough approach. We are taking the view, and it is not shared by all provinces, I can tell you, that the home invasion should be defined as when there is an entering in the home, whether the intent to terrorize was made before or after entering into the home. That is a very important distinction.

I hope that the members opposite would support us on that as we proceed to make that point. But I can tell you that the new Minister Cauchon was very clear with me that he would not adopt that yet. There has been a tweaking of the Criminal Code to make home invasion an aggravating factor in a robbery. He said he

wanted to see the experience with that. Well, quite frankly, we will not really know the experience because it is not identified as a unique offence under the Criminal Code. So that is another aspect that I wanted to leave with the member.

\* (11:30)

Also, we have been funding Age and Opportunity to deal with crimes against seniors. I know the work they do with break and enters. I know that first-hand. Since year 2000, we have been funding the Brandon Police Service for its Older Victim Services program. Mr. Chair, I am very pleased to see the interest by the Brandon police in providing that service. So that has been on going now, I cannot remember when in the year 2000 that began.

The Seniors Directorate also has an educational program for seniors' safety. I know they are continually re-evaluating that. So those are some of the initiatives that speak to that commitment.

**Mrs. Smith:** Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is, quite clearly, that this Government has been three years in power, and the promise was made to have a home security loan program in place. It has not happened. It is like we have our working group, which is a politician's way of saying, I really do not have the money and I do not have the vision, so we have yet another working group. For that working group to be working for three years, to me, seems an awful long time.

I would offer the Attorney General to sit down with me and, maybe, we could get it in place in, maybe, three weeks. I think that would be a reasonable length of time, especially when this Government ran on this promise.

The other thing of it is the promise was made, too. There have been recent home invasions, by the way, if the Attorney General is aware of that. I quote the Attorney General, actually the Premier of this province, as saying we will make our communities safer and restore faith in Manitoba's justice system. In all due respect, there is a lot of political spin going on here all over the place.

The fact of the matter is, could the Attorney General tell me one incident of a home invasion,

people who have invaded a senior's home, or a non-senior's home, where it was made a priority and where they have come to justice?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** We could commit to giving some materials to the member, noting some prosecutions and, as well, I think, it would be useful to pass on some of the Manitoba precedents in terms of home invasion sentencing principles that are developing which, I might add, are becoming more heartening in terms of the recognition by the courts of the seriousness of this offence.

**Mrs. Smith:** I have to say in reading the Hansard in years past it was very interesting to hear this present Justice Minister talking about how they would make the streets safer and talking about the stats, talking about the increase in crime, yet when it is this Government's turn to solve the problems we hear political spin about, oh, well, stats do not really matter; *Juristat* does not really matter; everything is fine here in the city of Winnipeg, here in the downtown.

Clearly, it was fine to pass a bill to open the pubs on Sunday downtown. Now we have seen a dramatic 200% increase in crime downtown. There is a problem here. I hear today in Estimates the Attorney General saying there is no effect with the Sunday pubs opening, that there is no effect. In actual fact, I visited the Health Sciences Centre emergency area on a Sunday. It is a completely different picture from what it was before that legislation went through. In all due respect, what happened downtown was when the pubs were closed on Sunday, they did not have such a ready opportunity to take legs and walk to the residences and cause blood in the hallways, because violent crime and drinking had continued to occur, but what we see now, in all due respect, is a dramatic 200% downtown crime rate jump in crime.

I would say quite clearly if your Government cannot get any evidence that the opening of the Sunday pubs had a negative influence on downtown, in all due respect you have blinders on. The fact of the matter is now, instead of the police and the emergency vehicles having a rest on Sunday because the pubs are closed, the police and the emergency areas are open for business and much more active business in the

emergency of the Health Sciences Centre, much more active business downtown with drinking.

The fact of the matter is that has not contributed in a positive way to downtown at all. I think there has to be some point in time when the current Government has got to wake up and not become anesthetized and avoid issues. The fact of the matter is this bill that was passed in this House which members on this side of the House spoke clearly against did come into effect. Now as of very shortly this past month the crime in the city was up 7 percent in '01 and a dramatic 200% downtown increase in crime. Winnipeg's crime rate increased last year, including a 27% jump in homicide and attempted homicide. Downtown was the centre of a lot of these things happening.

