



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

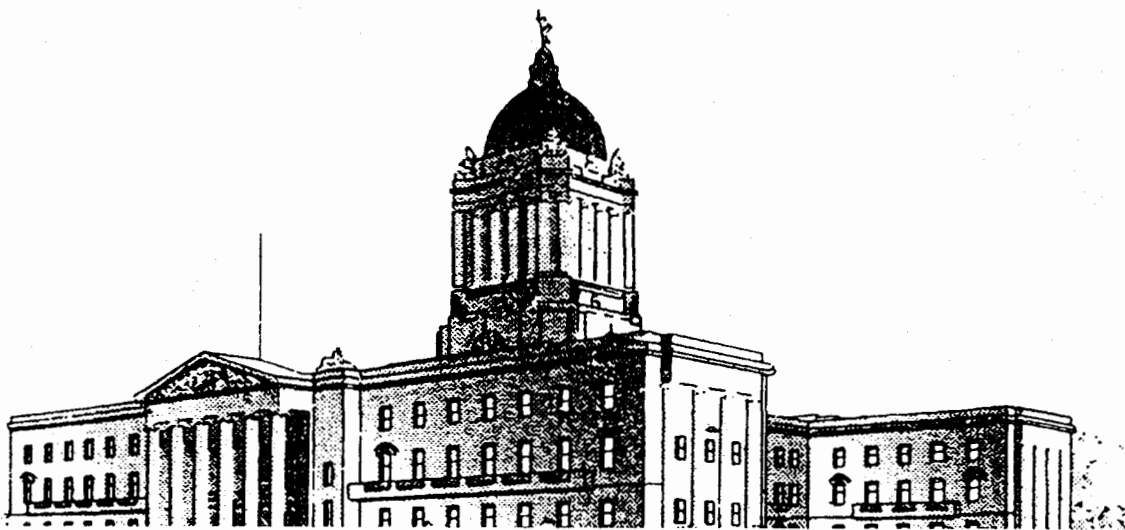
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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



Vol. LII No. 69 - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 23, 2002

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
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.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, 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

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****PRESENTING PETITIONS****Universities Property Tax**

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Glenn Dobson, Verna Mae Dobson, Charlotte Dobson and others praying that the Government of Manitoba consider ensuring that local property and education taxes do not rise as a result of the offloading of provincial responsibilities onto the City of Winnipeg, the City of Brandon, and Fort Garry, Assiniboine South, Winnipeg No. 1, St. Boniface and St. Vital school divisions.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2002-2003, Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mr. Gary Robichaud, the Leader of the Prince Edward Island New Democratic Party. This visitor is the guest of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**West Nile Virus
Mosquito Fogging**

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, less than two weeks

ago on July 12 the Health Minister invoked legislation passed by the Doer government instructing the entire city of Winnipeg be fogged for mosquitoes. At the time the Health Minister said, and I quote: After discussions with the Premier and the mayor, we have determined the Province will be asking that the entire city of Winnipeg be fogged.

The Health Minister added, and I quote: It is our decision from the Province that an imminent health hazard is possible.

Does the Premier still endorse his Minister of Health's (Mr. Chomiak) statement that an imminent health hazard is possible, considering that to date four birds have tested positive for the West Nile disease?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray: Well, that is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because for the past couple of nights the media have reported that Wolseley residents opposed the Doer government's decision to fog the entire city, and they have been blocking fogging trucks from public roadways and alleys in the neighbourhood. The Premier is quoted in today's *Winnipeg Free Press* that he does not have evidence the protests are keeping the trucks at bay. That is what the Premier says. He has also said that they have no plans to use the courts to force Wolseley protesters out of the way of the city's fogging trucks.

A number of other Wolseley residents who support the fogging that the Health Minister has requested to deal with the imminent health hazard have threatened to make citizens' arrests. I would ask the Premier why his Minister of Health's imminent health threat does not apply to the residents of Wolseley.

* (13:35)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, the legislative framework that was in

existence allowed for a so-called individual-right application for a so-called buffer zone. When we brought the bill in last November and December, we dealt with the issue of one of the health risks we were concerned about, the potential of West Nile disease. The Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has overridden the buffer zone that was in existence when we came into office. Before, prior to that, there was no spraying going on for mosquitoes in Wolseley. Last night I understand over 60 percent of Wolseley was sprayed; the night before they were to be sprayed or fogged but the winds were over 60 kilometres an hour. The bottom line is before the minister made his ruling there was no spraying going on; now there has been some progress. The conditions continue for us to deal with mosquito populations in this populated area.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, on July 12 the Health Minister acknowledged that there would be opposition to fogging but said he was doing what he felt was necessary to prevent a major disaster. He demanded it. The minister said, and I quote: We have made the decision that the public protection is more important.

It appears as though public protection is not what is important to the Government when it comes to the residents of Wolseley. If the Premier believes the fogging of mosquitoes is about public protection and a necessity because of the possibility of, according to the Minister of Health, an imminent health hazard, why does the Premier dismiss plans to use the courts to force protesters out of the way to protect those that are against fogging?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the law is written in such a way that the ministerial order is the law. The requirement for fogging is there. In fact, the law is written on the basis of public health to disallow an injunction for somebody who was opposed to fogging or other means of public health if members opposite will read the law and the act that was passed in this Legislature.

We believe the rights of the majority of this community to be protected in a potential health risk supersedes the individual rights of a few that are either protesting or having a position of using the buffer zone legislation that was in place when members opposite were in

government. That is the decision of the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak).

Mr. Speaker, the police yesterday made some individual decisions. We do not direct the police from these legislative buildings how to implement certain requirements; but the conditions for fogging that were issued by the Minister of Health, the decision we made was to override the buffer zone and we are still committed to the decision the Minister of Health made.

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

Mr. Murray: Over the weekend we have learned that two more dead birds have tested positive for the West Nile virus in the rural municipalities of Ritchot and St. Andrews. The Health Minister has said that fogging is necessary to prevent a disaster. When will fogging take place in the R.M.s of Ritchot and St. Andrews?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the member ought to know that there is a variety of responses dealing with this particular issue. First was the issue of larviciding. For the first time, as I understand, there was larviciding both inside and outside the city of Winnipeg. Significant resources were invested this year to deal with larviciding around the city of Winnipeg.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, for the past several years there has been a significant ongoing education campaign as it relates to the West Nile virus. It has kicked in in high gear as a result of the finding of a positive for West Nile virus in *Corvus*, so the plan is in operation.

With respect to fogging specifically as it relates to the city of Winnipeg, in this large population area we felt it was in the interests of public safety that fogging, that an extended—

* (13:40)

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a Health Minister who has demanded, within two hours of finding a bird in Winnipeg, demanded that the entire city of Winnipeg be

fogged. Yet, when crows are found outside of Winnipeg in rural areas of Manitoba, it appears that there is nothing that is going to be done. My question is: Why does the minister not take the same approach to rural Manitoba as he demands in Winnipeg?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of factual inaccuracies in the Leader of the Opposition's question. It reminds me of the Leader of the Opposition's shopping list before the session started when he ran around rural Manitoba saying: The NDP is going to close rural hospitals, and he was wrong then.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. When we put out information, it is correct information, not like a press release done by this minister which stated it was the municipality of Ritchot when it was actually the municipality of Taché.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, what I was attempting to do in my response was to clear up the misapprehension of the Leader of the Opposition and try to deal with a public health issue as opposed to turning it into a political issue which was what the Leader of the Opposition's only interest in this regard appears to be.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before making my ruling, I would like to remind all honourable members, a point of order should be used to draw the attention of the Speaker to a breach of a rule or a departure of procedure.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order. Answers to questions should not provoke debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the honourable minister to conclude his answer.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, on the day in question as I indicated, at five o'clock in the afternoon, which is about six or seven hours following the finding of a positive bird in Winnipeg, that I had talked with the mayor, that I had talked with the Premier (Mr. Doer), and they were invoking the order in order to override the buffer zone with respect to fogging.

I also indicated in a press conference that the Leader of the Opposition could have attended. We will make available the resources of the Province in all Manitoba to take whatever measures are necessary in order to protect public safety.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Government's policy in regard to fogging for mosquitoes following the discovery of birds with West Nile virus seems to be lacking.

The Minister of Health talks about inaccuracies. Well, let me try and put his quotation then on the record. He said regarding the fogging of the city of Winnipeg that, quote, it is our decision from the Province that an imminent health hazard is possible, an accurate comment of what the minister said.

The minister has also said, quote, we have made the decision that the public protection is more important, Mr. Speaker. It is the Government's policy that public protection is important unless people block fogging trucks and unless you live in rural Manitoba.

Why treat them like second-class citizens?

* (13:45)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, not only is larviciding available both in urban and rural Manitoba, and we have made it available, fogging is available in both rural Manitoba and urban Manitoba.

If the member really wants to be accurate, he ought to look at the comments of the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) when we discussed debate on this bill when we brought it before the Legislature, because the Member for

Ste. Rose talked about concerns with respect to spraying and other issues that had to be taken into consideration. So the Leader of the Opposition ought to check the comments of his own member of his own caucus in this regard.

West Nile Virus Mosquito Fogging

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, when the Doer government introduced Bill 10, they indicated it was very important to override the buffer zone in case, and I quote, of an imminent health emergency. Well, the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) supported Bill 10 when it was introduced, as did all members of this House, and my question today would be for the Deputy Premier.

Why is she no longer supporting her Government's efforts to address this imminent health hazard?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I am proud of the fact that the Deputy Premier and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister (Ms. Friesen), along with our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) have increased the drainage budget, as opposed to decreasing the drainage budget. I know they do not get it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lakeside, on a point of order.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, it is a point of order or indeed, probably a matter of privilege, for the First Minister to put deliberately wrong information—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the honourable member rising on a point of order or a matter of privilege? On a point of order.

The honourable Member for Lakeside, on a point of order.

Mr. Enns: A lengthy examination of the Minister of Conservation's Estimates revealed no

increase in drainage money in the province of Manitoba.

Furthermore, running his department with 9% staff vacancies that the whole Government is running, by orders of the ministry of the Treasury Board—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Prior to making a ruling, I would like to once again remind all honourable members a point of order is a very serious matter. It should be raised to point out to the Speaker the breach of a rule or the departure of procedure of the House, not to be used for debate or rebuttal. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

The honourable First Minister, were you rising on the same point of order?

Mr. Doer: You have ruled.

Mr. Speaker: No?

On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Lakeside, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, to conclude his answer.

Mr. Doer: To continue. For the first time ever there has been mapping of those water storage areas, again, agreed to and led by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen).

For the first time ever in the history of Manitoba, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Deputy Premier had a larviciding program in the total Capital Region of Winnipeg, something nobody across the way has ever done.

* (13:50)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Emerson, on a point of order.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): On a point of order, I would suggest the Premier look at the records and he will find that the mapping of water storage areas in this province was started a number of years before—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am going to once again point out to all honourable members, a point of order is a very serious matter. There is lots of time for asking questions, for answering questions if you want the information. Points of order are to be brought to the attention of the Speaker for the breach of a rule or a departure of the procedure of the House, not to be used for debate or rebut what a member has said. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please, because points of order are a very, very serious matter and I hope we will treat it as such.

Mr. Doer: Finally, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) invoked the section of the act 10 days ago to override the buffer zones, it is a decision supported by the Government. That is why 11 days ago the buffer zones would have been respected. That is why last evening 60 percent of Wolseley was fogged for mosquitoes pursuant to the Minister of Health's directive of 10 days ago.

Mr. Speaker: For clarification on a point of order raised by the honourable Member for Emerson, it was not a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) is passing the buck and trying to blame everyone else. Since the City is acting under the direct authority of her Government and since the Deputy Premier is the minister responsible for larviciding and fogging in the province of Manitoba, will she now stand up for the residents in her constituency who deserve the same treatment as the rest of the city of Winnipeg does?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have the viewing public, we have visitors in the gallery who have come here today to listen to questions and answers. I would ask the full co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, for several years our monitoring with respect to the West Nile virus indicated that it was likely the West Nile virus would appear in Manitoba. When West Nile virus appeared positively in the bird population, we invoked a section of the act that indicates a health imminent, because of mosquitoes capable of transmitting diseases, and we overrode the buffer with respect to the fogging in the city of Winnipeg which was already ongoing.

With respect to outside of the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, we have increased mosquito trapping and testing, sampling of standing water, and dead bird pickup is already taking place. Mosquito traps have been set up in St. Andrews and are to be set up in Ritchot. The R.M. of Ritchot said fogging would not help in this area as I understand from the paper, and the reeve from the chief administrative office of St. Andrews said, and I quote, they would not ask for fogging. That was from the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

As a result of discussions that took place between our Government officials and officials at all levels of government, Mr. Speaker, we are trying to work co-operatively to deal with a health threat.

* (13:55)

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the provoking debate, but I would like the minister to put on the record if it is Taché or if it is Ritchot, because it is important that the people of Ritchot or Taché know exactly which area was infected. There is a misunderstanding on which one. The minister's response was again Ritchot just now, but there are some people who are saying it is Taché where the bird was found.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker. By my count that is the fourth or fifth point of order raised during, what, three or four questions of Question Period. I think I leave it up to the viewing public to see who is abusing the rules of this Legislature.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order. If any member seeks information they have a right to get up and ask a question but not to use points of order to raise questions. That is not the purpose of points of order. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable—the honourable Official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, have you concluded? Okay.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Will the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) stand in her place, tell the Premier and the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) that she does not need a buffer zone, that she can answer to the constituents of Wolseley who deserve the same treatment and the same protection as the rest of Winnipeggers do? Will she stand up and ensure that the fogging takes place in her constituency of Wolseley?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are trying to play political games. The bottom line, last evening in Wolseley fogging took place—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I was rising on order, so the honourable First Minister's comments would not have been picked up by the mikes because they probably would have been off. I was rising to remind all honourable members about decorum in the Chamber. It is very important to the viewing public and the guests we have in the galleries. Decorum is very, very important. I once again ask the full co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the order was issued by the Minister of Health. The fogging took place last evening and there was no buffer zone.

Health Care Facilities Review—Availability

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg hospitals are undergoing the biggest operational review in the history of medicare, a \$600,000 probe launched to find out why hospital costs are so much higher here than in other Canadian cities.

Can the Minister of Health tell me why I was denied access to a copy of the interim Deloitte and Touche report when I applied for it through Freedom of Information?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when I last checked the Member for Charleswood had FIPPA'd through Freedom of Information literally hundreds and hundreds of pages and was provided with those pages and is being provided with pages, as I understand it, on almost a regular basis, something that we were not permitted when we were in office since we took FIPPA and we extended it. We just did not keep it within government. We extended it to all regional health authorities, institutions, et cetera. The member has more information than anyone has ever had in the health care system since I have been around.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister certainly did not answer that question.

* (14:00)

Review—Recommendations

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to ask him to confirm that the report recommends staff cuts and layoffs in order to decrease costs in Winnipeg hospitals. Can he just confirm that?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the member must be thinking about a report that was tabled and was brought forward by members opposite. I believe it was put together by one Connie Curran. It cost close to \$4 million, I believe, and I think that is what resulted in the layoff of a thousand nurses during the Conservative years.

Review—Manitoba Nurses' Union

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Can the Minister of Health confirm that the nurses' union was the only union not represented on the steering committee and if it was because the nurses' union refused to participate in this particular review?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, there are ongoing operational reviews, studies being done by regions all across the province of Manitoba in order to improve the quality of care across the province, but one thing we will not do, we will not hire a big high-priced consultant to come in from the U.S. like Connie Curran came in to tell us to close 1400 beds, to tell us to lay off a thousand nurses. We believe in rebuilding the health care system, not slashing and cutting as occurred during the dark days of the 1990s, according to the president of the Manitoba Medical Association.

Review—Recommendations

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): On a new question.

Mr. Speaker: On a new question.

Mrs. Driedger: The Manitoba Nurses' Union vehemently opposed and actually boycotted the review of the Minister of Health's \$600,000 review, and they refused to co-operate with Deloitte and Touche in any way, saying the review unfairly targeted nurses.

Can the Minister of Health confirm that his \$600,000 review recommends the layoff of eight full-time registered nurses in critical care at the Health Sciences Centre?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, first off, the member opposite was complaining about critical care nurses. In fact we are trying to increase the number of critical care nurses we are training in this jurisdiction. We are not cutting programs and we are not cutting nurses, as happened during the 1990s. We are not a cutting government. We are a building government.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister confirm that his \$600,000 review recommends the layoff of 50 full-time obstetrical nurses?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this is not the 1990s. We are not going to enter the dark ages of the 1990s with respect to the firing of a thousand nurses. We are short nurses. We have vacancies all across the province and in the city of Winnipeg. We are trying to expand roles. We are trying to expand functions. That is why we have doubled the number of nurse trainings in this jurisdiction.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, the Minister of Health is avoiding answering all the questions.

Can he confirm that his \$600,000 report recommends the layoff of almost 200 full-time positions from the nursing departments of Winnipeg hospitals and, because most of the nurses in Manitoba are working part time, that 200 equivalent full-time positions could eventually lead to 400 layoffs or 600 layoffs of part-time nurses? Is that what his report recommends? Can he just confirm that?

Mr. Chomiak: No, that does not. In fact, not only is the member factually wrong in terms of the ramifications but the member opposite stood up a week ago and said, why do you not hire more nurses. We are hiring more nurses. We are expanding the role of nurses. We are expanding the number of nurses training. Perhaps that is why members opposite did not support us when we expanded our nurse training program. Now I see where that came from. In fact we formed with the nurses' union a joint council to try to work with the nurses' union to try to find more full-time nursing positions and try to make full-time nursing positions more available for nurses across the system. We are trying to rebuild the system after the dark days of the 1990s.

According to the president of the Manitoba Medical Association, the 1990s were the dark ages of health care in Manitoba.

Livestock Industry Tuberculosis

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, news reports today indicate that there have been three cases of tuberculosis in cattle in Manitoba over the last decade and that Manitoba has been declared a tuberculosis zone for cattle.

I would ask the Minister of Agriculture and Food if she can give us full details to tell us what she is doing about this, and to provide details of

what extra testing and costs will be required of producers.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the accreditation of Manitoba has been downgraded, and it has been downgraded because there was another case of TB found in Manitoba. The first case of TB was found in 1997 and at that time CFIA indicated that there was TB, but no action was really taken by the provincial government at that time.

Since we have taken office, we have put together a TB strategy where the Department of Conservation, Department of Agriculture, CFIA, Manitoba Cattle Producers and the Riding Mountain Park association are all working together, and money has been put in place to address the issue of TB.

We have had accreditation. We have had notification from the USDA that the whole province will be zoned. The Province and producers were working to have a smaller zone in the province, in the whole province. What it means is we now have to negotiate with the USDA to try to have that changed, but it means that breeding stock leaving this province will have to be tested before it can leave the province.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue, one that I raised more than a year ago in this Legislature. It is disappointing that there was not more decisive action taken then. Clearly, the problem here is growing.

I would ask the minister: One of the things that consumers are concerned about and the minister perhaps can clarify is what are the implications for people in Manitoba who like to eat beef?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there are any implications for the people in Manitoba who eat beef. We have food standards. We have inspections. The member knows full well we have federal inspectors at all facilities, and he should not be using this as a scare tactic or fearmongering.

This is a serious issue. It affects our cattle producers. But we have to work together at it to

come to some conclusion so that we can continue to move beef cattle out of this province, because it is a very important product and a very important part of our economy.

For the member to say that he raised this issue and nothing has been done, I wish he would listen to what we have said. We have put together a strategy. There has been money put in place for barrier fences. There has been a committee put in place. There have been meetings held. But the member is forgetting, as well, that TB is an accredited disease. It is a federal responsibility. It falls under the CFIA, and we work with the CFIA and have been working very closely with them and the producers, because this is an important issue.

I would ask the member not to try to use scare tactics or imply that the food in Manitoba is not safe, because that is not true.

Mr. Gerrard: Manitobans deserve clarity and they deserve to know good information so they do not have to be anxious.

I would ask the Minister of Agriculture: Why is it when there is such a serious issue, why was there no ministerial statement? Why is there nothing on her Web page on tuberculosis? Why has there been an absence of a media release today? What is the minister doing? Why is this Government just sitting on its feet instead of doing something?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member would use all of that energy and direct it to a more useful purpose, maybe we would get something accomplished or some support from him.

An Honourable Member: Hook him up to a power grid.

* (14:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, and get some energy there.

Mr. Speaker, for the member to say that nothing has been done obviously tells me that he has not been listening to what has been going on. There has been a series of meetings with producers. There has been a series of meetings

discussing what kind of zone we might have in Manitoba so that all cattle are not affected, but the member seems to forget that this is federal issue. They are responsible for the control of reportable diseases. TB is a reportable disease, if the member does not know that yet.

The CFIA has made a ruling on Manitoba's accreditation. The USDA has now said that they want all of Manitoba zoned rather than the smaller area, and we are continually working. I can tell the member that it was this Government that put money into a TB strategy. Absolutely nothing was done by the previous administration.

Drinking Water Government Initiatives

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): My question is for the Minister of Health. In those dark dreary days of Tory rule throughout the nineties, nothing was done to protect Manitoba's drinking water. As a matter of fact, cuts to the departments of the environment, natural resources and Agriculture actually worsened the situation and weakened protection for Manitobans and their families.

Can this minister indicate what action has been taken to protect our drinking water supply here in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, one of the first things we did was reinstate the subsidy for well-water testers. I understand members opposite who were responsible for the cutting of that program were handing out well-water testing kits at their constituency offices, so I am glad that they have come around.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we put in place an Office of Drinking Water, and we have before this Legislature a bill that builds upon some of the best experiences and some of the experiences that were learned in Walkerton and North Battleford with respect to drinking water quality. It is one of the more progressive pieces of legislation in all of North America. It protects water right across the system, not just the public water systems but the semi-public water systems as well as providing assistance to the private

well water operators, which is considerable. It takes Manitoba's water system and over the next few years will move it into an era where Manitobans can again feel totally confident in their water systems as it proceeds.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Gaming Commission Compliance

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Gaming Control Commission. On July 16, the minister responsible indicated that the Dakota Tipi Gaming Commission was in compliance with the gaming regulations of the Province of Manitoba. Since the minister has assured himself that they are indeed in compliance, I would like to ask him if he is prepared to table the 2002 financial statements for the gaming control commission in Dakota Tipi.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, indeed Dakota Tipi is in compliance, and I am pleased to report that since we have come into government we have made significant progress in dealing with the legacy of the previous government which was 13 gaming commissions that were not in compliance. I have indicated also and I indicate to the member again that indeed Dakota Tipi is in compliance and is currently in the process of providing this year's financial information which we anticipate by the end of the summer. So we have acted to bring Dakota Tipi into compliance by working with that community. We are proud of that.

Financial Statements

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, the financial statement was due on June 30 and it is now past that date, but since the minister cannot table the financial statement that was due on June 30 I would ask him if he would be prepared to table the financial statement ended March 31, 2001.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): The member opposite knows, by the way, and I think this is important to put on the record, that when they were in government, in terms of the gaming commission, none of this information

was made available. In fact, there was no information made available in terms of which bands were in compliance. I remember the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) asked me that question and we have provided that information.

I can indicate they are in compliance, and currently. In fact, they met with the gaming commission as recently as last week. They are providing that information. We are working with Dakota Tipi to make sure they live up to those requirements, something that did not happen when the members opposite were in government.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

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

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, under section 57(3) of the gaming commission act: "The Commission shall be empowered to monitor the effectiveness of the functioning and regulatory activity of the licensing authorities and to communicate its observations and findings to the Minister."

I would ask the minister whether he has had that kind of communication from the commission with respect to the annual reports, the financial reports from the Dakota Tipi gaming commission.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I meet regularly with the gaming commission and that is one of the ways in which we have been able to make progress, not only in regard to Dakota Tipi but other First Nations communities.

I want to put on the record it may come from the fact that we believe in trying to work in partnership with First Nations communities, something that may come as a complete surprise to members opposite who left us with a legacy in which 13 communities were in non-compliance. We have made significant progress, including with Dakota Tipi and we will continue to work with First Nations to achieve that.

Auditor's Recommendations

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

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

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, for the record I would like to table the Dakota Tipi First Nation Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2001. In that report, the accountant, the auditor, says, and I quote: Our examinations indicate serious deficiencies in internal controls over the accounting records. As a consequence, we were unable to satisfy ourselves that all revenue and expenditures of the Bingo Palace had been recorded or existed, nor were we able to satisfy ourselves that the recorded transactions were proper.

Mr. Speaker, has this minister acted in any way on the recommendations that came from the auditor as it relates to this report?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, once again I put on the record that in fact as recently as last week the Gaming Commission met with the gaming commission from the First Nations community and are dealing with those financial deficiencies on the auditing side.

As I said before, we are working with First Nations communities, including this community, to make sure they do come in compliance, something I wish the members opposite had done when they were in government.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

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

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact the Dakota Tipi First Nation's gaming commission was given a month to be able to respond to the concerns of the auditor. That is over a year ago.

Has the Dakota Tipi First Nation's gaming commission responded to the comments of the auditor, and has the minister received those?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned and I will put it on the record again that as recently as a week ago the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission met with the First Nation, and in fact that information is being provided.

I want to indicate the way to resolve matters like this is the way this Government is treating it: Work in partnership with the First Nation, unlike the ostrich approach of the previous government which, quite frankly, left us with a legacy no one should be proud of in terms of compliance with gaming control regulations in this province.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Legion Houses Walkway Project

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): On Saturday, July 20, of this year, an official opening ceremony was held to commemorate the completion of the Legion Houses Walkway Project in Morden. It was a great success. The project entailed the construction of an enclosed link between Legion House One and Two. This link will provide year-round access between the two facilities for residents as well as caregivers and others who come to the facilities. This \$90,000 project was funded by various levels of government and local organizations as well as individual donations.

* (14:20)

I would like to offer my congratulations to the board of directors of Morden Legion Housing for the Legion Houses Walkway Project. I am certain residents, staff and visitors alike will be grateful for the conveniences this initiative will provide to them. I would also like to say a word of thanks to the many hardworking volunteers who had a hand in making this project and official opening possible.

Finally, I would like to recognize the building committee chair, Barny Bjarnason, for the role he played in making this project a reality after it had been discussed for a number of years. Again, thank you to the board of directors for the work they have done on this project.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Member for Flin Flon—order. If members wish to carry on a conversation could they please do it in the loge or the hallway. It is

very, very hard to hear the member who has the floor.

Cranberry Portage Homecoming

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the 75th anniversary celebrations for my home town of Cranberry Portage are in full swing.

On September 19, 2000, a number of dedicated volunteers formed the Cranberry Portage 2003 Homecoming Committee. The official celebrations are scheduled for the August long weekend in 2003. Many former Cranberry Portage residents and visitors are expected for this historic event, which will include an official opening with invited dignitaries, social and historical displays, a parade, a fish fry, a community social, community barbecue and many other celebrations. A number of the events will take place in a beautiful, natural setting, namely, the park on the shores of Lake Athapapuskow.

The Cranberry Portage site has a long and colourful history. It is named after a profusion of low-bush cranberries that grow in the area. For thousands of years, Aboriginal people used the portage between Lake Athapapuskow and First Cranberry Lake. Later, explorers, adventurers and prospectors also used the portage. In the 1870s, the noted mapmaker and explorer, David Thompson, first referred to the site as the Cranberry Carrying Place. In the early 1920s, a family of surveyors and miners, the Thompsons, built the first permanent dwelling along Lake Athapapuskow. This year, the last member of that family, Margaret Rose Thompson, died at the age of 104 at the same site along Lake Athapapuskow. Also, in the mid 1920s, Mr. Fred Semchenko established a stopping house along the portage. By 1928, prospectors swarmed into the area lured by rich mineral finds near Sherridon and Flin Flon.

On March 25, 1928, the first steam engine pulled into Cranberry Portage. At that time, Cranberry Portage was a distributing terminal located halfway between The Pas and Flin Flon. Tragedy struck on June 4, 1929, when a forest fire to the north swept into town and destroyed most of the buildings. The town was rebuilt

overnight. It soon gained the reputation of being a robust, colourful and lively northern town. It is still colourful today.

I am proud to represent friendly Cranberry Portage. I wish the Cranberry Portage 2003 Homecoming Committee much success.

Crime Rate

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, here in the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg, this Government has a dreadful legacy that it is leaving with Manitobans in the area of crime.

Since this Government came into office, the Hells Angels have come to town. They have set up a storefront. There have been shootings in broad daylight. There have been firebombings in the constituency of Fort Garry plus other places. There has been police intimidation. The police intimidation did involve a firebombing of a police officer's residence. Gang members have risen to approximately 4000 gang members.

There have been promises, promises, promises made by this current Government. Mr. Speaker, 427 days ago, a cyber tip line was promised by this Government to protect children from cyber internet exploitation. Unfortunately, the cyber tip line is still not up. I have to put on record that this current Attorney General wishes to be the first in Canada and, as a result, has extended the cyber tip line into the federal jurisdiction.

So it covers all of Canada. It is regrettable that Manitobans cannot feel the benefit of feeling safe and children cannot feel the benefit of being safe because this Attorney General does not attend to the needs of Manitoba children.

Mr. Speaker, 18 police officers have been recently announced as coming on the streets. Unfortunately, this money to put the 18 police officers on the street comes from the photo radar initiative.

To date the money is not available. There is no time line, no understanding of when exactly those 18 police officers will be on the street. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has a dismal record in the area of fighting crime here in the city of Winnipeg and in the province of Manitoba.

Ochre River Days

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): I would like to put a few words on record about a little community with a great big spirit in our part of the world. The town I speak of is Ochre River. Ochre River is a village within the R.M. of Ochre River. Every summer they host Ochre River Days, which I was pleased to attend with Michelle and our son on the weekend.

We had a great time. There are so many good festivals in rural Manitoba, in every part of rural Manitoba, from the largest of our rural communities to little communities like Ochre River. One of the highlights of the weekend is a parade. I think Ochre River prides itself in probably having more people in their parade than they do actually watching the parade. It is a huge parade. Everybody gets involved. People from all around the district come in to view this parade and to take part in a good community event.

All day Sunday there was a ball tournament, slow-pitch tournament, organized with a number of teams participating, live entertainment on Saturday night at the dance under the big top in Ochre River, and, of course, a real connection with our history and a real connection with pioneer days. There was a horseshoe tournament that took place on Sunday as well.

This was an opportunity for the citizens of Ochre River and visitors from outside of town to come and view the new Ochre River Park that the council has been working hard on, and the volunteers in that community.

We know in these little communities the importance of volunteers to make these kinds of events work. So I want to recognize on behalf of all of us here in the Legislature the organizing committee and all their volunteers who worked so hard to make Ochre River Days a success again this year in the summer of 2002.

Randy and Deanna Wondrasek

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): It is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the recipients of Manitoba's Outstanding Young Farmer Award, Randy and Deanna Wondrasek. This young couple runs a grain and cow-calf operation just west of Russell.

Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers Program recognizes excellence and achievements of Canadian farmers. Regional nominees for this award must be between the ages of 19 and 39 years old and must also derive at least two-thirds of their income from farming.

At the national awards seminar the seven lucky regional winners will be recognized for their achievements and judged based on their farming progress, their maximum use of natural resources, crop and livestock production and contributions to their community, province and proud nation of Canada.

Randy Wondrasek, despite the fact that he has a university degree in agriculture, feels the most valuable lessons he has ever learned were taught to him right on the farm. Since having taken over the family farm in 1987, Randy has learned about seeding, chemical use and basic machinery maintenance simply from experience.

Deanna, who also grew up on a farm, had as a child seen the stresses that often accompany farming, and she promised never to marry a farmer. Now, however, she knows that she would not have it any other way. She explains that by living out on the farm the kids have the chance to raise their own animals and a chance to learn the responsibilities that come with that.

From here Deanna and Randy will travel to Toronto to represent Manitoba at the national level. In response to their fantastic achievements Mr. Wondrasek commented that farming is very rewarding in that you take a lot of pride when something works out. While the Wondraseks are excited about representing Manitoba at the competition, they still feel that their continuing involvement with the alumni of the Outstanding Young Farmer Program is a real reward. Perhaps Mr. Wondrasek best exemplifies the true spirit of the Manitoba farmer when he said we enjoy working the land and doing things together. It is probably the most rewarding lifestyle that I think anyone could every choose.

It is clear that these Manitoba farmers should not only be recognized for their successes and their accomplishments, but also for their strong sense of family and community. It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that I, on behalf of all

members of this Legislature, congratulate the recipients of the Young Manitoba award winners for Manitoba, Randy and Deanna Wondrasek.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

STATUS OF WOMEN

* (14:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be continuing the consideration of the Estimates of the Status of Women. When this committee last met, there had been agreement to have a global discussion. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Chair, if I might just take a moment and introduce Gerri Thorsteinson who is with us today. She was here yesterday but not at the table, and she is a policy analyst with the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for that introduction.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I would like to thank the minister for that introduction and welcome to the table.

I think yesterday we were in the process of discussing the whole issue of a safe house for child prostitutes. I was attempting to find out from the minister where this issue is at. I do know, and I think contrary to some of the discussion yesterday, I believe that back in 1999 there were certainly meetings with the working

group up until, the last record I have would be minutes from June of 1999 where members of the community and those within several government departments were involved in discussion and still working towards an end goal of some sort of support program for child prostitutes. So it was an ongoing process then, and it is now over three years later.

I was commenting yesterday that I was a little disappointed that the minister did not have some sense of what her own position might be on her thoughts on a safe house for child prostitutes. So maybe I will just start by asking the minister again if today she might indicate for me, and I know when there are papers that are before a Cabinet committee or Cabinet that the end result cannot be discussed, but I would like to ask her personally what her thoughts and her views are. I know she indicated yesterday that she had an opportunity to meet with women from the community who certainly are proponents of a safe house, and so what are her thoughts on the presentations that have been made to her from the community around this issue?

Ms. McGifford: I did indicate yesterday to the member that this Government takes extremely seriously the whole issue of sexually exploited children, and this Government has certainly been working on this issue. I indicated to the member that recommendations will be brought forth, and I would like to ask the member to be patient. Those recommendations will be brought forth.

Now the member made reference to presentations made to me by members of the women's community. What I had said yesterday during the Estimates was that I have had meetings with many groups from the community. I think I mentioned the Provincial Council of Women, I remember the anti-poverty group who marched in—was it September 2000? I have met with E. Fry, several other women's groups, service providers of various kinds. Most of those groups have made reference to sexually exploited children, but not in my memory have I had a group come forth to present specifically and only on sexually exploited children. So it has been part of a larger presentation where that issue has come up. We have heard it in this Government. I have told the member that recommendations will be brought forward.

Now the member makes reference to my personal views. At this table my personal views are not really relevant. My personal views are aired at the Cabinet table among my colleagues, and I do not know what the practice was amongst the previous government, but our practice is to arrive at consensus, and we have a position because we work together as a caucus. So the views of government will be reflected once the decisions are made, and I ask the member to keep patient. She will be informed as soon as there is something to share with her.

* (14:40)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, but again I think as the minister within the Government that is responsible to advocate on behalf of women, from time to time that minister, and I know because I was in that position, has to take a stand on behalf of women. There certainly has been, although the minister may not have received any special presentation from women. It might have only been part of representation that has been made to her in her meetings with women throughout Winnipeg or throughout the province. There certainly has been a lot of attention paid to this issue in the news media, much of it approximately a year ago. I would presume that the minister would have read those newspaper articles, would have heard the strong statements from women, and women that are feeling that this Government is not paying the attention to this issue that this issue deserves.

So I will go back to some of the articles that were in the paper last year, and many of them refer to a safe house that would serve as a transition from the streets. I am just quoting from one last November, for instance, an article by Lindor Reynolds who, by the way, was the person that made the presentation at the Lunch and Learn session that I attended around this issue, who has done an awful lot of work in the community, has seen first-hand the issues that young girls on the streets face and is very much a strong advocate for a safe house for those young women that are involved in the sex trade.

That article back in November indicated that Winnipeg could have a 10-bed safe house for child and youth prostitutes within a year if the Province accepts a series of recommendations

from an internal committee developing into the sexual exploitation of children. So, back last November, the community believed that the Government would be receiving recommendations and would be dealing with them.

Now I know that, usually in a budgetary cycle, departments are looking to go to Treasury Board with recommendations through that budget process and what initiatives might be supported in the following year's budget. I do know from speaking to women in the community before this year's Budget was announced on April 22 that they were very hopeful that there might be something concrete announced with this year's Budget and, I believe, were quite disappointed that that did not occur.

So I guess my question would have been: Was there any discussion at the departmental level with the Women's Directorate or the Advisory Council and were there any recommendations that came forward that would have strongly supported inclusion of some money for a safe house in this year's budget?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, a few minutes ago the member made reference to the Minister for the Status of Women taking a stand and seemed to be suggesting that I do not take stands at Cabinet or on committee. I do not know where she would get this information or how she would come to this conclusion. In fact, I rather pride myself on taking a stand when it comes to the lives and rights of women. Indeed, I do take a stand. I do advocate on behalf of women. I always do, so I think the member can rest assured.

The member made reference to Lindor Reynolds, who is a columnist with the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and pointed out that Lindor Reynolds had spoken at the council's Lunch and Learn session on January 10, 2002, and I believe that was attended by other community members. Certainly, I am advised that some of the points of Lindor's presentation included the need for more public education on the dynamics and scope of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

She talked about the need to protect children from this type of exploitation. Apparently, she

talked about the importance of eradicating child poverty, that this was a priority, something on which members opposite had a dismal record, I might add. She also pointed out that children of both genders are being exploited by the sex trade, that these individuals are children. We need to remember when they are children, and it is important that we remember this. She pointed out that gangs and johns prey on kids as young as children in elementary school. She pointed out that children must be made aware at a very early age of the dangers of sexual exploitation and that children need to be tutored in ways to protect themselves from this kind of exploitation. This can be done in a variety of ways.

* (14:50)

She talked about the need to monitor the increasing risks posed to children via predators using electronic or communications mediums. She talked about it being unacceptable for our society to ignore the commercial exploitation of children via the Internet or through prostitution. She pointed out that children must be protected and deserve an excellent quality of life. I could go on, but I basically provided a follow-up of her report. As the member knows herself, it was an excellent presentation. We again congratulate Lindor Reynolds on her presentation. I do tell the member again that there are recommendations that will soon be heard. She will know as soon as we come to any conclusions when and if those recommendations are made public and become part of public policy.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We are three years into this Government's mandate. This is an issue that had been on the table for a considerable period of time before the 1999 election. We, to date, have not seen any action or response, especially at a time when we see increased gang activity. The Hells Angels have moved into our province and are very much alive and well. We do know that the sex trade on the streets is very much related to gang activity. I think there has been significant research. I wonder if the minister, on behalf of women that are being sexually exploited, has asked her staff to do any work or any research or any analysis on whether the increased gang activity over the last couple of years in our city has had an impact on it and there is any correlation to increased prostitution on our streets as a result.

Ms. McGifford: I guess this is one of those conversions on the road to Damascus because the former government was in power for 11 years, starting in 1988. So, if the member was as passionate and keen as she portrays herself as being, there was certainly a great opportunity for her to do the work that she now expects to have been done in a shorter period of time. I am not sure that is quite fair.

She asked if the Women's Directorate is doing work on issues related to the subject under discussion. I think that she knows that the Status of Women is represented on the Healthy Child Committee. Yes, indeed, the Status of Women is doing work and research along with other individuals who are part of a committee who are making recommendations. As well, the Women's Directorate is doing research on services for girls in gangs. That is something that we are currently involved in.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder if the minister could indicate to me specifically what the Women's Directorate has learned and whether there are any recommendations before government right now.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair. Recommendations have not been made because the research is incomplete as yet. The research is ongoing. However, at this stage, we do think that what we are seeing is that there are many more services available for male children who are involved in gangs than there are for female children involved in gangs. We think that perhaps when our research is completed, it may show that we do need some services for females or girls who are involved in gangs.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, I know there are certainly issues around support services for those that are involved in gangs and hopefully some initiatives that might come forward that would look at more healthy or positive alternatives. It is something I think that we would all struggle with. It is not anything that I would lay any blame on anyone about.

The issue that I am talking about right now is child prostitutes and those that are being used by gang members and exploited by gang

members. We do know that the Hells Angels over the last couple of years have moved into Manitoba. They have a significant presence in Winnipeg. We know that sexual exploitation of young girls is one of the activities that takes place in a significant way.

I know that the minister said I have had a major conversion on the road to Damascus, that we were in government for many years and did not deal with this issue. I do want to indicate that when it was brought to our attention, we worked on it for two years and were very close three years ago to finding some support and putting some support in place. We are three years later with a significant increase in gang activity over the last two to three years in our province. We have not seen action from this minister on this issue, or this Government.

Now, she indicates that we should be patient, that there is something just around the corner. I understand I think from her comments or answers yesterday that she said the Cabinet committee quite probably has a meeting coming up in September. When was the last time the Cabinet committee met?

Ms. McGifford: You know, the member said that after 11 years in government they were awfully close to a solution. Well, after three years in government we are awfully close to a solution, and again I bring the member's attention to that.

The member talked about organized gangs and sexually exploited children and the possible link between the two. I want to assure her that this work is being done in concert with other members of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. Recommendations are to come forth very soon.

As to when did we have our last meeting, I cannot remember the specific date, but it was in early July. I believe it was a Monday or Tuesday in early July. Yesterday was the 22nd, so it may have been the 8th or 9th of July. The specific date I do not have with me, but it was during that time in July.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, could I maybe ask what the process is? I think I heard

the minister say that the proposals that are coming forward that the interdepartmental committee has done their work and there are recommendations there for the Cabinet committee to consider. Could I ask the minister whether in fact those issues will be dealt with at the next Cabinet committee meeting?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairperson, I am told that the recommendations, and I think I mentioned this yesterday, had been discussed at the deputy minister level, that the deputy ministers had made some revisions and that there is a committee now working on the ways in which these recommendations could be implemented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, my sense would be, from any process that takes place in government, that implementation does not happen until there is Cabinet or Cabinet committee approval. So I would question what an implementation committee of deputies is doing unless something has been approved.

Usually the process would be that recommendations would come forward, Cabinet would improve in principle, then implementation would take place. So I would ask for some clarification from the minister on that.

Ms. McGifford: It is looking at possible ways of implementation. It is looking at strategies to make sure that services are not overlapping, the identification of resources, et cetera.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the minister could indicate to me how long it has been at the deputy minister's level and when she might expect that that would come forward to ministers.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am told that it was at the deputy minister's level on June 20. It was discussed at the June 20 meeting. I think I mentioned to the minister yesterday that the Healthy Child Committee is meeting again in early September; however, since I do not control the agenda, I cannot tell you whether that material will come forth on that date or not.

I think I could suggest this might be something she wants to bring up during the Estimates of the Minister of Family Services,

who is the chair of the Healthy Child Committee. It would seem to me that that may be the venue for discussion.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, but again, the minister always likes to try to push the responsibility onto some other minister and say that questions should be asked of other ministers. I think that this is a significant issue that is important to women and to children in our province of Manitoba.

She is the minister responsible for advocating publicly on behalf of women, but the minister that has been chosen to be responsible to advocate for women within her Cabinet and within her caucus. This issue is one that has been sitting for a while. This issue is one, in January at the Lunch and Learn, that women said it was time that we put pressure on the provincial government because they are dragging their feet. That was back in January of 2002, and we are now in July of 2002. So women in the community were asking, and the event, the Lunch and Learn, was sponsored by the minister's own Advisory Council. Obviously, members of the Advisory Council heard that message loud and clear back in January.

I would presume that the Advisory Council that reports to the minister, that is her eyes and ears, got that message. I would ask the minister whether that message was relayed to her in January.

Ms. McGifford: The Advisory Council chair meets with me regularly and often discusses, in fact does discuss, lunch and learns. I appreciate the work of the Advisory Council and of the chair. As I told the member, I have also heard about this issue from women's groups in the community. In fact, as I have told the member repeatedly, there will be recommendations that will be before the Healthy Child Committee very soon.

You know, this, as we all realize, is a very significant issue. I think the same issues and concerns were raised with the prior government. The prior government apparently sat on its hands for 11 years. So I find it inordinate that this member expects a solution in 3 years. So I put that on the record and tell the member once again we are working on it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is not an issue that the former government sat for 11 years on. There was work ongoing on this issue for 2 years. It was at a point in June of 1999 where there were recommendations around a safe house. Those recommendations would have been dealt with through the Estimates process that would have started in the fall of '99. The reality was that there was an election and a new government took over. That is the Government that this minister represents. She represents women and advocates for women.

So she can go back and she can try to make the argument that we sat on our hands for 11 years and did nothing around sexual exploitation of children, but the reality is and the community knows that work and a lot of work had been done for 2 years on this issue and there were recommendations that were before government at that time, unless the minister threw the baby out with the bath water and said all of the work that the community has done to date is irrelevant because we are a new government or whether she said, yes, there has been a lot of work done, the community has put a lot of time and effort and energy into this, the bureaucracy has put a lot of time and energy and effort into this, we do not need to reinvent the wheel, we can move forward from here.

* (15:10)

Three years is a significant time. I wonder how many young women have been exploited and how many new young women have been exploited in the last three years while this Government has taken no action. I trust her at her word, and I trust that this is going to be dealt with this fall by her Government and her Cabinet.

I do not ever want to indicate that I do not believe the Advisory Council that represents or works on behalf of the minister or the Government is not taking its responsibility very seriously. I mean, they would not be holding the kinds of sessions on such a regular basis. I think it is a great idea, the lunch and learn whole process and concept. I believe that the message was brought back to the minister, and the minister has indicated that she meets on a regular basis.

So I guess my question to her would be: What has she done since the Advisory Council reported to her back in January or maybe February by the time they had an opportunity to meet that there was a concern in the community that the provincial government was dragging its feet? How did she advocate on behalf of the women when that information was brought to her attention?

Ms. McGifford: I would suggest to the member that probably not as many young women and children were exploited in the three years that the member mentioned as in the 11 years when her government was in power. Since she is counting numbers, I would suggest that to her.

I think that we indicated that some of the work that has been going on in the department is the research into gang issues and providing services for young females who are in gangs and are often victimized by the gangs although they are in gangs. We have participated in the Healthy Child Committee. We participated as a department in the research of the Healthy Child Committee.

I repeat again that the Healthy Child Committee, a staff component, has prepared recommendations. I am advised that there was a meeting on the 20th of June. I am advised that there will be, pardon me, there was a meeting on the 20th of June of officials at the deputy minister's level. I have told the member repeatedly that recommendations are due to come forward and they will be discussed at the Healthy Child Committee.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, other than a safe house for young women that are being sexually exploited, are there any other initiatives that the minister could share with me that are underway or ongoing or under consideration?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, of course, the sexual exploitation of children is a very complex issue and requires a multifaceted strategy. A safe house is just one part of a number of initiatives. Other things that are important are public education, services of various kinds. Of course, since these recommendations have not been before Cabinet, they are confidential, and I am not really willing to go into a great deal of detail at this time.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess there may be recommendations that are before Cabinet at this point in time that the minister is not prepared to discuss. I guess I would ask her what initiatives—

Point of Order

Ms. McGifford: On a point of order, Mr. Chair—

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me, a point of order.

Ms. McGifford: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I wish to draw to your attention that, not only am I not prepared to discuss, but it would be a violation of Cabinet confidentiality to discuss. So I think there is a distinction there that I would like to put on the record.

Mrs. Mitchelson: On the same point of order—

Mr. Chairperson: On the same point of order, the Member for River East.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not really want to get into this, but I have, from time to time, heard ministers answer questions, even in Question Period, that say that something specific is going to Cabinet, and it will be decided. So it is the minister's prerogative to discuss or not to discuss, and I take her at her word that the issues that are going before Cabinet, she is not prepared to talk about and can use Cabinet confidentiality to her advantage when she so chooses, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order, there is no point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairperson. Because I know that this is a very multifaceted and very complicated issue and that there are significant different strategies that need to be undertaken, I wonder if the minister could indicate to me, over the last three years, what specific initiatives have been undertaken and what programs are in place today, that are new over the last three years, to deal with the issue of sexual exploitation of children.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am a firm believer in promoting the lives and rights of women and

children by a holistic approach. I just want to point out that one of the things that this Government has done is to show that it values women in a whole variety of ways. For example, we have more women in Cabinet than most, well, certainly than any other cabinet of its size in the country. We have appointed women to very senior positions as far as chairing boards, et cetera. So my point is this is a way of showing that we respect women, that we trust women, that we want to give women credit for their skills, and I think our Government has done this in a whole host of ways.