Having said this, I would think it would be almost embarrassing to stand up in the House and say the stats do not matter. It is embarrassing. Human life matters. Crime rates matter. When you look at the city and you see the spread of crime in urban areas, crimes that never happened before, and I take example of my constituency. I cannot remember, ever, in the history of Fort Garry, when we had firebombings. We had two firebombings this past week. That is troublesome, plus there are other things that I know happened in Fort Garry, and I will not go into them specifically at this point, but the kinds of crimes that we never saw before, except in the past two years.

Mr. Chair, I think it is a concern that that storefront for the Hells Angels is still open and running. I think it is a definite concern that there was a denial in this House about the gang numbers and, pressed, the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh) had to come forward and his gang numbers were higher than what mine were.

Mr. Chair, I think it is a concern when there is a political spin put on these tremendous problems. When this Government was in opposition, this Government was very vocal on all the problems: the crime rates, the court backlogs, the bails, the plea bargains, you name it. This particular Justice Minister who is now the Attorney General had lots to say.

Now at this time, in all due respect, it really baffles me how politically smooth this Justice Minister has become. I am imploring the Justice Minister, or pointing out the Justice Minister now has to wake up and take some responsibility, because it is like the cyber tip line.

I mean, this Attorney General here in Estimates today has to explain to Manitobans why he would put forward a press release stating this week that 18 police officers will be on the street, \$800,000 will be committed to them, and even telling Manitobans—excuse me, I would really like to be paid attention to. This is a very serious matter. I am not a polished politician. I have not lived my life in this Legislature. I have had a real job outside these buildings for a lot of years, and what I am seeing here is shameful.

\* (11:40)

When that press release was put out and trying to lull the public to sleep saying, hey, there are 18 new police officers on the streets, knowing full well that that radar system is not even up, the money is not even there, and it might be a year before those police officers are on the street. That was not in the press release. And the cyber tip line, the first of its kind; what a wonderful thing. I said, yes, what a wonderful thing. Good for the Attorney General, until 460-some days later the thing is still not up, and you know why the thing is still not up? It is not up because this Attorney General wanted to make a name for himself.

This Attorney General wanted to, not only make it provincial, but make it federal, and with all due respect, this Attorney General was elected in his constituency in the province of Manitoba, and you have to take care of Manitoba first. That is what is important. What should have been done is the cyber tip line should have been put up in Manitoba, it should have been tested, the resources should have been there, and then, go on federally, make it national. I would love to have a national line here, if we could take care of Manitobans first.

Now, when we learn about the stats, all of a sudden this *Juristat* really does not mean very much. Well, in actual fact, the *Juristat* means a whole lot. It means that crime is tracked across Canada, based on the arrests that have taken place, and there is a comparison between cities. It matters we have the highest crime rate according to the *Juristat* in Canada. It matters. It matters that the Hells Angels have not only moved into town two years ago, but now have an operating business downtown. It matters. It matters that we have 4000 gang members. It matters that there are firebombings in Fort Garry. It matters that home invasions are occurring more and more. What baffles me and worries me is that a lot of people seem to be protecting their jobs. A lot of people seem to want to put a real rosy spin on it.

I think, if we are going to solve problems, this Attorney General has to answer the question here in Estimates, to me, this morning, that if we are going to solve problems, we have to acknowledge the problem is there. We have to be able to say that we need to work together to make this better. When parents are afraid to let their daughters drive cars at twelve o'clock at night because of the things that are going on in this city, there is a problem, and, you know, sir, that is what I am hearing.

I do not want to sound like you sounded, like this Attorney General sounded in opposition. I do not want to do that. I have been trying to see why the change, suddenly, when this party came into government. I can almost predict the answers in Question Period that will be given. In actual fact, this is very scary. It is very scary because I see what was happening in our city and in our province.

I think the answer is, number one, to get more resources out there in the police force. I mean real resources, not a press release that says 18 police officers and there will be \$800,000 and nobody knows when, how, or where this is going to happen. This is yet another empty commitment. Not an empty commitment like, seniors will be okay because we will provide them with some sort of a loan that they can get their home security installed and be okay. Well, you know what? I have talked to seniors. They do not feel okay. They do not like to come to the door after

dark. They do not like to walk in suburbia, in urban areas that used to be safe here in the city of Winnipeg. A lot of these senior are on fixed incomes. I am sorry, but with all due respect, they cannot wait three years for results.