As far as the initiatives that are specifically geared towards the sexually exploited children, I will take that question as notice, and we can provide the member with information.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, is there any one initiative that the minister could, off the top of her head, think of or indicate that her Government has undertaken in this area? I would think that any announcements that had been made, she, as the advocate for women around the Cabinet table, would be aware of some of those initiatives and would be able to, off the top of her head, provide some information to us.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, for example, I can point to a program at New Directions called TERF, Training Employment Resources for Females. I am informed that the department people are working very closely with Jane Runner, probably an individual with whom the member is familiar, on that particular initiative. So the member asked for one; I have given her one. I have also identified earlier the research that is being done by members of the Women's Directorate.

I might also point to the work that is being done in the Advisory Council. In fact, there was a Lunch and Learn held in the Advisory Council in January, apparently attended by the member opposite, that has led to this line of questioning. So I think the member is quite familiar with the fact that there is work being done by this Government on this particular issue. For an in-depth answer, which would really involve monitoring all departments, and we are quite willing to do that, I will provide the member with official information by letter.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, yes, I am aware of the TERF program, and I know that it has been around for many years through New Directions. Is there anything new that is happening through that program with Jane Runner that the minister might be able to share?

Ms. McGifford: Well, I am advised that Jane Runner is very involved in acting as an adviser as our new strategy is about to roll out. Again, confidentiality is an issue so the member will find out about it in due course.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, does the minister know offhand whether there are any resources that were budgeted in this year's budget around initiatives to deal with the issue of sexual exploitation?

Ms. McGifford: No, I do not know the answer to that question offhand, but again I would advise the member to bring that question to the attention of the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), pardon me, and let me also add the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh).

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, that leads me to a question around what role the Minister responsible for the Status of Women plays when it comes to working with her colleagues and examining. I mean is there sort of inter-departmental co-operation? If there is an initiative that comes up, for instance, in the Department of Justice that deals with women is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women aware? Is she brought up to speed by the Minister of Justice on what might be coming forward, and is she asked to provide input on whether she supports a specific initiative?

Ms. McGifford: Perhaps I could ask for clarification. Is the member talking globally or is she talking specifically about issues related to the sexual exploitation of children?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I am talking globally. I know that there is a budgetary process within government and a Treasury Board process. I know that we had a process whereby we had Cabinet committees that sort of dealt globally with budgets, certain different

committees of Cabinet that departments were involved in, and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women was involved in the budgetary discussions and new initiatives around issues that might come up in Justice or Education or Family Services, in those days, the Children and Youth Secretariat, now the Healthy Child Initiative.

What role would the minister play in a global way in being a part of any initiative that might be being looked at by any government department that might impact or affect women?

Ms. McGifford: Well, Mr. Chair, I am pleased to inform the member that as the Minister for the Status of Women, I work in close concert with my colleagues. Over the years in opposition, I developed a very close working relationship with the current Minister of Justice and, as well, with the Health Minister (Mr. Chomiak), and more recently, since 1999, with the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and with the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger). Of course, I forgot to mention the Minister of Child and Family Services. I have mentioned that he chairs the Healthy Child Committee and that I have been a member of the Healthy Child Committee and have been pleased to work with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), not only on that committee but I have joined him in work related to domestic violence prevention and child care from time to time.

I can point out that some of the work that we have been doing with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Justice involves possible credit splitting of the Canada Pension Plan. We are also members of the anti-stalking committee. In an attempt to make policy that is more user friendly my department is involved in gender analysis when it comes to education and proposed education in northern Manitoba, particularly related to hydro-electric development in the North.

I think I mentioned yesterday, probably in my introductory remarks, that one of the things that I have done as Minister for the Status of Women is travel about the province. I have been in Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson, Lac du Bonnet, Dauphin and hope to travel to The Pas in the fall in order to meet with community

groups and talk about health issues. This is part and parcel of a health strategy for women.

As a department we have been involved in breast screening, midwifery, smoking cessation. Those are examples of some of the things that we have been involved in.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I was just getting to the internal, working process within the minister's Government and budgetary process and new initiative process. I know that through consultation throughout the province there is input into many different areas within government regarding women's issues. I know that the Advisory Council brings information forward. I know that the Women's Directorate, in its work, brings information forward too. I am wanting to get to what process her Government follows when it comes to new initiatives.

For instance, let us take the Healthy Child Initiative. The minister is a member of that Cabinet committee. When the budget for the Healthy Child Initiative is developed it crosses government departments. There is very often a Health component, an Education component, a Family Services component. I know the Minister of Family Services is in charge of that committee. It falls under his budgetary authority, but it is interdepartmental, because very often government departments share in the cost and they share in the development of programs and new initiatives. The Minister of Justice is, I believe, involved. If I could just get clarification from the minister, the Department of Justice is involved in the Healthy Child Initiative, or no?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the member is right. The Minister of Justice is a member of the Healthy Child Committee, and the Department of Justice participates in the Healthy Child Committee. I believe the deputy minister attends meetings with the Minister of Justice and is part of the deputy minister's committee.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I was pretty certain that that was the case. We have initiatives that would be coming forward. I would presume that it is not only the Department of Family Services that takes the lead on certain initiatives around Healthy Child, that the Department of Health might take the lead from time to time, the

Department of Justice would take the lead from time to time, Education may take the lead from time to time around initiatives. That is sort of the vehicle within government that develops programming intersectorally to support children. There would be an analysis, I presume, of that budgetary authority involving all of the departments that sit on that committee and all of the ministers that sit on that committee. They would all have input, and probably significant input, from their perspectives on any new initiatives or any ongoing initiatives or evaluations.

I would ask the minister whether or not there is a process whereby when the budget is being developed for the Healthy Child Initiative that all members of that Cabinet committee are involved in setting that budget and approving the new initiatives.

* (15:30)

Ms. McGifford: Just to review for the member, the departments that are involved in the Healthy Child Committee are Health, Family Services and Housing, Justice, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Education, Training and Youth, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and the Status of Women.

In relation to the member's specific question, the Healthy Child Committee has its own budget, of course. It has a line in the budget. The Healthy Child is, like all departments, subject to the Estimates process. The Healthy Child takes forth its Estimates to Treasury Board. They are debated there, and in fact often debated at the Cabinet level, as with all departments.

As far as building the actual budget of Healthy Child, staff make proposals, they are discussed by all ministers, and ministers make decisions with regard to prioritization, et cetera, and then the budget goes forth from that point on, to Treasury Board.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I ask could we have a five- to ten-minute break.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave for a short recess?

An Honourable Member: Yes. I believe 10 minutes would be a good time.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed and so ordered. Ten minutes.

The committee recessed at 15:32

The committee resumed at 15:45

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, so the minister has indicated to me, then, what the process is for decision making for the Healthy Child Initiative. So that would lead me to believe then that she was involved in discussions around budgets that would reset new initiatives, that would be a part of this year's budget announcements.

So I would ask her then to indicate to me, I know that she did indicate I think just a few minutes ago that she was not sure, or maybe I should ask the Minister of Family Services what was in the Healthy Child budget. But if she was part of those discussions, part of the Treasury Board process presenting the budget for the Healthy Child Initiative, could she indicate what new initiatives were approved through the budget process?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I certainly sat in and was part and parcel of the budget discussions on Healthy Child Manitoba. If I said that the member should ask the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), I certainly misspoke myself because I was present. I do want to bring the member's attention to the fact, once again, that Healthy Child Manitoba is in the Department of the Minister of Family Services and Housing and that he chairs the Healthy Child Cabinet committee.

Some of the things that were part and parcel of the budget discussions this year and some of the things I certainly supported were the parent-child centred approach. The parent-child centre concept has been expanded. We refer to it as the parent-child centred approach. It is an approach that reinforces the emphasis on the importance of community and the importance of community developing a local broadly based coalition to determine the best approach to developing and implementing parent-child activities in regions. The regions are based on the regional health

authority boundaries, that is outside of Winnipeg, and on community areas within Manitoba.

Parent-child coalitions have been established in 11 regions outside Winnipeg and 12 community areas in Winnipeg. In addition, there are three cultural organizations who have received parent-child funding: La fédération provinciale des comités de parents, Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres and Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

All regions except downtown and Point Douglas have received either developmental or implementation funding. Membership on these two coalitions has been confirmed and they are expected to access development funds in the very near future.

So I do bring the member's attention to the parent-child centred approach. It is certainly an approach that my department was very keen on. We certainly supported the Health Baby program and I joined the minister, oh, some time ago to make an announcement on Health Baby.

Healthy Schools, formerly Nurses in Schools. The Healthy Schools initiative will provide a strengthened public health nursing, health educator and primary health capacity in elementary, middle and/or senior schools, with the priority on those schools located in communities with higher than average factors of risk to good health.

* (15:50)

Some of the other important initiatives were the Healthy Adolescent Development which works with the communities to build capacities to support healthy adolescent development with a harm reduction and population health framework.

Certainly FAS/FAE strategy. Healthy Child Manitoba works with community partners to address FAS through. There are five strategies here: public health and awareness; prevention and intervention programs; support staff to care givers and families; resource development and distribution; and diagnosis and treatment services.

Some examples include support of the following: first of all, STOP FAS; Fetal Alcohol

Family Association; and FAS Information Manitoba. Of course it has a toll-free line.

Mr. Chair, Healthy Child Manitoba also includes a home visiting initiative, Baby First, Early Start. I know the member is familiar with these programs. We think they are very effective.

More recently my department has been interested in working on strategies to consider the high costs of food in the north. In fact, that is being worked on in connection with the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk) who is very interested in that, as well as the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson).

I would also like to bring to the member's attention that the Advisory Council published the sixth edition of *Parenting on Your Own* in partnership with Healthy Child Manitoba and also in partnership with the Women's Directorate. For the first time, *Parenting on Your Own* is on-line, so it is accessible to folks who probably could not have accessed it earlier. I think putting it on-line has another advantage, that is, it is easier to do revisions, so it is more affordable. Those are some of the things that we worked with when the committee was discussing the budget. There were also several community initiatives—they are not all with me—individual, smaller projects where we had to make decisions on funding or not to fund.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am pleased to see that *Parenting on Your Own* is continuing. It was first published when I was the Minister responsible for the Status of Women many moons ago. If we are into the sixth or seventh printing and publication, I think it is great. It has obviously been a very valuable tool. I am pleased to see it move into the new age and be up on the Internet on a Web site that does make it more easily accessible. I noticed though that in that list of initiatives and new initiatives there was not any mention of funding for issues surrounding sexually exploited children. This discussion and the Estimates process is all around budget and budgetary decisions, so I would ask the minister whether there was discussion around this and whether there was anything brought forward for consideration for budgetary support in this year's Estimates process.

Ms. McGifford: We could not cost this program before the recommendations came forward. I just give that information to the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Would there be some discretionary money in the Estimates of the Healthy Child Initiative that would be available once the recommendations come forward, or is the minister indicating that any resources for this initiative might have to wait until next year's budget?

Ms. McGifford: As far as discretionary funds are concerned, I ask her to ask that question of the minister responsible.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, the minister has already indicated to me that she was part of the discussions around the budget for the Healthy Child Initiative. Now she is indicating I should ask the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale). I would expect that, if she was part of the process and part of the approval process for initiatives that would come out of the Healthy Child Initiative, there would have been some discussion around some contingency should there be needs that arise partway through the year. I know this issue has been on the Government's plate for at least the last three years. I know it was on our agenda for a couple of years before that.

* (16:00)

When forecasting what might need to happen during a fiscal year, there is some discussion around ongoing work that is being done and commitments that might need to be made. So I just ask the minister whether there was any consideration or discussion during the budgetary process around setting aside.

You know, the minister may say there is some confidentiality around Cabinet discussions on this whole initiative because government or Cabinet has not dealt with it yet, but it certainly is an issue that has been out there in the public that I know the minister is aware of, the Government has been aware of. So from time to time, although work is still ongoing, there is sort of a notional commitment from government to set aside some money to deal with recommendations from committees that are

actively working towards developing new initiatives.

So I guess I would just ask her whether there was that kind of discussion through this budgetary process. I am not asking her for an amount or any detail. If that announcement is in the offing or will be made, it seems to me we can expect an announcement to be made around some initiatives this fall just from what the minister has said, that it is at the deputy's level, so it will be coming to the Cabinet committee and that there should probably be a resolution soon to this issue. So I would just ask her whether there is any discussion or any notional commitment through the budgetary process to this initiative during the budget discussions.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, there was not a discussion because we had not received the recommendations at the time that we were discussing the Estimates for Healthy Child Manitoba for 2002-2003.

The member asks about discretionary funding. I would suggest to her that we do not have the Estimates of Healthy Child here, we do not have the staff who are intimately acquainted with Healthy Child Manitoba here. I suggest once again that these questions would be best asked during the Estimates of the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), who, of course, has access to that information.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I realize we do not have the staff from Healthy Child Initiative here, but we do have a minister that is part of a Cabinet committee for the Healthy Child Initiative here. I mean, the discussion on the budget, the Estimates process was not that long ago. It was only a few months ago. You know, the minister has indicated many times that this is an issue that she is extremely concerned about. We know that she is an advocate within government on issues for women and female children. We do know that work is ongoing.

I guess a question I might ask is: Is everything that was included in the budget of Healthy Child Initiative as a result of recommendations that had come forward, issues that had been dealt with completely and all the work had been done internally and the budget was

approved accordingly? Or were there other issues that were on the table where recommendations had not come forward to government yet, but government felt that they were priority issues, so that partially your funding might need to be set aside with the expectation that recommendations were in the works? Can she indicate whether that process is followed or is used by her government?

I mean, I know, very often, when we went through the budgetary process and there was a new initiative that was being worked on and the recommendations for funding would not be in till half way through the year, we would put half-year funding in place. I guess my question to the minister is: Was there discussion around this issue, and was there a notional allocation of money in this year's budget to deal with sexually exploited children?

Ms. McGifford: I think I already indicated to the member that, whether there is discretionary funding or not, it would be best to ask the Minister of Family Services and Housing, who is responsible for the Healthy Child Committee and who has access to staff. I do not have the Healthy Child Estimates with me. I do not have the staff from Healthy Child with me. That question had best be put to the person who has the expertise, and that is the Minister of Family Services and Housing.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I might ask the minister then, when they were discussing the budget or the Estimates for Healthy Child, did she, as an advocate on behalf of women, raise this issue with her colleagues indicating that it was a pressing issue and that it was something that she wanted to add her support to as they moved forward in this year's decision-making process around what some of the needs might be?

Did she indicate to her colleagues, through the Estimates process, that this was a pressing issue, one that was high on her priority list and one that would need some consideration some time this year?

Ms. McGifford: Well, Mr. Chair, I think we have answered this question in I do not know how many different ways over the course of I do

not know how long. I have assured the member that there is a committee at the deputy level that includes representation from: Health; Family Services; Justice; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Education, Training and Youth; Culture, Heritage and Tourism; and the Status of Women. That committee is preparing recommendations that will come forth to the committee.

I think, Mr. Chair, that this is evidence of the commitment to this Government on the importance of issues that relate to the sexual exploitation of children. I know that these concerns were raised with the previous government. The former minister tells me that they had just about reached resolution, but they had not reached resolution. I tell her the same. We have just about reached resolution, but have not reached resolution. I bring to her attention, once more, that child sexual abuse is a complex issue, that it requires a multifaceted strategy.

I know the member has talked considerably about a safe house, but a safe house is only one aspect of a strategy. I think the member knows that there are many other important aspects of a strategy to address the sexual exploitation of children. In fact, a safe house sometimes turns out, or there is a possibility that it sometimes turns out, not to be a terribly safe house if it becomes identified in the community, et cetera.

Anyway, my point, the point that I have been making several times, is that, yes, this Government is committed. We will be considering recommendations. If the minister wishes to have more information about discretionary funds and whether there is money budgeted to start a program half way through the year, or three-quarters of the way through a year, or two-thirds of the way through the year, these are questions that would have to be asked of the Minister of Family Services and Housing who has access to the expertise from Healthy Child Manitoba and who is primarily responsible for that department.

So, Mr. Chair, I think that the question has been answered, and I will leave it at that.

* (16:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I take it by that answer that it was not something that the minister raised with

her colleagues. I am not going to dwell on this too much longer. I did ask her a direct question of whether she raised this issue with her colleagues during the Estimates process. She did not answer that question, so I would presume that, by not answering the question, she is admitting that it was not an issue that she did raise with her Cabinet committee.

I do want to indicate that I look forward to hearing an overall strategy and some sense of whether the community can expect a safe house after the September Cabinet meeting of the Healthy Child Initiative that is scheduled. I know the minister said there is a meeting in September. So I would expect, and I anticipate, as I know many others in the community will anticipate, an announcement very shortly thereafter around a comprehensive strategy for sexually exploited children. I am glad that it is at the deputy minister level, and I am hopeful that all ministers, including this minister, will be briefed by her deputy before that Cabinet committee meeting so that they can move forward in a very expeditious way and make an announcement. So I do look forward to that and want the minister to know that I will support movement in that direction and give credit where credit is due when that announcement is made.

Mr. Chairperson: Before I recognize the Member for Russell, I just want to inform the committee that private members' hour has been waived, and we will be in Supply until six o'clock.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chair, I have some questions for the minister as they relate to the whole issue of gambling and perhaps the impact on families and women. This is an issue that I see the deputy minister expressing her gesture with regard to that, but that is fine.

Mr. Chair, I sense that this is an issue that is important to the women in this province, and to families in this province, and it is for that reason that I raise the issue in this committee because this is the place to raise it.

Mr. Chair, for a number of months now we have been raising the issue about the advertising as it relates to gambling in Manitoba and what

this is doing to families in our province. I think the AFM recently reported on their findings, that are not new, but indeed they continue to be vigilant on what the impact of gambling is on families and on young people in Manitoba. It is a negative impact. It is causing our youth, especially, to engage themselves in activities that are illegal because they require the money for their gambling addictions and their habits.

Of course, Mr. Chair, you live in a constituency that is probably more sensitive to that than many others, because your constituency is one that has very high moral values when it comes to issues of gambling and other activities that sometimes society engages in. So, when I ask these questions, I ask them on behalf of families and on behalf of women who see us going down a path that is not desirable. We have seen the budget for gambling in this province triple, and at least there are a few bodies in this province who have raised the red flag with respect to what advertising is doing to their children and their families.

I want to ask the minister why it is that she feels it is so important to involve herself and her department in the whole issue of advertising gaming in the province of Manitoba.

Point of Order

Ms. McGifford. Mr. Chair, on a point of order. I do not believe that questions on gaming should be directed towards the Ministry of the Status of Women. Questions on gaming can be asked at the standing committee which met last December and will be meeting again.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order raised, you do have a point of order. This does not come under the Status of Women. This issue can be raised at the standing committee which considers the annual report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. Thank you.

Mr. Derkach: You did not ask for a response to that point of order. I would like to speak to the point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me. Sorry, I did not see you. I will let you speak to that point of order.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, on that same point of order, as a matter of fact, you have already ruled, but I am going to ask you to reconsider your ruling—

Mr. Chairperson: I will.

Mr. Derkach: —because the information as presented, if you were listening carefully, my preamble talked about the impact on families and on women. The Status of Women secretariat and the department, for that matter, has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of women in this province. In doing that the issues as they relate to such things as gambling, drunk driving, sexual abuse, and the list goes on and on that impact on families and women are indeed near and dear to the hearts of the people that I represent in my constituency who are women.

So I ask this question on behalf not just of the constituents in my area who are women but, I am sure, on behalf of women right through Manitoba who have expressed through their churches, who have expressed through their organizations, the frustration and also the concern about the issue of the advertising about gaming in our province. So it is in that context that I ask the question. Therefore, Mr. Chair, I ask that you respectfully consider this in your ruling.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I will.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Chair, to the same point of order. While I appreciate the member's ingenuity in trying to bootleg the question on gambling to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women in the province of Manitoba, quite correctly the responsibility for gaming in the province of Manitoba is not a matter before this sitting today.

Mr. Chairperson: The appropriate forum, questions on gaming should be raised at the standing committee which considers the Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. So I will stick to my earlier ruling that we raise questions at the appropriate forum.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, you disappoint me greatly. You know I have the utmost of respect

for you as a member and as the Chair of this committee, but I also have a responsibility on behalf of the women in my constituency and other women that have expressed their concerns through me to deal. Therefore, with the greatest of respect, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Chairperson: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Derkach: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Do you have support of another member?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will recess for a recorded vote in the Chamber.

The committee recessed at 4:32 p.m.

—————
The committee resumed at 5:31 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Will the committee come back to order? The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Derkach: I believe the critic is on her way in here, but I do have some questions to ask of the minister, and I guess I will have to try a different approach since, Mr. Chair, you ruled that my questions were not relevant to the Status of Women, which I find very curious and certainly will be reporting that to the women in my constituency at least.

I want to ask the minister whether or not the issue of gaming and the issue of the impact of gaming on women and children is a topic that she has had some discussion on with the Women's Secretariat.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to point out to the member that your ruling on his question was that it was out of order, so I think he put something slightly different on the record. I just wanted to correct that. As to the question, have I had discussions with gaming, and I am assuming the member is referring to my department, the Women's Directorate, has this been brought to my attention, I am told by the ADM for the Status of Women and also the leader of the Women's Directorate that they have not ever had a call on gaming at the Women's Directorate.

Mr. Derkach: The minister who is responsible for the Status of Women is also the minister responsible for gaming in the province of Manitoba. She is also the minister who has launched a very aggressive program with respect to advertising gaming in the province of Manitoba. The alcohol foundation of Manitoba, which deals with problem gamblers and problem issues as they relate to such things as alcohol and gaming, has come out very strongly with respect to the impact that gaming has on families in the province of Manitoba. This in itself must have some concern to the Women's Directorate and to the women of this province because, if I have heard it as an MLA, I know that somebody in the Women's Directorate must have heard it from families in the province.

Just recently we have seen from the research and the surveys that have been done that not only is there a direct correlation between gaming and the impact it has on families—as a matter of fact, the advertising in itself has caused an increase in the incidence of illegal activities by those who are addicted to gambling. From the people that I represent, there has been quite a concern raised about the fact that we as a province seem to be hooked on gambling, seem to be hooked on advertising gambling and perhaps some of the revenues that are raised from that activity. In effect, we are destroying the lives of young people who are in the care of families and women. Therefore, we should be

conscious of that, and we should be sensitive to it.

So I find it somewhat surprising that the minister tells us that the Women's Directorate has never had a call on the issue of gaming and its impact, but I do want to ask a question as it relates to the Women's Directorate and ask whether or not the minister, in her discussions with her Directorate, has addressed the issue of the impact of gaming on families and on women in the province of Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: You know, Mr. Chair, I find the hypocrisy at this table absolutely staggering. Here is this member from Russell, sitting at this table, talking about the evils of gambling when, under his watch, under his government, the former government, the Filmon government brought into this province 5000-plus VLTs, when his government expanded the two casinos in Winnipeg so that the overrun on the casinos was \$100 million. I find it absolutely incredible, just rife with hypocrisy that this member can sit at the table and talk about the expansion of gambling. This is the Filmon legacy.

Now, I am assuming that the member's statements at the table today are evidence or is a public declaration that he rejects the initiatives of the former premier of this province, that he rejects the Filmon legacy, that it has nothing to do with him, except he was sitting at the Cabinet table. He was sitting at the table that made the decision to bring in 5000 VLTs, to spend \$145 million on casinos. So I am just staggered by the hypocrisy.

Now, the question with regard to the Women's Directorate, I have asked the ADM for the Women's Directorate, and she has told me there have been no calls on gaming to the Women's Directorate. So I give the member that information once more.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I am glad the minister has finally acknowledged that this is the place to talk about gaming, because she has entered into the discussion herself. So, now that she has set that precedent, we will continue. No one is more rife with hypocrisy than the minister herself because she is the one who, in opposition, made all types of claims about the impacts of gambling on Manitobans. She is the one who is

on record in Hansard in terms of her views about the impact of gambling on the people of Manitoba, and now she has the responsibility and the distinction of tripling the gambling advertising budget. She has the distinction of being recognized as the minister who not only increased the threshold to gain more money from the VLTs in this province but has increased the number of casinos in this province, and they are yet to be built, to five, which we did not have. I have to say that the hypocrisy lies on the shoulders of this minister, not anyone else.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I have just ruled that the gambling or gaming and advertising does not come under the Status of Women. We have just ruled on that, and I would just like to caution the Member for Russell to uphold that ruling. Thank you.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, if I were finished with my statements, then you may rule. As a matter of fact, I had not completed my statement, and I will try to make it relevant, but, indeed, the minister herself has set the precedent by talking about gambling. So I am responding to her comments, nothing more, and I will continue.

* (17:40)

Point of Order

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, on a point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: On a point of order, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Ms. McGifford: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, this member mocks the whole proceeding of this House with his silly comments, with his disparaging comments. This is ridiculous.