There has to be a plan in place. I would like to be able to say that in the city, we are working together and the crime has gone down, without feeling a need to put a spin on the stats. I would rather see addressing of the problem. Could the Attorney General acknowledge, today, in Estimates, that there is a problem and that, indeed, the police resources need to be there and that the backlogs and the things that are happening in the court system right now need to be addressed? It is shameful. It is shameful, the plea bargains. It is shameful the kinds of court backlogs that are there right now. It is worse than it ever was. I would like to have the Attorney General comment and have on record what his point of view is. I am sure it will differ from mine, but I would like to have a public acknowledgement of where this Government is on the comments I have made this morning.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** First, I think all Manitobans have to acknowledge that the crime statistics are a challenge facing all Manitobans, in particular, a challenge facing those who have roles to play in the justice system. We have to reinforce the reminder that making Manitoba safer is a responsibility that goes beyond the justice system. The justice system, by and large, responds to crimes already committed. A 911 justice system, I do not think, is sufficient. We have to get to the front of the challenge. We have to keep people out of crime. We have to do what we can to ensure that there is a social and economic foundation that assures Manitobans of hopes and opportunities. We even need systems in place to keep youth busier. We have to remind Manitobans that even when they are volunteering at the community centre, or with the Scouts and the Guides, that they are actually also involved in combatting the challenge of crime.

In terms of the Justice Department itself, I think we have made some significant progress in realigning how we are positioned to deal with Prosecutions and Corrections, as well as we have seen the advent of new initiatives in the Criminal

Justice Division involving new laws and new partnerships.

We have been looking for criminal justice innovation that is being monitored. Some of the initiatives are pilots. Some are based on work done by the former administration. Some are just based on best practices that have been discovered in criminal justice systems around us. The challenge is one that, of course, cannot be solved solely at the courthouses; what I have often said. But at the same time, we have to ensure that the justice system is firm and well managed and organized and properly resourced. In times of strains on resources, the Government has been able to prioritize the support, financial support for policing in Manitoba and for Prosecutions and, indeed, Corrections. We will continue to see how we can better deploy those resources.

\* (11:50)

Just in terms of the cyber tip line, the advice I had yesterday was that the financial commitments have now been achieved and this has been a very important step in our progress. My understanding is that there are expectations that the line will be unveiled in September.

Mr. Chairperson, the member had some questions. I will just pass over some documents in terms of The Legal Profession Act and The Common-Law Partners' Property Act. In the meantime, we will look for the description. It is not a side-by-side, but there is some descriptive document on the statute, the errors act.

As well, Mr. Chair, I have information now on the complement of the judiciary. The Court of Appeal has seven regular justices and two supernumerary for a total of nine, and there are no vacancies now on that court.

In the Court of Queen's Bench there are 34 regular members, 8 supernumerary, for a total of 42, and there are now no vacancies.

In the Provincial Court, there are 39 regular judges. There is one vacancy, and that is a total of 40.

In the Masters, there are four regular, one vacancy, for a total of five.

**Mrs. Smith:** Is there any plan to appoint any more judges at this time?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I had a discussion with the new Chief Judge, and one of the first orders of business was a discussion about the process now to fill the vacancy in the Provincial Court. I know he will be back in a few weeks, and we said we would conclude our discussions at that time and get on with the nomination process.

**Mrs. Smith:** I do have a series of questions and things that need to be tied up today. Things are moving a little slower than I anticipated, so we will see how things go today, but I am going to have to jump around just a little bit to ensure that we do get these questions in. So I want to turn the attention to the Manitoba 2002 Estimates of Revenue for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002. On page 8 of that document, under Justice, fines and costs are recorded. I was wondering how much revenue is generated by highway traffic fines? How much revenue actually goes into the coffers from that aspect?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Just to clarify, is the member asking for a distinction between highway traffic fines and other kinds of fines? *[interjection]* We would have to provide that then in writing because we only have the global amount here in the House, which is the amount that is estimated in the Estimates based on experience. We can provide that to the member. There will have to be a request for that information from the Courts Division.

**Mrs. Smith:** I know it is close to twelve o'clock now, so if the House is willing, we can call it twelve o'clock with them going into a new section. It would be helpful to do that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will recess the session at 12. *[interjection]* Are you calling it 12?

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Conrad Santos):** The hour being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, July 18, 2002**

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