Mr. Chair, I would like to bring to your attention that the Member for Turtle Mountain is addressing comments directly to me rather than addressing through the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: There is no point of order, dispute of the fact. I would just like to caution members to speak to the topic, Status of Women. Thank you.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, the Status of Women is an important portfolio in the Government of

Manitoba. It is a portfolio that is, not only respected, but one that many women depend on to advocate on their behalf for activities that are conducted in our society by government and other agencies and individuals. So the minister has a responsibility, on behalf of women in this province, to ensure that indeed we respond in a proper way to programs, to issues and to activities that are conducted that impact on those women. There is one activity that impacts on the women in this province, and that is the activity of the addiction to gaming by young people, many of whom are women, many of whom impact on the lives of families, which impacts directly on the lives of women.

So it is in that context that I asked the questions. Now, I did not ask the minister whether or not they have had any calls on the issue of gambling. I have asked the minister whether or not she and the Women's Directorate staff have had any discussions and whether they have looked at the impact of gaming and the addiction aspect, which the minister herself through the newspaper agreed yesterday that there has to be a correlation, whether in fact they have discussed this in the Women's Directorate to ensure that the impact can be addressed in a proper fashion.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, I am advised once more by the ADM for the Status of Women, and I think I put this on the record twice now, that gaming is not an issue that has come to the attention of the Women's Directorate.

Mr. Derkach: So is the minister telling us in the Legislature that women in Manitoba, her Directorate that is responsible for advocating on behalf of these individuals across this province, have no concern, have not raised the issue, therefore have no concerns with respect to the problems of gaming, gambling and the Stats Canada report that suggests that there is a correlation between gambling addiction and crime?

Ms. McGifford: That is quite correct. As I said, the issue has not come to the attention of the Women's Directorate. We have had no phone calls. As far as I know there has been no evidence that there are more addictions among

women in this particular area than numbers of men addicted, Mr. Chair. I think the member should be very careful. I think he is getting quite close to being critical of staff. We have very hardworking staff. I think that he should respect that our staff work long, hard hours.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell, on a point of order?

Point of Order

Mr. Derkach: Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Chair, you know I have the utmost of respect for the staff of the Women's Directorate. I do not think the minister should be putting words in my mouth as it relates to how I refer to the staff in the Women's Directorate. I do not hold them accountable or responsible for something that the minister is accountable and responsible for. The minister has responsibility to answer to Manitobans with respect to questions that I may pose, but that has nothing to do with my attitude towards her staff at the Women's Directorate. Indeed, I have said time and time again and I will continue to say that I do have a high regard for all of the staff at the Women's Directorate, as I do for other departments as well. So I would ask the minister to carefully choose her words.

Ms. McGifford: On the same point of order, I am relieved to hear that the member does have respect for the Women's Directorate staff, because I thought he had said, and perhaps I misheard him, and I guess the record will show, I thought he had suggested something about had staff at the Directorate ever brought it to my attention. I am glad to hear that he has indicated on the record that he has great respect for the staff.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order, there is no point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, the Women's Directorate is a body that was put in place for a very good reason. It was put in place, as I understand it, because many of the issues that impacted on women were not getting the attention they needed by legislators and by people who were in position of authority with the Government of Manitoba. So their

responsibility was to ensure women's voices were heard, not only at the Government Cabinet table, but indeed at the Legislature as well.

I think members around this table would agree that is in fact the reason we have a Women's Directorate. For those reasons we have a body of people who, during our term, were put in place to ensure all women had equal treatment across this province, and indeed whose voices could be heard.

As an MLA, Mr. Chair, I have to tell you I have had a number of calls from families, and specifically mothers, whose sons and daughters had run themselves into a problem because of their addiction to gaming at a very early age. They were asking us as legislators what we were prepared to do to help these people and to assist in bringing their families back to normality. I do not know whether we can do that or not.

One of the areas that was highlighted to us was the area of the advertising of gaming by this Government. That is a specific issue, Mr. Chair, that is impacting on these people. I want to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women whether she is satisfied that the gaming advertising that is going on in the province of Manitoba is conducive to a proper environment, both in the family and in the issues as they relate to women in this province.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to inform the Member for Russell that I have already ruled on this. There is an appropriate forum to bring up this issue, the issue of advertising. There is an appropriate forum to bring this up.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, we are going to go to another vote if this continues. I am asking a question of the minister about the impact of advertising on families and women. If that is not a question that is relevant to the examination of the Estimates of the Status of Women, Mr. Chair, then we have a real problem here.

* (17:50)

An Honourable Member: Mr. Chair, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: On a point of order?

Does the minister wish to respond to this?

Ms. McGifford: I do, Mr. Chair. The member spoke earlier with regard to his concept of the Manitoba Women's Directorate. I want to refer him to the Supplementary Estimates where it says very clearly, outlines the Directorate's work. If I can quote from that text: "The Directorate works to influence government decision-making to ensure that the unique needs and concerns of women are integrated into public policy, legislation, and programs. Conducts research, policy and gender-analysis and raises awareness of emerging issues. Works with other government departments and the community to promote measures that will help women achieve equality. Generates government initiatives that reflect specific concerns and priorities of Manitoba women that require the Directorate's intervention."

So I think it is quite clear that the role of the Directorate, broadly speaking, is to encourage the full and equal participation of women in our society. The Directorate has a reputation for championing the lives and rights of women, as does the Advisory Council.

It seems to me that many of the questions that the member is putting forward are questions that could best be answered in the standing committee which addresses the annual reports of the Manitoba Lotteries Commission.

The member talked about the fact that he had had calls from his constituents and that he has constituents who have grave concerns over their sons and daughters. The member certainly does not see me as responsible for sons, I guess, since I am the Minister for the Status of Women, but anyway let me continue. He says he has had calls from sons and daughters, from constituents who have had concerns about addictions. I just would like to advise him, since he seems to be at a loss as to what to do to assist these individuals, that he may wish to advise his constituents or he could do this himself. He could make a connection with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. I am sure that they can give him the best advice. *[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I intervened here. Would you conclude your remarks and give the floor to the Member for Russell?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. I just wanted to suggest that the member may wish to refer these

constituents of his to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. I would think that he could get the best advice from that organization, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, the minister just read into the record the responsibilities—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: There is no real point of order here because I intervened and therefore there is not a point of order. The minister just responded to what I said. So the Member for Russell has the floor.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, the minister just advised us as to what the role and responsibility of the Women's Directorate is by reading into the record the, I guess the mandate of the Status of Women, and I want to repeat it. It says: "The Directorate works to influence government decision-making to ensure that the unique needs and concerns of women are integrated into public policy, legislation and programs."

Mr. Chair, I think that is evidence that tells us that indeed the Women's Directorate has a responsibility to ensure and to influence government in terms of public policy. The issue of advertising gambling is a public policy issue, an issue, Mr. Chair, that the Women's Directorate must have an influence over.

Now I correlate that to the statistic sheet that comes out, a fact sheet on gambling. The source is Statistics Canada which shows that the highest percentage of money spent on at least one gaming activity is done by women the age of 45 to 64, and the percentage is 73.

Now, Mr. Chair, that to me sounds an alarm bell, because in that statistic itself, it says that Manitoba spends the highest number of dollars on gaming and that dollar figure, that highest dollar figure is spent by who? Is it spent by youth, is it spent by men? No. It is spent by this sector of the population.

So, Mr. Chair, that is a startling statistic. Now I have to extrapolate from this that one of the reasons for that is because of the insatiable appetite this Government has for gambling revenue, and its appetite is fuelled largely by the fact that they cannot control their expenditures. In order to be able to satisfy this appetite the

Government has then undertaken a massive advertising campaign to lure Manitobans into casinos, and to lure women into casinos and into the gambling joints, if you like, in this province.

Now that is why I have a concern about where the minister stands, because she is not only the Minister responsible for gaming and Lotteries and advertising of that activity, but is responsible and accountable to the women in this province.

Yesterday in the paper, or this morning in the paper, the minister said that she was not aware of the statistics that have been brought forward with respect to the gambling addictions and problems as they relate to the people of Manitoba. So she has had some time now to make herself aware of that. So I ask her whether or not she is prepared to look seriously, very seriously, at these issues and to start to conduct her activities as minister responsible for gaming in a way which is going to curtail and allow the addiction issue to subside, rather than to increase in this province especially, Mr. Chair. As the statistics point out, it seems that there is a problem in the area of women gambling in Manitoba.

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

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:50)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): 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 for the Department of Agriculture and Food. We are currently considering item 3.4.(d) Soils and Crops. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Chairperson, I would like to correct the record as it was discussed yesterday about the position of the Minister of Agriculture here in this province as it pertains to known positions of the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan, as well as that of Alberta in relationship to value-added processing and the ability to market one's own produce.

Ultimately, the discussion went yesterday that Saskatchewan had not declared that it was in favour to changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. The minister stated that but I would like to correct her in that area. The Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan has, on a number of occasions, encouraged the Canadian Wheat Board to recognize the co-operative movement and the use of the new legislation more commonly known as new generation co-ops.

This legislation has been created in the spirit that the Canadian Wheat Board legislation was created and that being that any and all individuals that are producing a like commodity can come together and effect a greater bargaining power from the marketplace through co-operative and collective marketing. The Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Alberta, and I encourage the current Government of Manitoba to get on board and support the new generation co-operatives as legislation the previous administration put in place and to extend that support to commodities that are currently under the direction and responsibility of the Canadian Wheat Board.

So I would look forward to the minister's response and encourage her to take from the lead of her colleagues in Alberta and Saskatchewan and call upon the Canadian Wheat Board to allow for new generation co-operatives to effectively market members of those co-operatives' produce directly to value-added processors here in the province of Manitoba.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Madam Chairperson, the member talked about this Government's support for new generation co-ops and for value-added processing, and he seemed to be implying that there is something different in Saskatchewan's position and ours. I have to tell the member he is wrong.

First of all, yesterday he heard the discussion in the House on one of his colleague's bills, the Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), who put forward a resolution yesterday on new generation co-ops, and our view is very clear on it. If you look back in history, co-ops have been very important, and New Democrats have always been supportive of the co-operative movement.

The member talks about discussions with the Wheat Board. Well, I can tell the member that I have had many discussions with the Wheat Board, and if you think about the group that was wanting to process their durum wheat into pasta, the Wheat Board worked with them. They had, I believe, come to some agreement with the Wheat Board. The group wanted to completely bypass the board. That is not what the agreement was, and that is not the position that others have taken either, that there should be complete bypass of the Wheat Board. There should be co-operation, and I think that there was an agreement that this particular group came to, but they are not producing pasta at this time.

So I think it is an ongoing process of negotiations with the Wheat Board, and we have had the discussions with the Wheat Board of the importance of value-adding. I think that the member can appreciate our commitment to value-added when he looks at the investment that we made in Portage la Prairie. We have a commitment to invest \$10 million in Portage la Prairie into the Food Development Centre so that additional products can be produced and we can add value to the many wonderful agriculture products that we produce in this province. That applies not only to Portage la Prairie, but there is also the nutraceutical centre that we have invested in, as well as the St. Boniface Research Centre. All of those facilities are very important to add value to product, and the Wheat Board does play an important role. I think that the board that is in place there is very sensitive to the needs and works with companies and producers when they are looking for ways to add value to their products.

Mr. Faurichou: Obviously, this is a significant difference of opinion on the facts, but I was in the room when Minister Upshall from Saskatchewan called upon the Wheat Board to allow for those individuals involved in the company commonly known as Prairie Pasta to effectively allow each and every member of that co-operative to be able to market their product directly to the co-operative. That is from my own personal memory when I was in the room during discussions with Wheat Board officials because the co-operative that was described at that meeting was open to any and all individuals. So it was not exclusive. Any durum-producing

individual in the Wheat Board area was eligible to participate in this co-operative, so by any way stretch of the imagination was not disenfranchising any group or any individual because it was open.

So, yes, for those individuals who are taking the risk, they should be able to market directly and value-add their product on the Canadian Prairies here, and for those that are not taking that risk, why, then, should they benefit from any of the profits that may or may not be generated? If the minister is saying that one should not take risk and those that do not benefit should not participate, I would really like to hear the minister. She obviously has some body language that is contrary to the spirit of farming.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am not sure what the member is hearing, but I would suggest that he read Hansard when it is published because I said nothing of the sort. That is not what I said. I said that our Government is very committed to co-ops and to value added. We work very closely with people who are interested.

I would remind the member as well that Mr. Upshall is not the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. It is Mr. Clay Serby who is the minister. Mr. Upshall has not been around for many, many years.

I also said to the member that processors, such as Prairie Pasta, have to work through the Wheat Board and with the Wheat Board. I believe they had come to a consensus as to how they could get grain and durum wheat for processing. They had come to an agreement. The pasta plant has not come to a reality yet, but certainly value added and opportunities to bring more value and opportunities for employment are very important to our Government.

* (15:00)

Mr. Faurchou: Well, all I can say to the minister, Madam Chairperson, is that I encourage her on her travels to drive off the highway just west of Elie, Manitoba, attend to the flour-milling operation there, Prairie Flower, and ask of their experience as to value-adding producer-grown product. She may find because of the current situation that exists, in the spirit of

co-operation which she believes is present at the Canadian Wheat Board, I think she will find a different opinion, first-hand opinion.

I would suggest if all of the research dollars this province and the taxpayers of Manitoba are investing in value-added processing in Portage la Prairie in research which will ultimately produce varieties of grains and oilseeds that will find themselves a place in the functional food and pharmaceutical end-uses through research that is, as I stated, being supported by Manitoba taxpayers, there is going to have to be a fundamental change where producers can market directly through contract to entities that are adding value to that farm produce. So I encourage her to take that visit and find out exactly, because we are into a new age.

We, as producers, are quite able to source end-uses and markets for our production. The act that is governing us currently was developed when the elevators were every eight miles, where the horses and wagons never had to go a great distance to unload the farm produce.

Right now that same legislation is governing where we now see 40, 50, 60 miles between points of delivery. We all have access to highway tractor units that haul upwards to 1300 bushels and in the wintertime upwards to 1500 bushels of wheat. We have faxes and internet connections, satellite downloads. We are quite aware of where pricing and marketplaces are.

I encourage the minister to get with the 21st century here and to create some correspondence that is in support of the changes to the Canadian Wheat Board Act that will eventually allow the producers who are elected to operate the board the flexibility we all need in order to survive.

Now, in regard to the Soils and Crops sections—I believe the minister has a comment.

Ms. Wowchuk: I wonder if the member made some comments and now he wants to get to the line that we are at. I wonder whether he would like me to respond to those comments or he just wants to go into the next question.

Mr. Faurchou: Madam Chairperson, my comments were words of encouragement to the minister to do the right thing, but if she feels it necessary to comment, the floor is hers.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, first of all, the member pointed out that there is a plant at Elie and that I should take the opportunity to look at it. Well, I can tell the member I drive past that plant as often as he does or maybe more often on my way back and forth to Winnipeg. I can also tell the member that I have met with the board, and I am well aware of the issues. I think that those people are doing a very good job of value adding.

The member talks about the legislation coming into place in the horse-and-buggy days, and now we do not need the legislation of the Wheat Board. Well, I can tell the member, and the member should be aware, that this legislation has changed many times. There have been amendments to it. One of the most significant changes was when the board of directors was changed, when producers had the opportunity to elect a portion of board members, and the farmers of Manitoba and western Canada have spoken clearly, when they elect those board members, as to what they expect the Wheat Board to do for producers.

As well, I would not want the member to imply that the Wheat Board is in the Dark Ages and has not changed at all. If you look back and think of some of the people that have been appointed—and I believe the member might know Mr. Earl Geddes, who was hired by the Wheat Board several years ago and works to add value and work with people who are interested in adding value and looking for new markets for development of value-added products.

I think that the Wheat Board has an open mind. I think that we have producer-elected directors on the board now who bring forward the concerns of producers and new changes, but I think that there is a way to work together. I do not think that you have to destroy the Wheat Board that has done a very good job for producers to add value. We have to work in co-operation.

I would encourage the member to talk to his representative on the Canadian Wheat Board and talk to other representatives on the Wheat Board and share his concerns and make them aware of them so that changes can be made in the best interest of Manitoba producers and of all Manitobans.

Mr. Faurichou: I do not know where the minister gets the comment that I want to destroy the board. The board has its place. However, for those of us here in the province of Manitoba, we have to look to value-added processing, and we have to have the ability to work through contract to be able to deliver our production in the most cost-effective manner. Also, in order to promote, we can invest in as the processing industry like those in Elie did, and I would suggest that the minister not continue to drive by but to stop in. *[interjection]* Okay. The minister indicates that she has been in there. Then, did you notice some of the bags that were being packaged there, that the wheat that they were milling was of U.S. production and that the flour that was being produced was going into bags marked product of the U.S. of A. and being shipped to the U.S. of A.?

Is it not interesting and does it not bother the minister that a Manitoba mill, in order to be viable, has to import U.S. wheat, mill it and ship it back to the U.S.? Why would we, as the breadbasket of the world, have to go some place else to get wheat?

An Honourable Member: That is a good question.

Mr. Faurichou: Really good question, and the minister has to find the answers out. I will tell you, if she investigates, she will find those answers, and she will be talking about a different philosophy and understanding if she gets that research dollar.

Yes, things are changing, and I want to make note to the minister here that the first week of shipping here is upon us in Manitoba through the Port of Churchill. I found it extremely curious that our cruise ships outnumber the cargo ships in the first week of shipping. There is one vessel coming in for Canadian Wheat Board grains and two cruise ships looking for the Manitoba polar bears and other Arctic wildlife to observe. So indeed times are changing when the port was first created for the export of agricultural products and now the tourism industry is, at least in the very first week of operations, more prominent than that of the agricultural impact on the port.

I also want to make mention that we spoke in committee about the importance of alternate

crops and hybrid production. Last week's *Co-operative* edition, July 18, had a full-page article on hybrid poplar production which looks like it has taken root here in Manitoba.

I wonder, with the indulgence now of the minister and chairperson, because of my need to move to other committees, whether I could ask a couple of questions on the next two lines and still leave open Soils and Crops line.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the rule of the committee? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Faurichou: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister the same question I asked two years ago of her, and last year again of the progress that she has made with her colleagues, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) and the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), which I asked earlier this year, about the deliberations that were committed to in the first year of her Government, that there would be a committee of Cabinet to address the need for more irrigation in the province of Manitoba and especially in and about Portage la Prairie in the advent of the J. R. Simplot potato processing plant which is under construction currently and will be looking for a full production of potatoes next year.

* (15:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, indeed, the Simplot plant is under construction right now despite the fact that one of the members of the Opposition said that we would never see that plant built under this Government. It is under construction, and things are progressing quite well there. Our department works very closely with Simplot and the producers on the projects in the area. This year, there is a million dollars in the Budget for irrigation projects. So there is work being done on design of projects.

I guess, when we look specifically at the Portage area, last year there were some changes made to the Portage diversion to allow for the water that runs through that diversion to be captured and used for irrigation, farmland irrigation in the area. As well, the member may be aware that the Department of Conservation announced a water strategy, and there has been a series of meetings being held in the area to

develop the water strategy and look at how best we can use the water that comes down the Assiniboine River and manage it in a way that it will be used in the best interests of producers. There is a lot of water that comes at certain times of year. It has to be managed.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

So, yes, this is an important issue, one that the department is involved in and will continue to be involved in, and there are some projects that are being worked on in the design stage now.

Mr. Faurichou: I find it rather difficult to comprehend the reduction of over \$500,000 from the Budget slated for irrigation development in the province of Manitoba at a time where crop diversification and the need for higher-value crops being produced with the necessity of supplemental water and that the Government of Manitoba would slash by a third the available resources for that development.

So, if we are looking to do as the minister has talked so much about and then behind the scenes effectively not provide for the resources to accomplish what she says her Government supports, I hate to use the word "hypocritical," but I think of no other more descriptive word applicable at this time.

I want to ask very specifically about the commitment that the minister made, as did the Premier of the province, that there would be a committee of Cabinet that would co-ordinate the need to address the need for additional irrigation in the province of Manitoba. When was the last time this committee met?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff): Before I recognize the honourable minister, I would like to advise the Member for Portage la Prairie that the use of the word "hypocritical" is considered unparliamentary language. I would ask you reconsider using that language and take the gentlemanly course of action and withdraw those words.

Mr. Faurichou: I will withdraw the word "hypocritical" in my description of the minister's actions versus her words and just say that her

words are running contrary to her actions, as indicated in the book of Estimates.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff): I thank the member for what I perceive to be his withdrawal of those words. I ask the honourable minister to respond to the point he raised.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chairman, the member implied that I was trying to somehow hide numbers. The Estimates book is a public document. There is absolutely nothing that is being hidden here. So I can assure the member that we view irrigation as a very important part of the diversification of Manitoba. It is important for the potato industry and for other industries.

I can share with the member the expenditures that have taken place over the years. Back in 1996-97 it was \$186,251; in 1997-98 it was \$717,708; in 1998-99 it was \$905,013; in 1999-2000 it went up to \$1.258 million; 2000-2001 it was \$1.01 million. That is the average that is being spent. I can tell the member that this is what we project that we need this year to meet the projects that are going to be ready to go. That is how budgets are set. You project how much you think you are going to need.

I can also tell the member that one of the things that is causing some difficulty is that the federal government has refused to come on side in this project. It is provincial dollars that are there but no federal dollars. So we continue to negotiate. We hope we will have some movement on the federal government's part so that there will be indeed additional funding for these projects. But we believe that this is sufficient funds for construction of the projects that are in design stage now.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I realize that there has been an improvement. I will compliment the Government for increasing the budget for irrigation development. However, I would like to make it abundantly clear that much of this money is now consumed in the research and development requirements of irrigation projects directly called for by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. As a farming enterprise in Portage la Prairie making use of the Assiniboine River diversion as a water source for our

irrigation, we were faced with close to a million-dollar project to put all of the infrastructure in that DFO called for to prevent the fish coming down from the river down to Lake Manitoba.

* (15:20)

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Now, excuse me, I have a lot of difficulty trying to figure that one out when the diversion flows fully in the springtime right to Lake Manitoba. Why are we trying to prevent the fish that come down the river during the summer access to Lake Manitoba, when the fish that come down in the earlier part of the spring have access to Lake Manitoba?

If the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is right up to speed on all of this, if they are afraid of us sucking up the fish and putting them through our irrigation pumps, we already have to have rotary screeners with back-flushing to keep the algae off of the screen and from clogging up our nozzles.

So DFO and a requirement for this fish screen was, to my personal understanding, a total waste of good money. I would like to encourage the minister to band with other ministers, even the minister of highways, who is having a great deal of difficulty with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as it pertains to drainage and road construction in the province and really get down to the bottom of things, because spending close to a million dollars for absolutely no benefit would be extremely hard to justify.

In fact, I would like to find a Department of Fisheries and Oceans individual who would go into a public debate with me to explain why the fish screen and fish ladder and all of the other infrastructure that was called upon before any water went down the Assiniboine River floodway. It just was beyond me, now, mind you, there was some call for infrastructure that allowed for a closer regulation of water flows into the Assiniboine River, and that, in itself, could possibly have been accomplished in a lot less costly fashion if DFO was not involved.

So I want to caution the minister about the projects and all the money and the expenditures as to at the end of the day what has been

accomplished as far as adding acres. I will state to the minister the absolute importance of getting down to work on this and providing more irrigation here in the province of Manitoba.

The first shift of J. R. Simplot will require 20 000 acres of production. Now, 20 000 acres of production may be accomplished in fairly short stead. However, one has to recognize that potatoes are only one crop in rotation with others. It is suggested by her department that we be in a four-year rotation. So, in fact, you have to have 80 000 acres available for irrigation for that one shift. J. R. Simplot is expecting to add a second shift within two years of opening, so, therefore, we are looking at 160 000 acres.

That, Madam Minister, is a significant number of acres for irrigation. Believe you me, \$1 million in support by this administration is not going to have 160 000 acres available for irrigation in the province of Manitoba in four years time.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the member raises the issue of DFO and the impacts that they are having on water projects in this province, and there are serious implications, additional costs that come with it. It is an issue that I have raised with the federal Minister of Agriculture and my colleagues have raised as well. But I can tell the member that we are not going to stop a project to have a fight with DFO. We have to proceed with those projects. So I do not think the member would suggest that we would take on a fight with DFO and shut down the projects that we have going. If they are going to be more costly, we have to proceed because we need these acres irrigated.

The member talks about the needs of Simplot, and I can tell the member that we are well aware of the needs of Simplot. We have negotiated with them, and we have made a commitment that we will work to get the number of acres in place that are needed. In fact, we have put a very significant proposal forward to the federal government that would see \$85 million invested over 10 years, split between the producers, the Province and the federal government. We have not had a response from the federal government on that, and that is why we are proceeding with the resources that we

have, to use the dollars that Manitoba has, and we are continuing to negotiate with the federal government. I hope that in the near future we will have some agreement that the federal government will recognize the importance of irrigation in Manitoba and put some funds forward.

But I indicate to the member that the resources that we have put forward in this Budget are sufficient to complete the projects that are in design now. The member knows it takes time to design these projects. Farmers have to have resources as well. But the member also implied something about research taking too much money out of the fund. So I want to tell the member that 69 percent of the money goes to infrastructure. Over the past five years the area management is 9 percent; research and demonstration, 16 percent; monitoring, 4 percent; and administration is 2 percent. So the member can see clearly that the majority of the money goes to the infrastructure, but I will not accept criticism on 16 percent of the funds going to research, because I think research and demonstrations are very important. It is through research and demonstrations that farmers see new technology and then make decisions about the types of irrigation that they want to put on their land.

* (15:30)

Mr. Faurschou: No, I want to clarify. If I gave the impression that I was against research, by all means, I want to correct the record. Research is a vital component to agriculture here in the province of Manitoba and most certainly would like to see a greater level of support go towards research, and demonstrating the results of that research so that people can benefit from it. But I do want to stress to the minister to stand up, along with her Cabinet colleagues, for a position that makes sense when it comes to the calls by DFO for investment and expenditure of dollars that do not make sense, and with the fish coming down the Assiniboine, it did not make sense. There are low-flow culverts that allow for the fish to travel through. They are not landlocked. All the irrigation equipment that was withdrawing water from the channel had back-flush fish screens so the fish would not stick to the screens or anything of that nature. We, as

producers, along that, just could not understand the additional expenditure.

It does take a while to get in place. We worked almost three years and went from a project that we expected to cost \$40,000 to a project that cost \$160,000 by the time we conformed to all of the engineering specifications. Yes, it is a better system, but we, as producers, are hard pressed to come up with three times the business plan allocation as we had to in this particular case to provide supplemental waters from the Assiniboine River diversion through to the Rat Creek and ultimately to the Whitemud watershed.

I want to ask of the minister, seeing as the Minister of Hydro is here at the table, as well as the Minister of Industry and Trade, that these discussions involving the projects and the Assiniboine River is vital to agriculture and a supply of water to agriculture, domestic and industrial, as well as Manitoba Hydro, as it flows through to Lake Winnipeg. I want to ask the minister have you considered the merits of the Assiniboine South Hespeler report, as tabled in the House by then-Minister Plohman, that called upon the construction. This is the No. 1 recommendation of the tabled report of the Holland Dam, which would essentially provide a lake for recreation and water storage twice that of the size of the Lake of the Prairies as we now know it. I would like the minister to comment on that because it has so many merits, hydro generation capabilities, tourism and recreation, enhanced fishing here in the province as well as water-retention capabilities and water flow regulatory abilities that would see here in the city of Winnipeg a regulated flow in the Assiniboine that would not see the covering of the walkway along the Assiniboine almost every second year as we have seen it now because of summertime rainfalls. That investment can be used by those who are visiting and live in Winnipeg, as well, continuously rather than intermittently, as we now see it.

As well, I will say to the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), who is here present as well, that riverbank erosion is a real concern for all persons living in and around the Assiniboine River where dikes are eroding because of fluctuations in water levels in the

river channel. The wetting and drying cycles, Madam Minister, if you are not aware, are the reason for riverbank erosion. The soil dries out, and it is very porous and very conducive to erosion, but, if the soil remains wet and constant, it has a natural adhesion with the water molecules that bond it. So, with all the ministers present that would have input on this, I am pleased to ask this question.

Ms. Wowchuk: I can tell the member that the study he is referring to is a very old study, and my understanding is that some of the recommendations of that study were taken. The Assiniboine diversion, the Shellmouth Dam, the Holland Dam that he is proposing was considered a very expensive project. I believe that under the previous government's administration, his party, they recognized the costs of major megaprojects like this as being extreme, and that is why the government of the day moved to the surplus water irrigation projects to collect water rather than build large dams.

I can tell the member that our Government is very concerned and want to ensure that we do use the water that we have properly and that we manage it properly. That is why the Minister of Conservation put forward and commissioned the Assiniboine River study to look at what are the options there. I am giving the member my views on this, but this study does not come under the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Faurchou: I would like to thank the minister for her comments. No, the responsibilities do not fall to her for the Assiniboine River. However, indirectly, the Assiniboine River does have a significant impact on agriculture, whether it be in the primary production through irrigation and water supply that way, but also to the water supplies to wet industry that McCain and J. R. Simplot are reliant upon a consistent flow. The Clean Environment Commission hearings, we have learned that were held this past December, we learned a great deal more. I do want to take this opportunity to compliment the individuals in the Department of Conservation that have studied the Assiniboine River so extensively.

I was unaware that, you know, sand bar movement was being studied and how the changes of the sand bar affect the fish habitat

and other things, but we do have to move forward. It was, I will say one of the top priorities of the previous administration to reconsider the construction of the Holland Dam because of the evaluation that was done by the Department of Natural Resources, that put the Holland Dam at the top of the list as far as water retention as it was related to cost. A formula was created to evaluate the benefits of that particular project. It came out, Madam Minister, head and shoulders above any other project that was studied or considered within the province of Manitoba. The benefits are just overwhelming.

I do not want the minister to leave the thought that the South Hespeler report is not a vital report. It was published in 1988, and yes, there is information dating back to the fifties within it, but believe me, the escarpment has not changed very much. The river still is there. The people of Manitoba are still there. There is a great deal of the content of that report that is as current today as it was when that report was tabled.

* (15:40)

I believe, if the minister understands her responsibilities in Agriculture, she will pursue this with her colleagues, the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Selinger), the Minister responsible for Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk). So, if she has any comment, I would appreciate hearing that.

Ms. Wowchuk: I think I have stated very clearly to the member that our Government is very interested in water management and using it in the best way for all economic development, whether it is Hydro development, but, certainly, we are interested in using the water that comes down the Assiniboine River in many ways. That is why we commissioned the Assiniboine River Study. That is why the amount of work has been done on it by the Department of Conservation. We believe irrigation is very important. That is why we are continuing to work with the producers and continuing to pursue the federal government to set up a larger program and encourage the federal government to participate in irrigation, so that we can have the growth we need in this province.

Mr. Faurshou: I do want to impress upon the minister though, for those of us who have studied the merits of the Holland Dam No. 3, I would like to encourage her to do so as well, because I believe she will find, as we have, that this project is one worth consideration. I will say in the efforts to enhance water quality this project does just that as well. The depth of water held back along the Assiniboine would improve water quality because the depth of water would not allow the growth of algae that is now very prevalent within the shallow waters of the Assiniboine and causing a great deal of concern to those who are using the Assiniboine River waters for domestic water purposes, as well as those for irrigation. It does cause us on occasion for automatic shutdown on our irrigation as the draft gets too great because the holes in the screen are full.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, it is interesting to note there has been a change of heart on the part of the Conservatives and the Opposition. When they were in government they looked at this project and thought it was too expensive. That is why they went to the retention of water. Now that the member is in opposition, he sees the merits of this project. I would remind the member they had 11 years to build this dam. If he sees it as such an important project I do not know why he did not deal with it under the previous administration.

Mr. Faurshou: I just got elected.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member says he just got elected. Well, I would think the member, whether he was elected or not, was representing his community. I would think the member, if he thought this was an important project, as a resident of Portage la Prairie, would have gone to the Conservatives. Now, 11 years later, now that they are not in government, they want us to find the money to build a dam that they were opposed to when they were in government.

I thank the member for his advice and we will take his advice into consideration, as we take all of his advice.

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the minister's response. I have not had a long tenure as a member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly,

but I do want to say I do support the project. I was, in my short stint on the government side of the House, very much promoting the project and trying to advance what needed to be put in place to work with it.

If the minister is willing to support the project I would like to say there will be no argument from myself, in support of this project. We would be able to go together to the federal government or to whatever other agencies to make this happen. I think because of the hydro generation capabilities and the development in southern Manitoba where long transmission lines would not be necessary in order to consume the hydro generating capabilities of this project, that would be very environmentally friendly and allow for a greater amount of electricity being exported to the lucrative market to the south of us which the Government, of which she is a member, is wanting to see more of so that they can support through a dividend to the general revenues for the benefit of all Manitobans.

So I think this is a win-win-win situation and we would appreciate the minister saying on record that she will at least look at the project and call upon her colleagues to consider the merits of the project, because it is very, very important that we have a consistent flow of water, as was the findings of the Clean Environment Commission report of earlier this year.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, it is really interesting to hear the member. I hope the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) heard the member indicate that he is now in support of hydro developments. I think the record is very clear that the previous administration was opposed to Limestone, but now the member is saying he supports transferring revenue generation into general revenues. So I am very pleased that the member has seen the light about the value of investing in hydro for the export market.

So I guess the member now has changed his mind. He supports the construction of hydro dams, and I would encourage him when he has the opportunity to speak to the Minister of Hydro or go to those Estimates or go when the PUB is here to express his support for hydro generation development and the construction of

dams, because that was not the position of the previous administration. I remember very clearly the opposition to the construction of dams. I can think of a particular dam that I had an interest in and raised with the previous administration, and they were not interested in that kind of work.

But it is very nice when you are in opposition now to say, oh, yes, now build this dam. I would have to wonder what the price of that dam would be and what projects the member would see cancelled in order to have this particular dam constructed so that there is a recreational lake, I think that he was talking about, and water for irrigation.

But I can tell the member that we are very concerned and committed to the agriculture community and are working to have a consistent supply of water for irrigation, and that is why we have done the study on the Assiniboine River. I thank the member for his comments and his support for agriculture and his support for the need to do more work with irrigation. I hope we will have the same support from him when we look to the federal government for their commitment to irrigation, because that is really what we need.

Irrigation has always been a partnership, and if you look at the amount of money that the federal government has invested in other provinces in irrigation projects, Manitoba is far behind in that commitment. We are going to continue to work to get the federal government to live up to their responsibility, as they have in other provinces, so that we can have more irrigation in this province.

Mr. Faurchou: Madam Chairperson, while I appreciate the minister's comments, I will say that each and every project must be evaluated for its own merit. I do not personally appreciate the minister's comments saying that, in generality, I am totally supportive of dam projects, damming water in this province—I do not know if that came across quite right

* (15:50)

But we do have to look at the Assiniboine River really seriously, Madam Minister, because

it was stated time and time again by presenters, whether they be Department of Conservation or individuals who have an interest in the river, that we are coming very, very close to our maximum draw at low-water flows from the Assiniboine River.

If the minister is truly comprehending what it means to have an irrigated acre here in the province of Manitoba, 160 000 acres effectively have to be available for irrigation. To qualify for that terminology, we have to have a minimum of three inches of available water per acre here of supplemental water to be considered an irrigated acre.

If one is considering one inch is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 29 000 gallons of water, imperial gallons of water, times three, we are looking at close to 90 000 gallons of water per acre. You times that again by 160 000, capabilities to hold that. Now, each and every year, it will not be necessary to use that, but, at the very, very least, you are going to have to have 40 000 acres or additional acres of water available on any given year. So, if you do the math, you are going to have to have a significant water retention program.

I am stating to the minister that it would be a lot more environmentally friendly to have that water retention in one spot and be able to avail that water retention to other purposes, such as recreation, such as fishing, such as continued water consistent flows in the river, hydro-electric generating capabilities. The list goes on and on in regard to having one area, as to dedicated for water retention here in the province.

So, before I leave here today, I would like to have the minister's commitment that she will at least discuss the merits of the Holland No. 3 project with her colleagues of Cabinet, so thereby having the most current knowledge available to make the best decision for agriculture and the province of Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, what I can clearly state to the member is that I will discuss with my colleagues the necessity for water for agriculture, which I have done and which we, as a Cabinet and caucus, have discussed many times.

I want the member to know that the Clean Environment Commission study shows clearly that there is enough water from the Assiniboine River to meet the needs of the production required for Simplot. That is, if all of the acres were done, there would be adequate water there. We know that not all of the water will come from the Assiniboine River for irrigation.

So we are looking very closely. We know what the need for water is. That is why we are doing, the Minister of Conservation is doing a study of the Assiniboine River, and we will continue to work on this issue, but the Clean Environment Commission has looked and identified the amounts of water and has indicated that there is an adequate supply from the Assiniboine to meet the needs of Simplot.

Mr. Faurchou: I want to make it clear, though, that, when the minister states that there is adequate water, the reference that she is making to adequate water is based on a probability of rainfall, snowfall coming at prescribed times throughout the year, on average, and historical figures, and is, in no way, shape or form, assured that there is adequate water.

The only way we can assure ourselves of adequate water is in fact to be able to control the water flow within the Assiniboine River. Yes, we have one structure already available to us to monitor and to regulate the flow, that being the Shellmouth Dam. However, as the minister is probably aware, that takes 16 days to have that water, which is released at the Shellmouth Dam, reach Winnipeg. When one is considerate of that length of time and the current track record of the weathermen or weatherladies in the province to forecast 16 days and to say that this amount of water is going to reach Winnipeg after 16 days is at best a guess and can no way be assured. So you have to have another way of regulating the water flow through to Winnipeg here that is closer and a little more assured, because if one were to see two weeks of very hot, dry weather, not only would the water consumption go up by those that are taking water from the river but also, too, the evaporation that would take place out of the river channel and have even less water available when it reaches The Forks and the junction with the Red River.

So I would like to express to the minister: Will she consider discussing the merits of the Holland Dam project with her colleagues to at least school herself to the point where decisions that she is responsible for in Agriculture can be made through current knowledge and understanding of the Assiniboine River and the merits of the Holland No. 3 dam project.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, Madam Chairperson, I have to say it is unfortunate that, if this project is so important and the member sees it as so valuable for maintaining the level of water for agriculture, his government did not take it on when they were in office. They were in office for 11 years. It was there; I do not know why they did not take it on. We see the Assiniboine River as having an adequate supply of water in it. The member is questioning the comments made by the Clean Environment Commission as to whether or not they had adequate data. Well, their assumptions are made on historical modeling, historical data that has been collected. We do have the Shellmouth Dam that does regulate the flow in the Assiniboine River. I can tell the member that I trust the work of the Clean Environment Commission and the numbers that we have put forward.

But, again, it is very unfortunate for the member that he was not more aggressive during those 11 years of Conservative administration and did not have that dam built.

Mr. Faurshou: Two points: I wish the minister would be mature enough to recognize my statements for what they are. That was a clarification of the Clean Environment Commission's report, being that the adequate water flow statement was based on probability and that in itself is an uncertainty, and that is the end of discussion on that point.

* (16:00)

In no way, shape or form am I calling into question the findings of the Clean Environment Commission nor those that took the time to participate in the process and provided a great deal of information that was studied by the commission and helped many of those of us who were in attendance to understand the river more fully. I will also say that going back and stating

that my personal involvement in support for this project was wanting in past years, we are now just beginning to understand a lot of what happens within the river as it pertains to sandbars, to fish, to micro-organism development, to the ability to disperse the nutrients that come from waste water treatment plants. There are a lot of things that were not understood that, because we were wanting to know more about the river, were undertaken by the department of natural resources, now the Department of Conservation. There are a lot of very responsible, respected individuals that are putting their time, their effort into understanding and answering the questions that need to be answered about the river. Once that is accomplished, then we can make the most intelligent decision.

All I am asking of the minister is effectively that once this information is known that she take some time to discuss with her Cabinet colleagues the merits of the dam at the Holland No. 3 site.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I think the member indicated in his comments that this does fall under the Department of Conservation. I would hope that he took the opportunity when that department was in Estimates to raise those issues there. I can tell the member that our government and our Cabinet has many discussions on the importance of water in this province in areas where there is too much water, areas where there is not enough water. We certainly talk about water management and the need to have adequate water for irrigation. That is why the Minister of Conservation set up the study of the Assiniboine River, to look at how best to monitor, control, and use that water in the best interest of Manitobans.

Mr. Faurshou: Well, I am in complete agreement with the minister on her last comments and will say that it is vitally important that we do all that is possible to safeguard the water that we are blessed with in the province of Manitoba. But I will say that we should be working co-operatively between the various ministries of government to make certain that the resource that we have in the province of Manitoba is best used for the benefit of Manitobans, not only today, but into the future, and that we have to recognize the need to preserve and control in some fashion the water

that is flowing through Manitoba and out ultimately to the Atlantic Ocean via Hudson Bay.

Anyway, the minister will also recall that I support the study on the topic of exporting bulk water out of the province of Manitoba. We have more than 100 000 cubic feet per second that is converted from freshwater to saltwater each and every day, where we have areas in Manitoba, areas into the neighbouring states that are desperate for water, and yet we allow this amount of water to be lost to the ocean that could very well benefit many, many individuals and for the prosperity of generations to come.

I know that the minister is part of the Government that passed the legislation that banned the bulk export of water and only allows water to be exported out of the province in small containers. That currently is her position, but I do believe that should be revisited because it is a waste, Madam Chairperson, of a great resource here in the province of Manitoba.

The water I speak of is already past the hydro-electric dams that allow for the generating of electricity and is being lost. There is no further fresh water being used here in the province of Manitoba. It ceases to be fresh water when it hits Hudson Bay. We will continue to have our differences of opinion in regard to this very vital resource. I believe we should not squander the resource and we should manage it in the most prudent fashion for the benefit of the province of Manitoba, now and into the future. It is important that we do so, but it is going to take a co-ordinated effort.

The minister has yet to answer my question as to when was the last meeting of Cabinet colleagues, as was asked for by the Premier (Mr. Doer), in regard to a co-ordinated effort for a blueprint of irrigation projects here in the province of Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member must have missed his opportunity to have discussions in other departments and wants to get on the record some comments about exporting water. I can assure the member the responsibility of exporting water does not fall in this department.

The member has been talking about the irrigation committee. I can tell the member that a

report was developed outlining future irrigation projects. That report was released last fall. It was made available when the Clean Environment Commission was holding their meetings and that is a public document.

Mr. Faurschou: I just want to make the point that when legislation was passed the Minister of Agriculture supported the legislation and stood and put her name to the record in support of the legislation. So obviously she has an opinion on it. It is part of the discussion and relevant.

In any event, I take from the minister's comments then, as I have raised in the Estimates with the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) as well, there has been no co-ordinated effort by the ministers, because there has been no meeting, even though the Premier stated to the public there would be a committee of Cabinet that would study this particular situation and that would make absolutely certain that there was a co-ordinated effort between departments towards irrigation here in the province of Manitoba.

* (16:10)

So, failing that, the minister cannot identify a date as to when she met with her Cabinet colleague from Industry and Trade and her Cabinet colleague from Conservation, I trust then that there has not been any Cabinet committee meetings and that this was again now a false promise, because even if the department is working on projects, where is the master blueprint of irrigation for the province where we will see an additional 160 000 acres being available for irrigation?

So, moving on, I would like now to ask questions on the Food Development Centre, but I see the minister wants to respond to irrigation still.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I have to tell the member he is wrong. The member does not seem to understand what I have been telling him, and the member obviously is not listening to what the Government has been saying. Clearly, there is a water strategy, and the water strategy is led by Conservation.

In addition, there is an irrigation strategy. That strategy was developed with all depart-

ments, and the report was released. It has been put out to the public, and it was made available at the Clean Environment Commission. So the irrigation strategy is there.

With regard to the water strategy, that is, as I said, led by Conservation, and a document has been put out, and we are looking for public input into it. So the member seems to have selective hearing.

He wants to have specific dates of when meetings were held. Well, I can tell the member Cabinet meets every Wednesday. If the member does not know that, I will tell him Cabinet meets every Wednesday. Committees meet following Cabinet or before Cabinet and on other days of the week as well.

If the member is looking for a specific date when the last meeting was, I do not have that date, but I can tell him water issues are very important for this Government. That is why we have a water strategy, and that is why an irrigation strategy has been worked out, and that is why we are pressuring the federal government very hard to live up to their commitment and put in additional dollars. That is why we have put a proposal forward to the federal government looking for \$85 million in investment over the next 10 years.

Madam Chairperson: Is there leave of the committee to skip ahead to Food Development Centre?

An Honourable Member: Let us do irrigation.

Mr. Faurchou: Well, Madam Chairperson, I do not have selective hearing. I hear everything and comprehend what the minister is stating, but it was very clear by the First Minister (Mr. Doer) that a distinct committee of Cabinet would be struck specific to providing for irrigated acres here in the province of Manitoba that would avail itself to a supply of potatoes to J. R. Simplot.

If she is referring to the irrigation strategy book, that is strictly a booklet outlining ideas and not specific to one project or another or what efforts are being made to reach specific targets of irrigated acres. Where developments are going to take place, where they are not, who and how are not addressed in that booklet.

One is going to have to do a heck of a lot more to see 160 000 acres available for irrigation in four years' time, and it does not matter what the minister says about it. We are going to have to bring on board 40 000 acres a year.

I know personally how much infrastructure has to go in to add a thousand acres of available irrigated acres—the pipelines, the structure, the ultimate control infrastructure, because I personally put in a thousand acres of irrigation and know exactly. If you are trying to duplicate that 40 times in one year, I suggest that the allocation of \$1 million is very, very wanting, indeed, to accomplish this. If the minister wants to see another broken promise racked up because of her undertaking or lack thereof, then I think we are on the right road to that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the member is talking about the document that I referred to that was tabled with the Clean Environment Commission. We know what Simplot needs. We know that Simplot needs 40 000 acres annually if it goes to two phases. It needs 20 000 acres annually on one phase. We know there is a need for an additional 10 000 acres for the existing industry, so that means 150 000 acres on rotation. We know that. The department is working very closely with Simplot and with the producers on this issue, and Simplot knows what we are doing.

Now the member implies there is nothing in this document that I referred to. Well, the document spells out and points out clearly the potential development. It outlines areas where the development can take place, and it outlines the cost of this development. That is where we came up with the number of \$85 million over 10 years. So the member is implying that there is no work being done and is discrediting the department and the people that have been involved in this project. I take offence to that, because I think the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Conservation, PFRA and other people that were involved in the development of this project, of this document, did a lot of hard work. Simplot is aware of it. Simplot sees this as a good plan as to how we can meet their needs, as do other parts of the industry.

I am not quite sure how much more detail the member is looking for, but I think this document indicates where the potential development is, the needs of the industry and the number of acres that are needed and the dollars that are required. Those are spelled out. I can tell the member that this is an important issue for us as a government, and we are having close discussion with the industry. We know when they are going into production. We know the acres that have to be developed. I think the member also has to realize, and I am sure he does, that it is going to be the individuals that make the decision as to whether they develop their land and whether they irrigate it. It is not directed by government or in the industry as to who is going to irrigate or make this investment in their property.

* (16:20)

Mr. Faurschou: The last comment by the minister is contrary to what takes place in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Government is very involved in irrigation and irrigated-acre development.

I would like to ask the minister my last question very specifically. The proof is in the pudding. What are the figures for the last five years as to the number of irrigated acres in the province of Manitoba as to the progress that has been made towards the number of acres that is needed for the potato industry here in the province of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: Over the past five years there has been about 5000 acres annually that is developed for irrigation. That is about 25 000 acres over the last five years. About half of that has been supported through the SWEEP project. The balance of it is projects that farmers have taken on.

The member said earlier that Saskatchewan does something different than what we do here in Manitoba. What I said to the member is we cannot direct which farmers will do irrigation. Neither does Saskatchewan direct it. There is an investment, as there is here in Manitoba.

As I indicated to the member, we are working on negotiating an agreement with the

federal government to get the federal government to partner, as they have in other provinces. Other provinces have had significantly more investment from the federal government when it comes to irrigation.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I have listened very intently to the discussion that the honourable Member for Portage and the Minister of Agriculture have had on the potato industry and the irrigation development potential. It would appear to me, after having listened here for a while, that one of the most probably significant issues that has come about through this discussion, come to my attention, is the lack of a good potable water supply over the long-term period.

I am wondering whether the minister can give us an indication as to where she thinks the potential for irrigation exists in the province and how many acres there might be of irrigable land that might currently be developed without increasing the potable water supply in the province, currently.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I referred earlier to a study that was done and made available at the time of the Clean Environment Commission. In that study it was identified that there is still a significant amount of water in Assiniboine River that is available for irrigation.

We know we have a lot of land that could be irrigated, but there could be limits on water. That is why the SWEEP project, the surface water retention program, was created was to capture some of the water. I think there is still need to work at that. So there is the water that is available on the Assiniboine River that has been identified as still being quite significant that is available for irrigation.

There is the other process of capturing water in retention ponds to make it available during the season, captured in the spring when the runoff is high most years or when the heavy rain is, and then use that water for irrigation. That study identified a significant amount of land and water that is still available for irrigation crops.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could tell this committee exactly how many acres were

identified by that process as being irrigable land accessible to irrigation water on an ongoing basis.

* (16:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, we know that there is a lot of land that is available. It depends on how much water is allocated to agriculture, but the study that I refer to identifies large areas of land and identifies also that there is at this time surplus water in the Assiniboine River that can be made available.

The member is asking a specifically detailed question, and what I can do for the member is get a copy of that study and provide it for him and then look in more detail as to the strategy that was put forward by the departments.

Mr. Jack Penner: I appreciate that. However, I would ask: When the study was done, was any consideration given to the climatic requirements of specialty crops production and not only water as a potential for the development of those areas but the land quality as well as the land databases?

Could you also when you provide this report to me ask the department whether they might provide us with a land base—that is not what I meant, with the land quality that would have the potential of specialty crop production such as potatoes and other vegetable crops that might still be available for that kind of production and whether that is accessible economically to an irrigation plan.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is exactly what the study does. The study looks at the reasonable proximity of water that is available to land that is suitable. It identifies areas and quality of land that are suitable for irrigation. Soils have been rated for their suitability for potato production. For example, is it stony soil or is it soil that will work for irrigation? Is it soil that will work for vegetable production? Land is classified as to its suitability, and it is classified as good or fair for irrigation and for potato production.

So that is exactly what this document has done. It did look at the proximity of land that is suitable for vegetable and potato production and

in close proximity to water that can be used for irrigation.

Mr. Jack Penner: I understand the new plant that is being developed at Portage la Prairie will spend somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$150 million to \$270 million before completion. That is a significant investment for—I should put it this way, that is a significant leap in faith that a company such as Simplot is putting into a development in this province.

We certainly appreciate that kind of development because it leads us to be able to expand our diversification initiative in this province. That is welcomed by the agricultural community across the province. No matter who governs that is a fact of life that I think all governments would support those kinds of initiatives, if they are done in a manner that is sustainable in the long term.

For a corporation such as Simplot to make that kind of a commitment, one would believe there would have had to have been some commitments made by government to ensure that the infrastructure, the irrigation infrastructure, road infrastructure and other infrastructure that would be required and those needs would be met.

I ask, Madam Chairperson, through you to the minister whether she can give me an indication what the commitments were when the agreement was drawn to establish Simplot as a processing plant in this province and what sort of commitments were required by the Province to ensure that the land base, the irrigation capacities and facilities would be met and what sort of other agreements would be required to ensure they would be able to gain access to the markets in a regulated manner.

I know there are three questions there. The first question, I would ask the minister: What sort of expenditures did the Province commit to, to ensure the infrastructure for irrigation would be there?

Madam Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The committee recessed at 4:38 p.m.

The committee resumed at 5:38 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the committee come to order. I believe the minister was ready to respond to the last question.

Ms. Wowchuk: Simplot's investment will be \$120 million with full-time employment of 230 persons. As you know, the plant is under construction right now. The plant will require approximately 20 000 acres of annual potato production. The department works very closely with Simplot. The member was asking what Simplot asks of us. One of the things Simplot asked for was that we put in place a potato pest management specialist to work with the producers. We have done that. They also asked that we put our best effort forward to get a deal with the federal government to get the federal government to participate and ensure that the acreages that are needed were completed.

We put a proposal to the federal government. There has not been a commitment from them yet, but there is discussion with the federal government on how we can deal with this issue.

* (17:40)

Mr. Jack Penner: One would expect that a company such as Simplot, and I understand the investment has now been updated to about \$150 million, making \$120-million to \$150-million investment, as the minister has indicated, would want some significant assurances by the Province that there would be irrigable land available to ensure that the kind of production needed to keep the plant going would be there on an ongoing basis prior to them agreeing to building in this province.

What sort of commitment did the Province make in that regard to Simplot to ensure them that they would be guaranteed at least an ability to cause that kind of production to happen in this province?

Ms. Wowchuk: When Simplot came here, they looked at the programs that we had. They looked

at the SWEEP program. They asked that we continue with that program. They have reviewed the land. They know what land we have, what is available, the water resources that are available. They have worked with our department. They have worked with Conservation. They have asked that we put our best effort forward to ensure that the acres that they need for the production of the facility will be developed. That is the commitment that we have given them.

Mr. Jack Penner: What would the minister estimate the cost of that irrigation development would be by the time we are done?

Ms. Wowchuk: The program that has been identified is an \$85-million program over 10 years that would be split three ways between the federal and provincial governments and the producer.

Mr. Jack Penner: Can the minister indicate to me then what the requirement of the plant will be, how many acres of potatoes is that plant going to require annually to keep it in production at the capacity that they want to produce at?

Ms. Wowchuk: The plant will require 20 000 acres for first shift. As it goes to second phase, it will require 40 000 acres of potato production annually.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the Province of Manitoba has committed \$85 million over the next 10 years to develop irrigable water supplies to ensure that irrigation can in fact take place on that up to 40 000 acres of land. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: The proposal that we have put forward to the Government is an \$85-million program over a 10-year period. That is the proposal. There has been no commitment made. What we have committed to Simplot is that we will put our best effort forward to get that kind of a program negotiated with the federal government.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, the reason I am asking these questions, I find it very interesting that we have a major development going on in the province of Manitoba, a major commitment made by a corporation that will require irrigable land in order even to start production. There is

no question about that. It is my understanding that we do not have the capacity currently to irrigate enough land to give them even the 20 000 acres.

I see a reduction of \$500,000 in the Irrigation line budget in this department. I find it extremely strange that a government will have made a commitment to an industry to start development here without making a reasonable effort or giving a reasonable indication of any improvement in the irrigation system. As a matter of fact, it is a cutback in the irrigation budget by a third of what it was last year.

How can the minister in good faith demonstrate to an industry such as Simplot that this is in fact a meaningful commitment to the development of an industry and the establishment of a long-term, viable industry in this business? I also find it extremely strange that in your own Estimates Supplementary Information that you indicate clearly the expected results of your activities are development of a retention pond and water distribution system to service 50 000 additional annual irrigated acres for over a 10-year period. Certainly, these are nice words, but, in reality, the effect of your budget does not demonstrate the sincerity of the words the minister has put on paper.

I wish the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) was here, as he was before, to hear this, because I think it is important the Minister of Finance recognizes that it is imperative when an industry makes a commitment of \$120 million to \$150 million, and I would suspect by the time they are finished it is going to be more than that, and the Province reduces its commitment the year they establish their business here is not a very clear indication to an industry of the sincerity of the minister and the Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I can tell the member that the member should not doubt our sincerity to this issue. I can tell the member as well the industry does not doubt our sincerity because we have had discussions with them.

I want to tell the member what we have put forward is what is designed, what we believe we

will be able to spend this year. I can tell the member we have not been able to spend the 1.5 because there has not been the uptake in that money. With the work the department has done with producers, we expect the approximately a million dollars we have in the Budget this year will be adequate to cover the projects that are ready to go this year.

We have put forward a proposal to the federal government which would see \$85 million expended over the next 10 years. The member does not have to doubt our sincerity. We are committed to this and the money that has been put in the Budget this year is money we and the department staff feel can be expended this year.

* (17:50)

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, this is an interesting Government. Having listened to them for better than two and a half years now about how they will develop this province, how they are going to instigate initiatives, constantly when we ask them, during the Estimates process and others, there is constantly a blaming of others.

Again I hear the minister say, well, it is not our fault; it is the federal government has not come to the table yet. There have been many, many times during the history of this province when there were developmental opportunities that needed the sincerity of government in the long term to address the needs of the development, that commitments were made by the Government of Manitoba to ensure this development would in fact take place and have some longevity.

However, every time we ask the question: Why is this not happening, why is that not happening? Why do we have a one-third reduction in the Irrigation Estimates line in a year when there is a dramatic initiative being undertaken by an industry from outside of this province that is seeking a home here and that is looking for an element of security in supply of a natural product they are going to produce, a major job opportunity for the people of Manitoba, and an economic boom, I think, to the province of Manitoba. Yet, when we ask why is there not a significant indication in the Irrigation line to match the commitment made by the

industry, it is the federal government's fault. Constantly, it is the federal government.

So I want to ask the minister whether she has given any thought, or her Government has given any thought, to expanding the water storage potential in the province of Manitoba in and/or near the area where irrigable land is available, and I think we have a number of opportunities.

We have the Pemblier dams and the Pembina dams that have been proposed for many years and the economic benefit that would be accrued by a secure supply of water for the southern Manitoba region. We have the Pipestone Creek dam, the Souris River dam. All of these have been identified under a land-and-water strategy that the Progressive Conservative government initiated back in '88-89. That study and the proposals have been lauded far and wide as a sincere application of a land-and-water strategy both from a storage perspective as well as a developmental perspective and an environmental perspective.

Yet this Government now has the opportunity to demonstrate its sincerity and I think all of Manitobans have an opportunity to demonstrate sincerity in this regard without any indication from this Government that there is any real effort wanting to be made to demonstrate and prove this in its budget, or, otherwise, I think we would see significantly different numbers in this line.

So I ask the minister has she given any consideration, or has her Government, has her Premier (Mr. Doer) given any consideration as to developing some significant water storages in this province and in conjunction even with other partners just outside of this province.

Ms. Wowchuk: On the issue of the amount of money in the Budget, I have indicated to the member that on the projects that have been identified, this is the amount that department staff feel will be able to be spent this year.

I want to tell the member that this amount is about, on average, the amount that both the federal and provincial money-spending was. Because there is no federal money, the Province

is putting in the amount that both would have put in.

But this is the amount that has been identified as what can be expended this year for what is designed. The member has to remember that it is a partnership with the producer as well. There is an expenditure to the producer. These are the number of projects that have been identified as being able to go forward this year.

With respect to the amount of water available and the land available for potato production, that was the reason we did the Assiniboine River study, to look at how much water is available. It has been identified through that study that I spoke about earlier that there is significant water that is still available for irrigation purposes, and large tracts of land have been identified, as well, that can be used for this production.

The water retention is a program that we work on with producers. If there are areas where water retention can be developed, the department works with producers to develop those retention areas.

Mr. Jack Penner: It is interesting, when the Government of Saskatchewan, back in '87-88, started talking about developing the water storages on the Rafferty river and building the Alameda dams, there was a very significant criticism by the minister's government of the day. The NDP were ruthless in their criticism, both in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba, by the attempt of the then-Conservative government in Saskatchewan wanting to build a hydro development project there as well as water storages for future development. I remember well that the minister's colleagues were ridiculing us for supporting it.

I guess I was a minister at the time who was green enough, new enough to the political process that I went and flew into Saskatchewan and went and had a look at the potential—and they had already started construction over there—of this project. I came back and I said to the media, you know, my shoes are dry and I just finished walking through the Alameda River, and I said to them this, that I saw some huge potential for better water flows down the Souris

River because of these developments on an annual average basis.

Again, the NDP critics ridiculed and railed against this project. Yet, when I said that it would take one flood event to fill that reservoir, they scoffed at it and laughed, and it caused me some consternation—like I said, I was a bit new to the process—to voice support.

Yet, today, I can honestly say, Madam Minister, that I am truly, truly amazed at how that whole project is functioning. It has given us 20 cfs of water flow down the Souris River at the U.S. border on a continuous basis, and that Souris River has not stopped flowing since those dams were built. Before, during a dry period of time in the summer, the Souris River stopped running. It has not stopped running now.

All I am suggesting to you, Madam Minister, is take a bit of time, take a look at the land and water strategy that was done back in '88-89. You can have it. I mean, I do not claim ownership to it nor does the Conservative government because it was done for the people of Manitoba. There is some valuable information there. I believe that the developmental potential, with a significant commitment for that kind of investment in our environment, in a long-term environmental investment, is that we could have some dramatic increases in industrial activity in the southern reaches of Manitoba where vegetable production has some huge potential, vegetable processing has some huge potential. Yet all it will take is a commitment by this minister and her Government to make those kinds of things happen.

So far we have not even seen the rhetoric that would make us believe that they have any intention of wanting to make that happen or of fulfilling a mandate for developing industries and even supporting, Madam Chairperson, the initiatives that have been started by the private sector, as was the case in the Simplot project at Portage la Prairie in developing further our potato industry, because a reduction of \$500,000 in the Irrigation line during a time when a private investor is making a significant indication by investing \$150 million in the process—

Madam Chairperson: The hour being six o'clock, committee rise.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

* (14:40)

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 Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber?

We are on page 58 of the Estimates book. Resolution 14.2. Culture Heritage and Recreation Programs (a) Executive Administration.

An Honourable Member: He wants to say that the minister is just a wonderful individual, you watch.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): That is not from the minister from Southdale.

An Honourable Member: Sure it is.

Mr. Reimer: That is from the Member for Carman.

An Honourable Member: Carman. I just think that the minister is just an absolutely wonderful individual.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Southdale is recognized.

Mr. Reimer: Yesterday, when we were in Estimates, I had had an opportunity to talk to the minister and ask him a few questions in regard to the arts program, and the fact of arts purchases made a point of for public places here in the Legislature and other areas in government.

The reasoning behind it is to, as he mentioned and as I agree, showcase the artists here in Manitoba in all venues, whether it is in painting, or in sculpture, ceramics, glasswork and all other creative areas that people are involved with. As I mentioned and as he mentioned, there is a program of purchase in the community, and I believe the number that the minister mentioned was around \$27,000 that is used for the purchase of art.

I do not know whether the question was asked or answered yesterday in regard to the

timing of the purchase. Was the art purchase already done this year, which is 2002?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I thank the Member for Southdale for the question. For 2002, I believe was the question, that purchase has not been done yet. Just the juried art shows have taken place but that art purchase from the branch, or from the department, has not taken place yet.

Mr. Reimer: Could the minister possibly give an indication of, at the juried art shows, how many pieces of art have been purchased and the approximate amount of dollars that have flowed through the purchase at the various art shows for the year if it is available, for last year preferably, and this year?

Mr. Lemieux: Last year's purchases were approximately \$5,000 I have been advised, at the juried art shows.

Mr. Reimer: Just as a matter of clarification, the art shows that were attended or where there was a showing made, were most of the art shows in the rural area that we are talking about, for that \$5,000? Was that mainly the art galleries in the small communities in and around Manitoba?

Mr. Lemieux: The majority of the juried art shows take place outside of Winnipeg. I believe there is one in Winnipeg, but the majority of them take place outside of Winnipeg.

Mr. Reimer: Then, am I right in assuming then that the \$27,000 that is allocated for the purchase of art by the department, it is mainly the art galleries in the city of Winnipeg that are visited for selection?

Mr. Lemieux: I was just asking my staff about the process. Really what takes place is that purchases are usually done through Winnipeg, the galleries here, the Member for Southdale is correct, as well as Brandon. A lot of rural artists and others are asked to submit their artwork through slides and present it that way. The procedures have been the same for actually quite a few years, even through the Member for Southdale's administration, and it has not been changed.

Just on that note, I think with regard to more purchases in rural Manitoba and purchases in the North, that is something that will have to be looked at to give opportunity to the artists outside of the Perimeter maybe more of an opportunity other than just submitting slides and pictures of their pieces of work for an opportunity to be purchased by the Province.

It is something that the committee itself that is put together would have to review under the chair of Dr. Linda Asper and how to do that, how to tour the province, because that is what you are asking. You are really asking, will this committee tour the province to ensure that people from the North, whether it be Thompson or The Pas or Flin Flon, or Churchill for that matter, have equal opportunity compared with speaking to the artists from Southdale or an artist from Steinbach or an artist from Emerson.

* (14:50)

They should all have an opportunity to be able to have their pieces of art, or if they be pottery, or whatever they are, to have equal opportunity to have it in government buildings or government offices or in this beautiful Legislative Building. So it is something that is being looked now and it is something that is going to have to be considered, but the procedure has always been the same, I understand, for certainly the last decade and so on.

It is something that should be looked at, and I will try to ensure that we do look at it to make sure that more artists outside of the Perimeter have an opportunity to sell their art to the Province.

Mr. Reimer: A while ago, and I cannot remember exactly the timing on it but I do not think it was more than about six months ago, there was an announcement made by the department; I believe it was the minister's department, in regard to a grant that was going to be made available for the travel of northern artists to come south to show their particular areas of expertise in the art venue.

Can the minister update me as to how that has progressed, whether there has been a

significant uptake on that offer and whether that has resulted in the showing or the purchase of art by artists that have come down, particularly from the North? It was geared specifically, from my understanding, to the northern communities for them to have the exposure of their art.

Mr. Lemieux: The question is not that all your questions are not—to the Member for Southdale—good questions, but this one is particularly an important one. It does address the whole issue of Manitobans outside the Perimeter. I believe he is very supportive of this as well, that rural Manitobans and northern Manitobans should have equal opportunity. The costs really make it imperative in most cases for northerners and people in rural Manitoba to have opportunity to get in to Winnipeg.

We made an announcement of \$75,000. The member is correct. This was an announcement to assist Aboriginal artists. It was called the Aboriginal Arts Creative Development Pilot Project. The initiative was designed to enable professional Aboriginal artists in all the art disciplines to be able to create or produce new works over a three-month period. The maximum grant was \$7,500.

There is also the Aboriginal Arts Mentorship Training and Development grant, which the max was \$5,000 per artist. This particular grant helped professional artists through funding skills development apprenticeship and training and mentorship. This assisted them to come in, to be able to work with other artists, to be able to develop their trade or their craft. We felt it was very important. The amount of money itself is probably not reflective of the need, but, as the member from Southdale would know, in Culture, Heritage and Tourism there is a great need. The large sums of money that are often requested, whether it be Community Places grants or other areas, the need far outweighs what we have as far as dollars go. This is another aspect where we have just scratched the surface trying to allow Aboriginal artists, whether they be Métis, First Nations or Inuit, to be able to come into Winnipeg, to be able to work with mentors and work with other people to develop their skill.

Mr. Reimer: The minister mentioned, and he can correct me if I am wrong, but the indication

was that it is for a maximum three-month period of staying to take advantage of the grant. I heard two numbers. I heard the maximum grant being \$7,500, and then I heard the number of \$5,000. Was the \$5,000 included in that \$7,500 or is that on top of the \$7,500?

Mr. Lemieux: Maybe that is my fault. I went fairly quickly from one program to the next. It is two programs that were offered in this announcement. One was called the Aboriginal Arts Creative Development Pilot Project. The other program is the Aboriginal Arts Mentorship Training and Development Grant. The first program was worth to a max of \$7,500. The second program was up to \$5,000. There is really two in one.

Mr. Reimer: Am I right in surmising that one person could theoretically get \$12,500. Is that correct?

Mr. Lemieux: It is highly unlikely, but the max would be \$12,500. It is highly unlikely that a person would get both.

Mr. Reimer: Maybe the minister could give me a bit of an update as to the take-up on this program since it has been announced, have there been very many artists taking advantage of this, and whether the fund has been utilized to its maximum since its announcement.

Mr. Lemieux: It is fairly early since that was announced. It was a great announcement. The uptake, personally, I would have hoped it would have been much greater, but sometimes it takes time for the word to get out and for artists to become aware of the programs. That is, of course, our responsibility to try and maybe do a better job to let more artists know it is available. So far four projects have already been approved.

A visual arts mentorship project for Pauline Braun of Thompson; also a mentorship project to Catherine Orr to work with Stan Taniwa of Eden to develop wall art designs in Erickson; to the rural arts mentorship program, Carman for six to eight mentors to work intensively with teenage students at the visual arts; and a Jennifer Smirl of Morden to be mentored by a ceramic artist by the name of Bonnie McQueen.

So here you have one person from Thompson, Manitoba, and you have three others.

The three other projects, Erickson, Carman and Morden, have received the other three. I guess, just looking at what we have, I would say it is successful in the sense that you have three from rural Manitoba and you have one from Westman, two from southern Manitoba and one from Thompson.

The idea is to give artists the opportunity from all over the province to take advantage of these grants. We are just hoping there will be a better uptake on the grants that are provided, but time will tell. I am sure once the word gets out there, there are many artists, as we all know. I am sure the Member for Southdale knows. These are not the ones who sign million-dollar contracts to do their works of art. Every little bit of grant money really is very, very helpful to them. This was the initiative we tried to put forward to try to assist them, because you have, as I mentioned yesterday, Riel Benn, an artist from Birdtail whose works of art are all over the world but very few are displayed in Manitoba.

We would like to be able to ensure that other artists, whether they be professional or amateur, have an opportunity to improve their skills, improve their works of art and maybe have an opportunity to become world-renowned. Even though we know they do not make a lot of money, we have a great appreciation for all their works of art. I know, personally having attended a number of art shows, there is a tremendous amount of talent in Manitoba. We would just like that to be able to come out so everyone has an opportunity to see that.

Mr. Reimer: I think a lot of what the minister is saying is very true in the sense that Manitoba does have a tremendous resource in its artist community throughout all of Manitoba. It is not particularly concentrated in Winnipeg but there are a lot of rural artists in all venues who have tremendous works of art. The unknown quality is the exposure these people have to have to get their art recognized, whether it is here in Winnipeg or in other areas of Canada or internationally.

* (15:00)

One of the ways, I think, was mentioned yesterday that we had a short discussion on was the fact that showing of their art work and a

place for people to see their works of art in all venues is something that is very, very important. As was mentioned by the minister yesterday, one of the areas that is very well traveled, in fact we see it as we sit here in the House right now, if we went out in the hall there is a very, very good chance we would see tourists walking through our building and looking at all the various cornices and the amount of people who enjoy the view of this tremendous heritage we have as a Legislative Building and the uniqueness of some of the areas and the rooms and the exposures they all can look at.

It was mentioned yesterday, the Pool of the Black Star and how that has become a focus in a sense of not only the tourists' guide. I have had the opportunity to sort of have a guide put on by one of the tour guides just to get a better understanding of the building. Inevitably, they always—not always, but one of the stops has been the Pool of the Black Star, has been the overlook from the second floor into the Pool of the Black Star. People eventually end up down there for the sake of gazing upwards because you can look straight up into the dome, and it becomes quite a centerpiece of conversation and gathering.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Over the years, that area has been an excellent venue for the display of art in all areas, whether it was paintings or ceramics or other areas where people had a chance to be recognized, the names got put on display. Inevitably, I am sure a lot of artists benefit from the fact that they were able to possibly even sell some of their artwork to people because of the fact that it was shown in the Pool of the Black Star.

It was mentioned yesterday that the Pool of the Black Star is no longer available as a place of showcase for the artists. I was just wondering what type of pressure or what type of commitment the department would have in allowing that place to be relinquished of its exposure for the art community when it was relatively a public access place for artists to display their work in a gallery, and not likely to have to pay for the exposure.

The through-traffic in a lot of places coming through this building is something that can be captured and we can take advantage of because, as tourists, people would see the art; they would have the ability to participate in the purchase of that art. The art would inevitably maybe reach into other areas of Canada or even into the United States and internationally. It possibly could be triggered by the fact that it was on display in the Pool of the Black Star.

I want to ask the minister again as to why that place has not been made available to the art community for the display of their works.

Mr. Lemieux: The issue around the member's question is an important one. Obviously, amateur artists have to have an opportunity, as well as other artists have to have an opportunity, to display their wares. If they do not have that opportunity, no one else can appreciate or have the opportunity to look through their eyes on what the world looks like and the beauty that they are able to display.

With regard to the Black Pool, the space itself, I have had an opportunity to be down there a number of times, once more recently with no art being displayed there. That truly is a tranquil place. It is a beautiful room. It is a personal opinion, but, when the artworks were there, it really—I do not want to use the words "cluttered up," but it really took away from the beauty of the room, I felt, anyway.

I understand that this was one of the reasons and rationale that the Legislative committee—I am trying to think of their proper name; I believe it is called the building and grounds committee of the Legislature—made a recommendation to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton), and he accepted that recommendation that the Pool should not be used for display of different pieces of art.

Now, the artists are just not left high and dry. When they want to display some works, we work very, very hard to ensure that they have a room and a place to display their pieces of art. I would agree with the member from Southdale that this is arguably the No. 1 tourist attraction in the province, and arguably it is, I believe, the most beautiful Legislative Building in all of Canada.

So it draws lot of tourists. Our Tourism office at the front of the building would testify to this, that there are many, many tourists and tour buses that come through the building. There is an opportunity when you have a magnet like this of course with a lot of tourists coming in that it would seem to be a natural. But it was felt by the committee that it took away from the beauty of the room itself and the Pool of the Black Star.

So in part I would certainly have to agree with that decision, because it is a beautiful room in itself. Many, many tourists still do go and visit that room and go see the room for the beauty of the room itself, not necessarily to see pieces of art, but they go there to see the room. So it is a difficult issue, in a sense, because it seemed like a natural place to display art, but a decision was made that there would be other opportunities and other venues for the artists to display their pieces of art.

So the long and the short is that I certainly personally have not received any concerns from artists because they do not have a venue here. I can be corrected certainly whether or not the department has received any concerns. To the best of my knowledge we have not, that this venue somehow was removed and then people lost their opportunity to display their works of art. That is not the case.

It can be argued which is a better location, which is a better room, but they have not lost the opportunity to display their pieces of art, nor have they registered that with me personally or my department, I understand. But I will certainly check with my department and find out if that is the case. I know personally I have not been contacted in any way, shape or form, but I do not know if the department has received any concerns related to that.

So, just on that note, I just want to say that I would agree with the member from Southdale that it is important to be able to display pieces of art and to have venues for that. The artists that wish to do so, we assist them in many different ways and give them opportunities to display their work. Thank you.

* (15:10)

Mr. Reimer: I think one of the things that is always quite enjoyable for the members here and

for the building itself is when you have not only the tourists come through here but the local schools and the children get a chance to tour the building and are struck by the immenseness of it and the grandeur of the building. That room there is usually the gathering point, if you want to call it, for the young people. I would think that, if we are trying to cultivate the young minds towards a direction of appreciating the tremendous artwork and the capabilities of Manitobans by displaying their venues and having the children see these, it gives not only the awakening of their curiosity of art, but, as I mentioned, it gives the artist the opportunity to show off his or her showcase of talents.

I would think that to sacrifice the room just because it is being wanted to be classified as a quiet room seems to be a bit of a stretch, in a sense, because of the fact that it has, as long as I can remember, since being elected, that room has always been used as an area for showcasing Manitoba art and the exhibitions of artists that are wanting to showcase their work. If the art is not going to be showcased in that room and it ends up in the front entranceway, like some of the art is there now, I think that it detracts from the areas where things can be showcased, which would be, possibly, in the Pool of the Black Star. Unless there are other venues or rooms available for the showcase of that in the building, I would think that the artists have lost that exposure almost totally because of their elimination of that area in the building. I do not know whether the minister is referring to the availability of another area in the building when he says that we will continue to showcase the artwork of our Manitoba artists.

I was just wondering where would those rooms or where would that location be available where these works of art could be showcased again in the same type of venue. I am not too sure whether the minister sits on the committee of the buildings and grounds, whether he sits as a member of that committee, but whether he has contact with that committee to find out whether there is a place here in the building where he can champion the artists' rights of exposure, in a sense. Are there plans for another venue here in the building to showcase that?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): The honourable Minister for Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Lemieux: It is a mouthful, I know. You can throw in minister responsible for the voluntary sector, too.

I do not mean to make light; it is an important question. I just want to say and I should put on the record that the Pool of the Black Star was always meant to be a place of quiet contemplation. The room itself is a piece of art and a work of art, and it was meant to be viewed like that. I know that many artists are looking for alternate spaces and places to display their works. I know that the Province of Manitoba, I am going by memory, I believe we assist and fund anywhere from 15 to 20 different galleries, including the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, and I believe there is the gallery in Steinbach and many other communities we assist financially with assisting them to be able to display works of art.

It should be noted that this is not the only venue where works of art are displayed. I would like to note that, on the Pool of the Black Star, my understanding is there was some difficulty with regard to security. The artists were responsible for their own security. They were responsible for ensuring that pieces of art were not destroyed. This is very, very difficult for many artists. Even though we all believe that people come to this Legislative Building as tourists and visitors with all good intention, with intention to come here to view, whether that be the artworks around the building or to look at the building itself, that they would not be destructive or try to vandalize anything, it does not take much for one to distort or destroy a piece of art by just using a utility knife or anything like that, or chalk, or paint. It is very, very difficult to secure an area like that because the artists who are responsible—it is part of the arrangement, I understand, that they are responsible for their own security.

There were other questions raised with regard to, not necessarily the quality of work there, but the type of art that was going to be displayed there and wanted to be displayed there. Governments not wanting to be censors and not wanting to do that, on the other hand wanting to be sensitive to all the values of Manitobans, I understand that this could have been and would have been a concern, too.

But I would certainly want to put on the record, and I should say that the member from Southdale knows as well, that his government prior to ours was very, very supportive of artists as well. This is not something that is new or has happened overnight. They should be congratulated as, I believe we should be congratulated for continuing to support amateur artists. I know we are trying our best to ensure that they have every venue, and if anyone has any suggestions with regard to how we can improve that, I know the department as well as I am very, very open to any suggestions.

With regard to the Pool of the Black Star, as I mentioned it was always intended to be a place of quiet contemplation. I know that especially before or after Question Period there are many members in here that probably should take advantage of that room. I am not directing my comments to anyone in particular, but I would just say that the intention is to keep the Pool of the Black Star as a work of art in itself and to remain as a place of quiet contemplation. I understand that it is the committee that made that recommendation and, as it stands now, it is going to remain that. It will remain a piece of art in itself, and the tourists will be able to view that room for its beauty in itself.

Mr. Reimer: A room for quiet contemplation.

An Honourable Member: It has a nice ring to it, hey?

Mr. Reimer: Yes, it does. As MLAs, we need that too. We should be taking advantage of that, I guess, for quiet contemplation. I am not being critical of the minister.

I was wanting to ask the minister then, moving on to one other subject that I have a few questions for. There was quite a bit of, I should not say quite a bit, but there was some controversy in regards to the audit of the artworks under the purview of the department when the Government took office. There was the accountability of where the artwork was and whether there were pieces missing and the whole program of artwork that was not only in the minister's offices throughout government but in some of the public places where art is displayed.

I was wondering whether the minister has any update as to the audit of artworks that was carried out as to any of the missing art has been located or whether there has been any missing art turn up in regard to the audit that was performed.

* (15:20)

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question. I recall the discussion well. I am not sure whether it was controversial or not, but I understand the discussion well. I sat through those Estimates with the minister responsible for the department at the time, Minister McGifford. I am not often partisan, but I certainly did not like what I saw taking place. We were a new government. I was a new MLA sitting in the first Estimates, not my own, but another minister's, and watching that minister being raked over the coals, I did not appreciate it. I did not like the tone. It made it seem like she was being very vindictive, and she was not. She was trying to find out where the different pieces of artwork were as a new minister who should be responsible in trying to find out, make sure that everything is in order with her department, being a new minister.

I understand the feelings on the other side, too, because I had the opportunity to speak to a number of members who felt it was very, I believe the word is accusatory. It felt like they were somehow being smeared and tarred all with the same brush because when something appeared to be missing, there were no names at Taché to missing objects and so everyone was being painted as somehow they may have taken off with the art and so on. So I understand their feelings.

But just to get to the point and get to the answer, I understand that everything was found. The pieces that were missing or misplaced or wherever they were, everything was found except for a couple of pieces. They could have been broken. They could have been pieces of pottery that were broken, and you know they are irreparable. They were beautiful pieces of art, but you could not use Crazy Glue to put them together, and so they were discarded and noted as such. So I understand that everything, to the

best of the department's knowledge anyway, has been identified.

What I believe that did was to ensure that all those pieces of artwork that we purchase on behalf of the people of Manitoba for this building and other government offices and are the property of the Government, we should have an accurate record of where they are. After all, it is the property of the people of Manitoba, and they have a right to know that it is in safekeeping. I think what that did was just highlight the fact that, no matter who the government of the day is, any pieces of art that are purchased with public funds should not only be tagged and labelled as government property but also should be kept good track of to know where those pieces of art are so they can be kept for the citizens of Manitoba to view or for the beauty for whoever is in possession of it that particular day or that month or year.

So I appreciate the member's question. I know Minister McGifford feels the same way, that there was no intent to smear or to besmirch anyone's reputation in any way, but I know a number of members felt that way. They felt that they were being accused of something for which they were not responsible, and I can understand their feelings as well. But I certainly did not appreciate the tone in which my colleague was being accused, that somehow she was behind trying to do something that was certainly not part of her character.

So the long and the short of it is, all the pieces have been found except for a couple, I understand, that may have been pottery. So, to answer the member's question, we are satisfied as a department that good recordkeeping is now taking place.

Mr. Reimer: Would the audit of the various items throughout the various departments and everything else—is there any indication as to how many items might be in the collection? I know there is a number, whether it is categorized in regard to paintings or ceramics. Is it catalogued that way, or is it just put into a full number, as to what is in the catalogue for audit?

Mr. Lemieux: I guess this is at the basis of not only a dilemma but how difficult it is for government and how many pieces of art have

been purchased. I am not even aware what year governments started purchasing works of art on behalf of the public. This goes back many years. I am not even sure when, what year the purchases started. There is a tremendous amount.

Certainly, to the best of my knowledge, this goes through many, many different governments and many, many different purchases of works of art from all over Manitoba. I know I am very proud of the fact that my cousin from Dauphin, Earl Graham, who does a lot of scenery related to farm equipment and barns and so on, the previous government purchased one of his pieces of art. He is a tremendous artist who started up, I think he was 45 when he first started painting. So it is something, it is a real treasure, and to our family and to his family, his immediately family, it is very important.

I guess I am trying to give you a personalized view of how important it is when government purchases works of art around the province like that, the importance it plays, because there are many, even though in this day and age people make derogatory remarks about government, there are, I believe, far in the majority of people have still a great respect for government and the institution. When government purchases works of art like that, and I know in my cousin's case the family is very, very honoured to have such an honour be bestowed on one of the family members. It is important.

Thousands upon thousands of pieces have been purchased. To keep track of them is also equally important. I do not have the number for the member. I do not have the number, just off the top of my head, but I would be pleased to find that number and find out what the total purchase has been.

I am not even sure when the purchasing first started. I am sure it goes back decades upon decades, when pieces of art were purchased on behalf of the Government of Manitoba, but I will be pleased to find that number. Hopefully I will be able to get the accurate number, right to the last piece of pottery, and be able to provide you with that.

The collection includes, there are paintings, there are ceramics, there are portraits, posters,

pottery and all kinds of other collections, so there is a wide assortment, but I will be pleased to get the number for the member and try to get the exact number for the member.

Mr. Reimer: The member is right. I imagine the numbers, if you were looking at numbers in regard to the purchases over the years, they must be fairly significant. I happened to be part of the arts purchase program when I was a legislative assistant to Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. I remember when we went around and tried to stretch out as much as we could of the money that was allocated in regard to purchase of art. You would spend a little bit on a piece of ceramic and maybe a little bit more on a piece of artwork or a painting. The juggling act was always quite laborious because you were trying to cover as many artists as you could, but, at the same time, a lot of times you ended up with a fair amount of items. This was part of the process.

Then there was always the allocation of who got what type of thing. Everybody wanted certain things for their offices and everything, but that is fair game. The whole idea is to get it out into not only the minister's offices but the public offices that the public have throughout the government buildings and have exposure to it. So it was always very interesting, and I enjoyed those soirées in the artist communities to buy art when I was the legislative assistant.

I can still actually remember the dedication of a lot of the artists when you went in to talk to them. They were very, very talented and very dedicated to their art. I never had that appreciation of what the great talents we have here in the province until I got involved with that. They work out of certain areas, and certain artists come to mind that you just marvel at their works. I can relate very well to one artist. The minister mentioned one artist, but one artist that always was enjoyable to go see his work was Jordan Van Sewell and all his various, I am not too sure what the word is, but they were very, very unique.

* (15:30)

An Honourable Member: Modern ceramic.

Mr. Reimer: Modern ceramic of some kind, but truly, truly a great artist and the ability to show

his wares not only here in Manitoba, but he is getting recognized throughout North America and all over the place by now. He is a very, very enjoyable person to see his work and not only that, but to talk to.

Actually, I have gotten to know him quite well through social venues because of his artwork. In fact, the minister mentioned that when the audit was done, as it turned out, one of the pieces that was missing was in my office, and that was one of Jordan Van Sewell's pieces that I sort of took with me when I went from my minister's office to my office here in the Legislature. It was reported, but it just was not recorded, I guess, that I had that little piece of Jordan Van Sewell. So I know what the audit had meant.

Just out of curiosity, has there ever been a reckoning of, and I believe the minister mentioned, the dollar amount, the dollar amount that has been put towards the art that we have under our purview or through his department as to what the estimated value of all the art is?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the value of the pieces of art, my understanding at least, I have been advised that certainly there was a price tag put on the value of all the artwork that has been purchased and owned by the Province.

I am not sure what the figure is. I think the most recent one dates back a few years, possibly back when the member from Southdale was a legislative assistant to the minister at that time. I am not sure when the last auditing or financial assessment of the value was placed on the pieces of artwork.

I do not believe it has been done, certainly since we have been in government, since '99, since October '99, but I believe it was before then. I am going by memory, but I think it was around '94 or '95, the last time it was done. I stand to be corrected, but I think it was the mid-nineties. That is my best recollection.

I know that the pieces of work that he speaks of, the ceramic, this is an artist who is very fortunate to have someone working on his behalf, promoting his pieces of art. The Loch-Mayberry gallery has been able to promote

pieces of his work, you know, through Scotland and all over the United Kingdom, and so on. I know David Loch works very, very hard all around the world and more recently was in Japan with Winnie the Pooh paintings, which had thousands upon thousands and thousands of Japanese coming out to see Winnie the Pooh.

I was amazed by this because a lot of Japanese and Koreans use the Winnie the Pooh English version to learn to speak English. They use that textbook in their schools. So they are quite familiar with Winnie the Pooh.

David Loch does a great deal of promotion and should be congratulated for that, works very, very hard on behalf of some of the artists and people that have works placed in his own gallery, but also pieces that are being supplied around the world. So that particular artist, Mr. Van Sewell, is very, very lucky to have David Loch and others working on his behalf.

Once again, we do not have an updated estimate of the costs, not even an estimate of the costs, but a more accurate version of the value of all the pieces of art here has not been one done, I think, since the mid-nineties. I stand to be corrected. We will try to find out when that last was done and also the value, what was the price tag at that time when it was last done.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, in regard to a lot of that, I think that a lot of the art that was purchased years ago was from relatively unknown artists that have grown into some very, very significant names now like Ivan Eyre and other pieces that have upwards of, you know, into the five- and six-figure numbers by now. If memory serves me right, some of those paintings were purchased years ago for very, very, you know, less than 10 percent of what some of the paintings go for right now.

I would think that the care and concern of a lot of that art is something that, and I believe the department is very, very aware of it, of significant note as to the value of what we have in our buildings and in our offices. So it is something that we as Manitobans are sometimes not aware of the tremendous, as I said earlier, the assets of the capital of these artists and what they can contribute to not only our Government, but

to all of Manitoba. So I will just leave my questioning at that and turn it back to my colleague from Seine River.

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member from Southdale for all his questions. I just want to say that his point is well taken with regard to the purchase and the value going up.

I know that Jackson Beardy paintings, for example, the collection was purchased from the estate. I am not sure if the minister of the day, whoever that was, it could have been the member from River East when she was the minister, made that purchase or it could have been Mr. Kostyra, but it was at the end of the 1980s. That purchase was truly important for the citizens of Manitoba, because that estate, those pieces could have been scattered all over North America, which may not have been so bad, but Manitobans should be proud of the fact that we hold a sizeable collection of Jackson Beardy originals here because someone, that minister, had the foresight to feel that it was important to have those pieces of art here after the passing of a great artist.

So the value has gone up and has changed. A lot of pieces probably have changed since the mid-nineties as well, or whenever that last official pricing of the current art we have. I am sure it has changed over the last five years anyway. The value would go up, hopefully, you would think.

We are very fortunate to have a lot of the pieces and collections here that we do. The committee that does that deserves a lot of credit. I know the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) was part of that, as he mentioned, when he was legislative assistant, and has the opportunity to have discussions with his colleagues about who gets what piece of art and who wants what and how many you get. It is always a joy. That says something about all the pieces that are purchased. There are so many great pieces and such a wide variety of different kinds of art.

I know I have had the pleasure in the last year and a half of being minister of the department to really have my eyes opened. Being a real novice and having the department work with me and having to educate me in the department has been a real joy because I have

learned so much over the last year and a half. I know many of my colleagues are lined up right behind me and cannot wait to be the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism because it is an enjoyable portfolio. You learn a lot. You get a chance, as the Member for Southdale said, to meet all these artists, such wonderful people, different personalities. It is great to get out there and to meet them and talk to them. They do not make a lot of money. They do not do it for money. Many of them, just the love of the art, love of painting, love of sculpting. We are lucky to have them in Manitoba.

* (15:40)

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): I am wondering now if the minister wanted to move to Information Resources to be able to deal with that because of staff problems.

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the Member for Seine River. I appreciate her flexibility, and I know the staff do as well. One of the staff of the department has to attend a conference for a couple of days in Ottawa, so I really appreciate the Member for Seine River being very flexible in allowing us to deal with any questions related to Information Resources or Communication Services.

There is another individual who is also going to be going, I understand, or may be going, but this is dealing more with the Legislative Library, any questions related to the Legislative Library or the Archives, anything in that area. I understand she may be going as well. So maybe we will use the opportunity. I really do appreciate the Member for Seine River being flexible. Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Given yesterday's agreement, we will proceed to item 14.3. Information Resources (a) Client Services.

Mrs. Dacquay: I know who the staff are, so I will not belabour the minister to introduce his new staff. I will just proceed directly into the line of questioning.

Under (a) Client Services, there is a slight increase year over year. Can the minister explain what that increase is related to?

Mr. Lemieux: The increase is due to staffing increments. That is what the member sees in front of her.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister indicate how many vacant positions there are, if any?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, there is one position currently vacant.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Other Expenditures, according to the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, it includes such things as Transportation, Communication, Supplies and Services and Other Operating. Just so the minister knows where my questions are going to be directed.

On the first item identified there, Transportation has had a tenfold increase. Can the minister explain why?

Mr. Lemieux: My apologies for taking so long for the Member for Seine River. What I have been advised is that the difference beginning when government came in with the SAP computer systems, what these numbers do, and they reflect every column, every column there is a change, and it is due to this changing of codes and changing from one system to another, I understand. That is reflected going from services to Transportation, and that is the reason why there is a difference. It is not necessarily a matter of accounting, but it is because of one system going to another, and that is where you see the difference. That is reflected almost in every line on that particular page of 14.3. (a).

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that explanation. My question then is: The level of services has really not changed. It is the classification in terms of the expenditures. Is that correct?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, that is correct.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Public Sector Advertising, and this may also be as a result of the new system, but there is a substantive reduction in the Public Sector Advertising line year over year. Could the minister please explain what that differentiation is?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, in my opening remarks, I made comment about how there tried

to be some cost savings taking place with regard to government advertising for positions and so on. That cost saving is reflected in that particular line, showing that we have saved money as a result of doing that instead of taking out large, huge ads in the newspaper. We have been able to save some money there, and it has actually been quite well received. People are still able to get access to positions and so on, but it has saved us money in the way we advertise different positions and so on.

* (15:50)

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass lines 14.3.(a)(1), (2) and (3).

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Line 14.3. Information Resources (a) Client Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,317,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$282,800—pass; (3) Public Sector Advertising \$2,116,500—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$2,591,900)—pass.

14.3. (b) Business Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a question here. The change reflected here, is the same reasoning or rationale used for the change reflected here as was under Client Services?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, that is correct.

Mrs. Dacquay: You can call those lines, Mr. Chair.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Item 14.3. (b) Business Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,319,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$957,600—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$260,300)—pass.

14.3. (c) Translation Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,324,000.

Mrs. Dacquay: How many employees work in Translation Services?

Mr. Lemieux: I believe the number is 24.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are translation services provided for languages other than English and French?

Mr. Lemieux: No, Mr. Chairperson, it is just French and English. They are the two official languages of Canada.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please explain why there is an increase on the Operating line? I am referring to the subappropriation now.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, there was a capital cost involved in purchasing, and there is also cost now in maintaining, I understand, and that is the difference.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is that specifically related to SAP?

Mr. Lemieux: We purchased some software with regard to Translation, and now we are maintaining that.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass that section.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): 14.3.(c) Translation Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,324,000—pass; (2) Other expenditures \$431,000—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$269,700)—pass.

14.3.(d) Provincial Archives (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,309,600.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, can the minister please tell me how many full-time, part-time and casual staff are at the Archives?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chair, there are 47 positions, some of which are job-sharing and so on.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the minister able to identify how many of those 47 positions are full-time equivalent?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, by definition, the 47 are full time. There are 47 full-time positions. Even though some of them are maybe job-shared, it is 47 full-time employees. Each position is 52 weeks of employment, so it is categorized as full time.

Mrs. Dacquay: I assume the department keeps track of how many in-person visits there are on an annual basis. Can the minister identify how many there were over the past fiscal year and how that compares to prior years?

Mr. Lemieux: The number that was for last year—I believe assistance was provided to approximately 6600 visitors which requested approximately 30 000 items. It has stayed relatively the same. It has not varied very much. I just do not have the answer with me today, but I can certainly provide that, the exact number of both visits, as well as the items requested.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are the in-person visits higher than the telephone inquiries, or are they approximately the same?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, it is an interesting question because what we are finding right across government, I believe—I certainly can speak for this department, whether it be tourism or this particular area—that what we are finding is a real increase in Internet requests now. We are finding people, whether they be seniors or others, are using the Internet and the computers far more, and we are getting far more requests via that mode of communication. We are finding that that is where the real increase is happening, whether it be at tourism or, in this particular area, it is via the Internet. That is where the requests are coming.

Mrs. Dacquay: Has the fee increased over the last three years for the hourly fee for research services?

* (16:00)

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the fees that are charged are not for assisting individuals or groups that want information, but it is really for photocopies or postage and handling fees for mailing out documents. So I have been advised that people themselves, just for the help, people are not charged for that, but it is just for photocopying and mailing, those types of costs that would be charged to individuals or groups.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am aware it is for research services, which is the photocopying or the mailing costs, but my question was, has the fee increased over the past two or three years?

* * *

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Just on a matter of House business,

Mr. Chair, I am wondering if there is leave of the committee to call in the Speaker and deal with the matter of House business dealing with private members' hour.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Is there leave of the committee to call in the Speaker to deal with House business, to recess the committee to deal with House business? *[Agreed]*

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I am wondering if you could canvass the House to determine if there is leave to waive private members' hour today.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to waive private members' hour? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, just to advise that the Committee of Supply, by leave, had recessed only until that matter was dealt with, if we could revert back to Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will now revert back to Committee of Supply.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM (Continued)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): I would like to invite the minister's staff back in. There they are.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I will be pleased to continue with any questions that my critic has or certainly anyone at this point. Thank you.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): I believe the minister was about to clarify whether there had been an increase in the service fees for photocopying. I recognize that postage would understandably have gone up in the last year or two, but it is the photocopying.

Mr. Lemieux: The member from Seine River is correct. When anything related, for example, to postage, if that goes up or the cost of paper, it is really cost recoverable. That is really what it is based on. So anything that is passed on to us we pass on to our clients or to Manitobans or others who are requesting our assistance. So it is really just a passing of a cost that we have had to absorb. That is really what this is reflecting.

Mrs. Dacquay: I understand that the Archives keeps a very detailed inventory of their items. I also understand that there have been reports that, periodically perhaps, some items go missing. I have been led to believe there is a bit of a black market for historical maps. Has the minister any reports of documents that have gone missing recently from the Provincial Archives?

Mr. Lemieux: Certainly the staff and the people at the Archives are aware of issues related to what the member mentioned. But in Manitoba there has not been, to the best of anyone's knowledge, anything ever taken, removed probably in the last decade. So the security is very, very tight, and people are aware that archival material is very important and that there are people that are unscrupulous who are trying to take advantage of many, many different archives across the country and probably throughout North America. But security is tight, and to the best of our knowledge, over the past 10 years, we have not had anything missing. So we are very, very confident that what we are doing is—as was when the previous government was in place, that the security is in place, and the staff are doing a very good job in ensuring that it stays in Manitoba and remains here as our property.

Mrs. Dacquay: I do not know if this is the appropriate point. I had a few questions concerning the newspaper articles surrounding the historical native artifacts from the University of Winnipeg. First of all, I recognize that it crosses over two departments, both Education and the minister's department, but I am just wondering if this is the appropriate line that I should be asking those questions on.

Mr. Lemieux: It deals probably more with Historic Resources branch. But I would be pleased to answer the question right now. I believe I can, no matter if staff from Historic

Resources branch, Donna Dul were here or not, I will attempt to answer the question. Even though, you are right, it is an area that deals more with universities and the Minister responsible for Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), I would certainly be pleased to try to answer any questions that might be from a Historic Resources perspective.

* (16:10)

Mrs. Dacquay: I will defer on those questions, then, until we get to that appropriate section.

I just would like clarification from the minister as to which staff, I believe he indicated library staff as well—[interjection] Okay. For today?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mrs. Dacquay: So we can move now to Legislative Library.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Line 14.3. Information Services (d) Provincial Archives (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,309,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,610,300—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$209,500)—pass.

3.(e) Legislative Library (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$777,500. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a few questions here. Can the minister please identify what the full-time equivalent is for the employees in the library?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, 16.5, sixteen and one-half staff.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are the increases there relative to classifications and annual increments?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, that is correct. The Member for Southdale is correct. It is annual increments.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify approximately how many in-person visits year over year there are for the Legislative Library?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, I have been advised that we do not necessarily count the

individuals, but we count, keep track of the questions that are being answered. I understand, I have been advised that there are approximately 13 000 questions that are answered, or requests. It is substantial. We do not really count the individuals that are asking those questions.

Mrs. Dacquay: My next question is not specific to a line, but it is a concern that I have had raised vis-à-vis written communication. Has the department received any complaints about books that are available in our library regarding, I understand there are some very old books there, rare books, and some of which may contain materials that have views about certain ethnic groups that could be deemed to be quite objectionable?

Mr. Lemieux: There has not been, to the best of my knowledge, any formal complaint as such, but I believe the book that the member from Seine River is referring to is called *The International Jew*. I would expect that all of us in the House find this specific book very repugnant. Nevertheless, books such as these are historic. There are many people who use books like this that have been written, obviously, with a certain slant, that use it for research.

I know that many of us are certainly aware of what took place in the 1930s and so on, with regard to book burning, just because someone did not like a book and wanted to erase what they felt. They wanted to change history, and they thought that by burning books that would be a great way to do it and to approach it. Even though we find books like this very repugnant, the Leg Library has really adopted a position appropriate for one of this province's research libraries, and the book is retained and is available for research. It is a historic artifact.

Yet no matter how distasteful we find books like this, I believe it is important that the right action to take is to educate and not to censor. I believe that as a former schoolteacher and many who are fortunate and are honoured to be representing people in this province have a duty to educate people and not to censor. I think when you have books like this that are there, we can use them as an education tool.

As I mentioned, as a former schoolteacher these subjects were very, very difficult to deal

with when students were asking questions about what happened during the 1930s to Jewish people or people of Jewish ancestry in Germany and other countries. I believe there is an opportunity to use it as a time to educate people and not to censor, because when we are talking about this being a historical artifact, it is important to note that.

I apologize if I have been long-winded on this, but I think that it is really important that we all understand that it is there no matter how repugnant we feel about this, that it is used for research and will remain so.

Mrs. Dacquay: When one receives a complaint, is it up to the discretion of the head librarian, or is there a committee that would review that, or is it handled by the minister?

Mr. Lemieux: I have been advised that over 10 years ago, when the policy was in place—and certainly the previous government as well as our Government has kept that policy. Certainly, there has not been anything in writing or anything like that come to us. But at that time, the head librarian or the librarian made a decision, and I am sure the minister of the day was informed of that and agreed with it. But it is not really a process where the librarian sends a memo or a letter or an e-mail to the minister, and then the minister okays it or not. It is the librarian who made a decision in the day, and the policy that was in place with the previous government, we have continued to follow that policy.

I would only think that even if the previous government found that book particularly repugnant, they had made a policy decision, and we as a government have continued to follow that policy with regard to that artifact.

* (16:20)

Mrs. Dacquay: I will forward the written communication I received with a specific request to have it removed from the library. I will forward that to the minister so he can respond directly to the individual who contacted me on it.

My question is: Is this book very visible in terms of its location in the library, or is it more

discreetly placed with the older books, and some of those books are not as open for public viewing?

Mr. Lemieux: This particular book is kept in the rare book collection. In order to have access to that, you have to ask for it, but also you are given a catalogue that is a describer. It describes what is in that book or the contents of that item you are requesting. I mean, that is the process. It is in the rare book section. It is not lent out. It is not something that the library lends out to anyone. You have to come in and make a specific request for the particular item.

Once again, I just want to get back to the fact that the library, and also I would appreciate if the member from Seine River has received any letters or concerns, what I found that was really important, when we are discussing the library, the library itself is a member of the Canadian Library Association, and it subscribes to certain statements. If you bear with me for two seconds, well, maybe two minutes, it is important to note that the Legislative Library of Manitoba subscribes to the statement of intellectual freedom which states in part: It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

Now, again, I know the previous government found this book repugnant. We do, but, because it is historical material, it is important, according to the well-established principles that are in place, that libraries do not restrict access to materials nor do they support banning or censoring publications, even those that today are found to be repugnant. So, in other words, we do not like it, but people want to research it. Many librarians who are of Jewish ancestry must find it extremely difficult to have this sitting there in a rare book section that they know people can have access to, but they have to go through, and they have to ask for it. It is catalogued. So it is not lent out. It is carefully monitored in many ways. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I am prepared to pass this section, Legislative Library.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.3. Information Resources (e) Legislative Library (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$777,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$569,600—pass.

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,683,900 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mrs. Dacquay: In light of the fact that my colleague wants to ask questions on Tourism, would the minister consent to moving to Tourism now, then going back to Arts and Culture?

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to move now to Tourism? *[Agreed]* So we will be in Tourism.

14.4. Tourism.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Chairman, I want to discuss with the minister and with the department an issue that is of growing concern to many of us in Manitoba. It does not impact directly on the minister's responsibility in terms of specifically doing something about it, but inasmuch as he is the Minister responsible for Tourism in the province, sports angling has become, particularly over the last decade, a very significant attraction for so many people that are coming to visit us and many Manitobans themselves.

Several hundreds of thousands of Manitobans annually engage in the pleasant activity of angling for some of our fine fish species that we have in the many lakes that the department, the minister is quite correct and pleased to advertise not just to Manitobans but to many of our visitors to the south and I imagine probably in other parts of the world as well and the general advertising expenditures that this department expends on advertising.

It is not my intention to unnecessarily get into a debate with the minister on this issue. I

have spent a considerable amount of time with his colleague the Minister of Conservation on this matter. But I want to bring and put on the record, and I am pleased to note that my colleague from Dauphin is with me, because he is fully conversant with the issues, that in my judgement we are on a very questionable course that in my estimation can and will reduce what is now a quality fishing experience in Manitoba to that of a mediocre one. To that extent the efforts of his department, to that extent the substantial dollars that his people, his department use to promote sports angling in Manitoba, it should be a concern to this department, it should be a concern to the senior staff, it should be a concern to the minister.

I simply ask the minister to use his influence when sitting around the Cabinet table to ensure that this point of view is not lost on his colleagues. What I am talking about, of course, is what I believe his colleague is attempting to do. I know it is a difficult challenge, and I wished him well. He is attempting to introduce what I call a dual sports fishing management system into the province. He is currently negotiating on a priority basis with a western tribal group on lakes such as Lake of the Prairies and others, Lake Dauphin, where there will, in fact, be two management regimes regarding the sports fishing.

* (16:30)

I say to the minister, and I appreciate this is not his problem, I am just saying though that the impact of this happening at another department, how it is going to reflect on the Tourism responsibilities that he has. It is being watched very carefully across the province, because, as his colleague the Minister of Conservation indicated, this is a model that they hope to put in effect throughout the province, through the Whiteshell, other parts of the province as well. What in effect you are doing is you are undoing a decade's work of conscientious effort to make our sports fishing into quality fishing.

We introduced, I modestly remind the minister, it was my privilege to introduce the barbless hook into sports angling in Manitoba in 1889 or '90. We were among the first province—

An Honourable Member: 1889?

Mr. Enns: No, it was not 1889; it was 1989. In 1889, I had other matters to deal with that were of equal importance.

The obvious tactic of the members of the Government is to distract this serious discourse that I am having with the minister on a subject matter that is near and dear to my heart.

Report

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254): Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 considering the Estimate of Status of Women, the following occurred: The honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women raised a point of order concerning the relevancy of the questions pertaining to the advertising budget pertaining to Lotteries. I, as the Chairperson, ruled that the minister had a point of order and that these questions would be more appropriately raised at the meeting considering the reports of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation.

The ruling of the Chair was sustained on a voice vote, and subsequently two members required that a formal vote on the matter be taken.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 to consider the Estimates of the Status of Women, the Chair ruled that the questions being asked were not relevant to the Estimates being considered. The ruling of the Chair was sustained on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a formal vote on the matter be taken. Therefore, the question before this committee is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 29, Nays 18.

Mr. Chairperson: The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

We shall return to Estimates.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM****(Continued)**

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair now invites the members of the staff of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

The honourable Member for Lakeside had the floor before the formal vote.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Chairman, prior to that interruption on democracy's behalf, I was gently pointing out to the Minister responsible for Tourism in this province that it took the better part of a decade of some very specific programs that were introduced, some, I modestly remind the minister, by myself when I was Minister of Natural Resources, such as the barbless hook which then really gave life to the catch-and-release program. First of all, it was more humanely done, achieved with less damage to the fish, and I am surprised and encouraged and delighted that, as the minister proudly points out, it is in a very good book that the department publishes that is distributed far and wide among sports anglers and camping enthusiasts not just in the province of Manitoba but throughout the country and other parts of the world, Manitobans and our fishermen generally respect the limits that we have imposed on them. They recognize the goal, that is, to enable fishermen who pursue this activity the joy, the thrill of catching the big one, not necessarily taking it home but getting it photographed and just the thrill of catching the big one.

All of that, Mr. Minister, all of that is being, in my opinion, jeopardized if, in fact, his Government cannot bring back some integrity to the management of our fishing stocks. I speak now specifically of those western lakes, Lake of the Prairies, Lake Dauphin, a few other lakes there.

But as I determined in the examination of the Estimates of his colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), this is the plan for Manitoba. I do not have to tell you, Mr. Minister—you are intelligent and understand the issue—you cannot mix and match. You cannot fish with commercial gill nets and then expect to

maintain the trophy fish in any body of water. That is really the point.

I enjoyed, about a month ago, one of these pleasures at one of our northern lakes just a little east of Norway House. It was a tremendous fishing opportunity. We stayed by the limits, Mr. Minister, but we were catching all pound and a half, two pounders. I think 16 centimetres, you can keep. Over that, you release, and we were releasing many more that we were catching, and we had no complaints. We got onto the lake for our fishing experience at about two in the afternoon or 1:30. We were catching fish and releasing them, catching fish and releasing. Then at four o'clock or 4:30, I said, boys, we better start holding some because we intended to have a fish fry that evening. Within an hour, we had 30 fish.

We were a large group. We were a nine-person group. But, Mr. Chairman, of all that fish we were surprised we did not catch one large one we could look at. Later on at our campsite in the evening, cooking evenings, I stumbled across a couple of commercial gill nets on the shore. That, of course, is the answer. That is why I am saying, in this case, Mr. Minister, really and truly I know that this gets all involved with heavy-duty politics, heavy-duty challenge for us as to how we come to terms with the politics of the First Nations people.

If we do not succeed and we move on our present course, the world will not end. We just will not have quality fishing in Manitoba. There will be a lot of fish. The Department of Conservation will continue spending thousands of dollars on stocking and restocking our lakes. But we will not have that quality fishing experience that his department so proudly promotes, justifiably promotes to Manitobans, to Canadians and to sports fishermen around the world.

* (17:40)

I just want to make this point with the minister. I raised this issue earlier on in the session with the minister during Question Period. I had, as the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) knows, considerable time to explore this matter with his colleague the Conservation

Minister. My hope is that they can work out a satisfactory solution to this thing. I believe that it is the belief on the part of some of us that a co-management agreement, regime can be evolved.

I however feel, and I could be wrong, that we are heading to a dual management system. Therein lies the problem. There is only one resource. It does not really matter to the fish if it is being caught by a First Nations person or by a non-Aboriginal person. It is in the way that we manage that resource that will determine whether or not our fisheries maintains its deservedly good reputation, and, economically speaking, brings in the very substantial millions, multimillions of dollars to a relatively modest economy like Manitoba. So it is one that the minister and his department should not take lightly.

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that this directly involves this ministry as Minister of Tourism. I would just appreciate some response from him that he is prepared to at least acknowledge that there is a problem if it is allowed to go unchecked, in other words, the problem being specifically if we allow commercial gill nets to be put into a lake like Lake of the Prairies, the quality of that fishing in that lake will deteriorate. It cannot help but be the case.

I am asking him to use his influence with his colleagues, with his fellow Cabinet ministers, with people like the Member for Dauphin, who shares my concerns, on a different level perhaps, but certainly the general outcome. But surely the minister and his department cannot be oblivious to the growing number of concerned Manitoban sportsmen, particularly in the western part of the province, who see fisheries like the Lake of the Prairies, you know, the wonderful success story of Lake of the Prairies is it is in fact a man-made lake. It is a nice utilization of essentially a flood control structure that is providing these additional benefits, as we knew it would when we built it. One of them is that Lake of the Prairies has become one of the prime sports angling opportunities in the province of Manitoba, and it is being threatened.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to abuse my privilege of addressing the minister. The

minister, I am satisfied, knows exactly what I am talking about. I would like to hear from him that he will give it his best shot to try to resolve the issue.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the Member for Lakeside raises a lot of interesting questions and makes a number of statements which I would like to comment on. Please, with all due respect, I will certainly try to keep my comments directed to his questions or to his statements.

I just want to say that this is an area I am most familiar with. I had the opportunity to work in Russell, south of the Lake of the Prairies, and my home town until I was into my late teens, before I went south of the border, was Dauphin, Manitoba. So I am very familiar with Lake Dauphin and the area.

I know and what I have heard from the people there is that they are really pleased to see that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is working and attempting to work towards a satisfactory solution with all the people involved, whether they be lodge people, sports fisher people or First Nations people or Aboriginal people in the area in general. I know, just to make a comment about the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers), he has also been in conversation with many, many of the people there.

So that we are aware of the issue is correct. Yet the Member for Lakeside, if I were to read Hansard tomorrow and without having some input from myself, I might be led to believe that somehow we are going to be out of fish tomorrow, or by Monday, or the end of the year. So I want to put a couple of things on the record just to put it into perspective, and, yes, we are all concerned about the sustainability, the sustainable resource. I think we all have to do our due diligence to ensure that happens.

So I just want to put a couple of things on the record, like in 2001 there were 11 447 trophy fish caught in the province of Manitoba, 11 447 trophy fish caught in the province, and they were entered into the Master Angler Program. Over 85 percent of these fish were released back into the waters to provide recreation to future generations, which is tremendous. The previous

minister and also the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who has been a member of government and opposition for a number of years, should be congratulated for his role, in part, in his government that introduced the barbless hook, which was the first, the first in the country—I am not sure about North America but certainly the first in Canada—and he should be congratulated for that.

So when people are participating in the Master Angler Program since 1960, we are a world leader for catch-and-release fishing. We have fostered a recognition in Britain and all over the world as being a place where there are trophy fish, and there are plenty of fish to do so. That does not mean that we should not be concerned about sustaining this resource and the sustainability of the resource. We should be. All governments should be, as well as anyone involved in the industry, whether it be lodge owners and others who are dependent economically on that resource.

I know Conservation is really monitoring the fish stocks and is committed to managing the resource in a sustainable fashion. The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) has made a commitment to that. He understands that it is in no one's interest to deplete any of the lakes. I think the Lake of the Prairies, when I worked in Russell, it was in the middle 1970s, and I think it was in the eighties, I remember them talking about the Lake of the Prairies being depleted of any fish stock. I think it was in the eighties. I stand to be corrected.

But, I mean, this is a resource that you have to be very cautious with, and as was mentioned by the Member for Lakeside, there are a lot of dollars involved. I know the Minister of Conservation and the Member for Dauphin-Roblin are doing their best to talk to local people, discuss the issues and try to come up with a satisfactory resolution.

I have heard co-management is a term that is used, but I have not heard dual management being used. Dual management implies that there are two different systems. Co-management means working together jointly, attempting to preserve a resource, and how do you use that resource in the best manner possible. So there is a difference, and I know that the Department of

Conservation and our own department, working with all user groups like Manitoba lodges, Aboriginal communities, really to try to maintain the fishing stock and the management plans throughout the province. It is imperative.

I know we get so many compliments every year from people worldwide about our fishing, whether they be our friends to the south of the 49th or whether or not they be people that come from overseas to fish in Manitoba. It is truly an area where we can be proud. Not only do we have a lot of fresh air and fresh water, but our fishing stocks are plentiful, and we should be proud of that fact because it has taken a lot of time to really manage that.

* (17:50)

I know people from around Lake Dauphin, I know the member from Dauphin-Roblin knows this. People put up money out of their own pocket to stock those lakes, and they worked hard to ensure that that stock was built up to a satisfactory level. I know that people in the whole area are very proud of the fact that it has become a real tourist attraction.

From my perspective, being minister responsible for this area, it is important that that remain so. I want to put on the record that the Minister of Conservation is working extremely hard to find a satisfactory resolution to, in many ways, a complex issue. It is not just an easy issue to deal with.

So, with those comments, I would like to make just a couple more with regard to my own responsibilities with regard to tourism and the state of the sport fishing industry in Manitoba. You take a look at the total angling sales for the year 2000, the most recent records that we have, is just under 200 000, 185 000 thereabouts angling licences, of which 36 000 were purchased by non-residents, and Canada's highest number sold in the last 10 years. So people know their fish here, people want to fish.

In all due respect to the member from Lakeside, I would not want the impression left, somehow, that we are going to be out of fish in the near future or that we are in a real crisis. Yes, there are some challenges, no different than challenges in other provinces, whether in regard to hunting or fishing in other provinces. There

are some challenges that have to be met, and we will meet those challenges and we will find a satisfactory resolution.

I know that, as was mentioned, the Master Angler program, since its existence in 1960, we are a world leader in catch and release fishing. We foster the recognition that Manitoba is a leader in high quality fishing and resource conservation sustainability. Manitoba is the first jurisdiction to have mandatory barbless fishing throughout the whole province, and again, the member from Lakeside should be congratulated for this.

I know he enjoys fishing himself. He does a lot of fishing, as was mentioned, and it is a real pleasure that, yes, you have your limit. If you want to have your fish fry on the side of the lake, you can do it, but also, many, many fish, because they are so plentiful. As he mentioned, how many he caught. There were so many that he caught that they had to release back into their natural environment. And so he and his friends who went fishing, the nine or ten—I should be accurate because there are limits. I cannot remember the exact number that they caught, but I am sure they were under their limit, but they just had enough just to have a little snack.

Nevertheless, it is important that education is also an important component of ensuring sustainability, and that is something that we take to heart. The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), often we hear comments in this legislature, regrettably, that somehow he is not doing as much as he should or he should be doing more somehow. This is an individual all his life has been concerned about the environment, the ecosystem and sustainability. All his life he has been concerned with this and takes the challenges very, very seriously. I have total confidence in that minister.

Yes, the member from Lakeside was asking will you talk to the Minister of Conservation out some concerns that are around Lake Dauphin and Lake of the Prairies. Yes, I have taken the opportunity to speak to him and I have full confidence in him when he says we are working toward a satisfactory resolution in a difficult problem. It is not an easy one. So, from this department's perspective, the tourism and marketing campaign, I know we continue to promote fishing and hunting through many

different activities. There is an annual production and distribution of a hundred thousand copies of the *Fishing and Hunting Adventure Guide* that the Member for Lakeside talked about.

We are doing this in confidence, knowing that hunting and fishing is one of our key tourist attractions, not the be-all, end-all. We know that adventure in eco-tourism has become a very, very important and growing sector. Bird-watching, just in conversation with my friends from Texas, they are recognized as the No. 1 leader in bird-watching as a state in the U.S., and they pointed out to me that Manitoba is the No. 1 attraction for many bird-watchers in Canada. So we have many things in common, not just fishing and hunting. Friends from Texas come up in the Russell area to do the fly-fishing tournament that they have in the spring and fall, but also they come up to bird-watch and canoe and paddle down our beautiful rivers and our pristine lakes. So we have many things in common.

I know that participation within our industry is six U.S. and four Canadian sports fishing shows that we participate in. We are not going to end that. We have newspaper, magazine, Internet advertising with regard to our fishing industry, sponsorship of targeted television programs, we have media relations programs, all geared to fishing. The department also includes the *Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters* catalogue in response to inquiries, over 12 000 catalogues mailed annually.

We are promoting and promoting fishing. We have a confidence that we have a sustainable resource here and to the credit of the Member for Lakeside and the people who were there deciding to have barbless fishing. This has been, I believe, an important factor in why our fishing stocks are healthy today. Also, the people should be congratulated in the Dauphin area, and Roblin, Russell, Inglis areas for all their hard work and all those communities in between, Grandview, Gilbert Plains, because they really have pride in the fishing stocks, and the I know the Member for Lakeside is sincere about this. He is not raising something that is frivolous. He cares about fishing. He should be congratulated for that, but he has to understand that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), and I

trust he does, the Minister of Conservation also trusts in the judgment of people who are involved in this industry and will find a satisfactory resolution towards this sustainable industry. We know that all of us in this House have a lot at stake with regard to this industry, not only financially, but because it just makes the quality of life we have in Manitoba better for us all.

With those short comments, I hope I have been able to address and I hope I have raised the confidence level of the Member for Lakeside that we are doing all we can to ensure there is a satisfactory resolution and that this industry will continue to be strong.

Mr. Enns: I thank the honourable minister for those comments, Mr. Chairman, and I am prepared to leave it at that. I just want to remind him that I am concerned when it was determined, during the examination of his colleague's Estimates, that this spring over half a dozen nets containing over 1800 pounds of fish, walleye, were pulled out the bottom of Lake of the Prairies rotting, not even used for sustenance or feed by anybody. That kind of activity left unchecked will not sustain our fishing.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Did the minister want to respond to my colleague's final comment?

Mr. Lemieux: I know the hour is getting late. I just want to comment that I do appreciate the comments of the Member for Lakeside. I know I have spoken to him privately. He has a lot of concerns related to this issue. I do not want to oversell the fact that he has made his point and it is being considered. All suggestions are being considered at this point because it is an important issue.

With regard to Tourism, my critic for the department and the member from Seine River may wish to ask more questions. We are on Tourism now. I know it is a late hour, but maybe

there are a couple of questions that I can answer prior to our time expiring for today. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to call it six o'clock?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable Member for Seine River, a question?

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes. It is just sort of a generic question. I will not get into specific line-by-line questions at this point in time.

Surrounding the events of 9/11, I am just wondering if the department has proven out that perhaps it did have an impact and what kind of an impact it had in terms of the number of visitors and the number of dollars that were traditionally spent on tourism?

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question. It is an important one. September 11 created a lot of anxiety within the tourism industry and within the economy in general in Canada.

We are very, very fortunate in Manitoba to have the majority of our traffic being rubber-wheel traffic, people who drive here traditionally by automobile or certainly by using our highways to enter Canada. People who are more dependent on the airline traffic, people flying in as tourists, really suffered more than what we did. We are very, very fortunate, because many of our key visitors come from the U.S.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Dakota Tipi First Nation Derkach; Ashton	3677
Universities Property Tax J. Smith	3669	Members' Statements Legion Houses Walkway Project Dyck	3679
Tabling of Reports		Cranberry Portage Homecoming Jennissen	3679
Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2002-2003—Departmental Expenditure Estimates—Consumer and Corporate Affairs S. Smith	3669	Crime Rate J. Smith	3680
Oral Questions		Ochre River Days Struthers	3680
West Nile Virus Murray; Doer	3669	Randy and Deanna Wondrasek Derkach	3680
Murray; Chomiak	3670		
Mitchelson; Doer	3672, 3674	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Mitchelson; Chomiak	3673	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Health Care Facilities Driedger; Chomiak	3674	Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections)	
Livestock Industry Gerrard; Wowchuk	3675	Status of Women	3681
Drinking Water Struthers; Chomiak	3677	Agriculture and Food	3699
		Culture, Heritage and Tourism	3718